RtI^2

Developing a Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Approach to Response to Instruction & Intervention (RtI^2) for English Language Learners

Connecting to WIDA Standards, Assessments, and Other Resources

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Developing a Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Approach to Response to Instruction & Intervention (RtI²) for English Language Learners.

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Introduction

The WIDA Consortium provides support to state educational agencies (SEAs) and local educational agencies (LEAs) as they develop more culturally and linguistically responsive educational systems. With the reauthorization of IDEA (2004), states and school districts have been given the option of implementing a multi-tiered system of support to identify the needs of all students. Response to Intervention or Responsiveness to Instruction (RtI) is one example of such a system of support. By including both instruction and intervention in the acronym RtI^2 throughout this document, the focus is first on improving and enriching the core instruction delivered to all students and providing diverse learners greater access to the grade level curriculum. This guide puts forth a framework that can be integrated into an existing RtI^2 framework or can support SEAs and LEAs as they begin designing their culturally and linguistically responsive RtI^2 systems in the K-12 setting.

This WIDA guide includes tools and resources to help states, districts, and schools address some of the unique needs of ELLs within a culturally and linguistically responsive RtI^2 system. It is crucial that any RtI^2 system that is put in place at the state or local level proactively addresses the varying needs of students who are in the process of developing a new language (English) and assists schools in preparing culturally-appropriate contexts that support the learning of all students. Geneva Gay describes **culturally responsive teaching** and learning as:

> *the use of cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to, and effective for, them. It teaches to and through their personal and cultural strengths, their intellectual capabilities, and their prior accomplishments… it filters curriculum content and teaching strategies through their cultural frames of reference to make the content more personally meaningful and easier to master… it makes explicit the previously implicit role of culture in teaching and learning, and it insists that educational institutions accept the legitimacy and viability of ethnic-group cultures in improving learning outcomes (Gay, 2010, p. 26).*

The framework described in this document can support districts, schools, and school teams in examining the effect of sociocultural contexts for learning when implementing RtI^2 for ELLs in Kindergarten through Grade 12. The framework also provides each school or district RtI^2 team with a way to look systematically at the diverse student body and implement culturally-appropriate instruction and assessment practices.

This guide provides some ideas for educators to create their own professional development activities to support RtI^2 implementation in their local contexts. School systems are encouraged to build on existing strengths, including the expertise of their staff across disciplines (e.g., bilingual/ESL, general education, special education) in developing these activities. Please look for the **Professional Development Opportunity** icon throughout the document.

PART 1 of this resource guide is an overview of the components of the RtI^2 framework presented in published research. It gives the reader a broad understanding of RtI^2's statutory basis, its theoretical rationale, and the components that traditionally make up the RtI^2 model.

PART 2 introduces seven factors (Figure 2) that can impact students' academic progress, linguistic development, and responses to the instruction and interventions that are provided for them. The factors that are discussed are: the learning environment created for students, academic achievement and instruction information, oral language and literacy development, information about students' personal and family background, physical and psychological information, previous schooling information, and cross-cultural considerations. While it is important to consider the sociocultural context for all students, this section focuses on how these factors might specifically impact ELLs' educational experience. School teams can use the information related to these seven factors to better understand and more effectively support the ELLs they serve.

PART 3 introduces WIDA resources that may be used within the RtI^2 process to describe students' academic language development. This section will provide ideas for how to gather assessment information that can help teams to develop a profile of how ELLs are performing linguistically in school. This information will also assist educators in differentiating language instruction and assessment in order to ensure that ELLs are provided equitable access to content learning.

PART 4 proposes a culturally and linguistically responsive framework for the **solution-seeking process**[1] within an RtI^2 model. The framework is based on four components. The first component includes gathering **qualitative** and quantitative information across seven integral factors. A sample protocol for gathering this information (Table 2 on pp. 28-29) is presented to provide educators with the kind of data they may want to collect. The second component involves describing observable behaviors within the context in which they occur. The third component is designing and implementing instructional and intervention strategies at the systemic and specific levels to address students' needs. The last component is assessing and monitoring the progress (i.e., linguistic and academic) students make using multiple authentic assessment measures.

PART 5 provides some information on ELLs with special education needs. While it is outside the purview of this document to address the specific concerns of ELLs who have special education needs, this section emphasizes the importance of supporting these students' ELL needs as well as their special education needs. This section also highlights ways that the information gathered during a culturally and linguistically responsive RtI^2 process could support teams when determining eligibility and entitlement for special education.

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1 In this document, the term "solution-seeking" (Hamayan, Marler, Sanchez-Lopez, & Damico, 2013; Sanchez-Lopez & Young, 2003) is used rather than the traditional term "problem-solving." This terminology was purposely selected to emphasize that the focus of solution-seeking teams should be to identify and build on students' strengths and resources when supporting them in the areas in which they may experience challenges in school. "Problem-solving," with its more deficit orientation, can lead team members to specifically focus on what is wrong rather than searching for potential areas of growth or "bright spots" (Heath & Heath, 2010) in students' performance. It is imperative that schools and districts interpret student performance within the broader sociocultural contexts in which students live and learn (e.g., classroom, school, home, community, society at large), taking into account these multiple spheres of influence.

PART 1: Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Students: The Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI^2) Model

Defining Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI^2)

Response to instruction and intervention is a systematic, data-based assessment and intervention framework that seeks to prevent academic and behavioral difficulty for all students through high-quality, **research-based instruction,** early intervention, and frequent authentic assessment of students' progress. When students are not performing at expected levels within this framework, school personnel first consider the possibility that students are not receiving adequate instruction by examining their teaching practices, the school climate, and the type of programming created for students in addition to student performance data. Then, school personnel design and implement systemic and/or specific interventions within the general education setting to help students achieve at higher levels.

The RtI^2 framework consists of multiple levels of increasingly intense instruction known as tiers. These tiers provide students with a continuum of supports matched to their needs. There are various multi-tiered RtI^2 models currently being implemented in schools. IDEA (2004) does not mandate or endorse any multi-tiered model in particular (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). The regulations instead allow states to adopt criteria that best meet local needs. This document focuses on a three-tiered model in which Tier 1 represents Universal or Core Instruction, Tier 2 represents Targeted or Supplemental Intervention, and Tier 3 represents Strategic or Intensive Intervention (Figure 1).

Response to instruction and intervention (RtI^2) three-tiered model

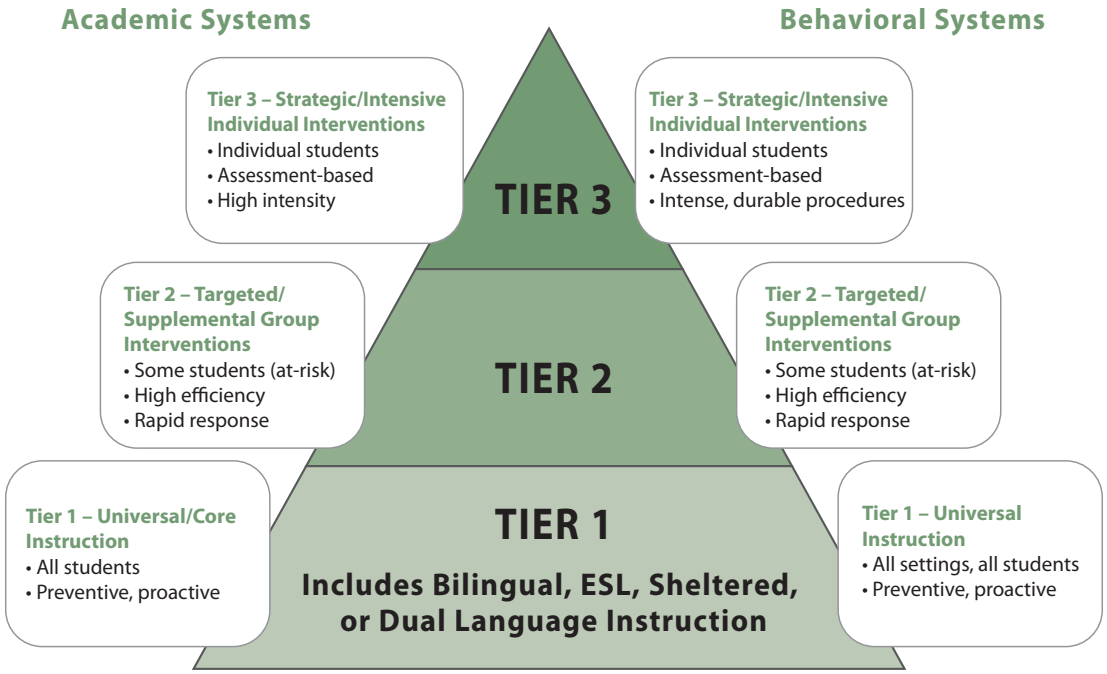

Figure 1. *Adapted from: OSEP Center of Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports*

Tier 1 – Universal or Core Instruction

Tier 1 of a Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI[2]) model represents the Universal or Core Instruction that all students, including ELLs, receive. It refers also to the entire school climate that is created for students in a particular school or school community. Klingner and Edwards (2006, p. 113) explain that "the foundation of the first tier should be culturally responsive, quality instruction with ongoing progress monitoring within the general education classroom." **For ELLs, Tier 1 includes the English language development instruction that students may receive (e.g., bilingual, ESL, sheltered, or dual language instruction).** The core instruction in Tier 1 for ELLs should be delivered in classrooms with teachers who are knowledgeable about the process of acquiring a second or additional language (Hill & Flynn, 2006), and know how to deliver culturally relevant content, literacy, and language instruction[2]. Instruction within these settings would not be viewed as an intervention (Tiers 2 or 3), but rather part of ELLs' core instruction (National Center on Response to Intervention, 2011).

A culturally- and linguistically-appropriate Tier 1 can serve as a check on the system, a way to evaluate whether or not the school or school district is moving toward the most appropriate service delivery model for their students. All the professionals who support ELLs' core instruction need to understand that they must make the content they are teaching comprehensible to the students (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2012) as well as differentiate instruction according to the students' language proficiency levels (Appendix B). Instruction in this context consists of a high-quality curriculum supported by **differentiated instruction** and **flexible grouping.** All students are assessed at multiple times throughout the year to identify those in need of additional support as well as students who need more advanced opportunities to develop their skills. For ELLs, Tier 1 or universal (core) instruction must be appropriate and enriched in a way that addresses their particular linguistic, sociocultural, and academic needs in a sustained, coordinated, and cohesive way. It is crucial to continually monitor the adequacy of the entire learning environment created for the students in Tier 1 in an attempt to avoid preventable challenges for all students.

Tier 2 – Targeted or Supplemental Intervention

Tier 2 of a Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI[2]) model is referred to as Targeted or Supplemental Intervention. It consists of small groups of students (usually three to five) who do not respond sufficiently to the most effective Tier 1 instruction and curricula. Approximately 10-15% of students may require the daily, targeted intervention provided in Tier 2. Tier 2 support is viewed as supplementary support because it is delivered within the classroom setting in addition to the core content instruction. In Tier 2, students receive targeted intervention only in specific areas (i.e., academic, behavioral, or both) in which their needs are not being met. By gathering authentic assessment data from classroom observations, review of student work samples, performance on common assessments, student-teacher conferences, field notes, as well as standardized measures that are used in schools, teams can target and support students in those particular areas (Chappuis, Stiggins, Chappuis, & Arter, 2012).

When receiving targeted intervention, students' progress continues to be assessed through ongoing data collection (both qualitative and quantitative) to determine the length of time they would benefit from

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2 More information on each of these areas of instruction will be provided in Part 2 of this document.

receiving Tier 2 assistance. Students move in and out of this tier of intervention based on individual needs and performance. Four key features of Tier 2 intervention include: (1) supplementary resources to implement high-quality instructional strategies, (2) targeted intervention at high levels of intensity, (3) ongoing formative/classroom assessment to monitor students' responses to intervention (often referred to as progress monitoring), and (4) team decision-making and collaboration. **If a culturally and linguistically responsive Tier 1 learning environment has been created for all students, including ELLs, only a small percentage of students would need to receive Tier 2 support in any given area or for any given need.**

Tier 3 – Strategic or Intensive Intervention

Tier 3 of a Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI^2) model is referred to as Strategic or Intensive Intervention. This is the most intensive level of support within the general education setting. In this document, Tier 3 instruction **does not** represent referral for special education or special education services. Tier 3 represents strategic or intensive individualized support designed to meet the specific needs of the smallest percentage of students who did not make adequate progress in Tiers 1 and 2. Support at this level is provided by a highly qualified teacher, generally outside of the classroom setting (but not always) and may be of a longer duration. The strategies may be the same as in Tier 2 but they are more intensive and individualized. **If a culturally and linguistically responsive Tier 2 has been created for students, including ELLs, very few students would need to receive Tier 3 support.**

Academic & Behavioral Domains of RtI^2

RtI^2 consists of both academic and behavioral domains. The academic domain focuses on student learning, primarily in the areas of reading, writing, and math. The behavioral domain focuses on explicitly teaching students appropriate social skills and behavior expectations. The behavioral domain is known as positive behavioral interventions and supports, or PBIS. Both academic and behavioral domains are depicted in the RtI^2 model in Figure 1 on page 5 to highlight the close connection between students' academic and behavioral performance and to provide a more holistic view of the student.[3] Although both domains are important to consider during the solution-seeking process, this document focuses on the academic side of RtI^2.

RtI^2 is a general education initiative. As such, the goal or purpose of RtI^2 is to enrich the learning environment for all students. This process should be fluid in that there should be no barriers that keep students from moving easily among the tiers as their needs change, intensify, or decrease. It may be that a student or group of students receives Tier 2 support in one area (e.g., mathematics, literacy, or behavior) and the rest of their needs are addressed effectively in the Tier 1 core instructional environment.

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3 Improving students' social skills results in more minutes spent in academic instruction (Putnam, Handler, & O'Leary-Zonarich, 2003; Putnam, Handler, Rey, & O'Leary-Zonarich, 2002). Additionally, high-quality instruction leads to increased academic engagement, which results in reduced behavior concerns (Preciado, Horner, & Baker, 2009).

Special Education Determination

If your state uses the information gathered through a culturally and linguistically responsive RtI^2 process as part of the determination of a **specific learning disability (SLD)**, this means that a local educational agency may use a process based on a child's response to scientific, research-based intervention delivered by qualified personnel as a part of the evaluation procedures. 34 C.F.R. §300.307(a)(2)[4]. No specific assessment tools or general screening procedures are specified for use within an RtI^2 model in federal law. 34 C.F.R. §300.304(b)(ii)(2). While part 5 of this document will address some issues related to supporting ELLs who may also have special education needs, using the data collected through an RtI^2 process as part of determining eligibility for special education is beyond the scope of the document. Educators should refer to their state laws and guidance and school district policies related to special education determination.

Potential Advantages of a Culturally and Linguistically Responsive RtI^2 System for ELLs

There are various potential advantages for ELLs in a comprehensive RtI^2 system that is designed to be responsive to their unique and particular needs. Under such a system, teams would have permission to support students in a more proactive manner; schools and school districts could begin to see an increase in the number of ELLs who would be successful in the general education setting, which includes ESL/bilingual instruction, and see more appropriate special education referrals. Other potential advantages would arise from increased system-wide awareness of culturally responsive instruction. Teachers would benefit as well because they would experience support as part of a school-based team and have structured opportunities to collaborate with colleagues across disciplines. School teams would not have to wait for students to fail before providing additional instructional support, or a range of supports. A culturally and linguistically responsive RtI^2 system could allow better monitoring of teaching practices in general and special education classes. This would improve teaching overall, and improve the quality and quantity of information about the educational progress and instructional needs of individual students (Damico, 2009). Table 1 on the following page describes some of the conditions necessary for a culturally and linguistically responsive RtI^2 system.

4 For more detailed information on IDEA (2004), please see Appendix F.

Necessary Conditions for ELLs to Experience the Benefits of a Responsive RtI^2 System
❑ Use innovative practices and reforms in all tiers with a focus on enrichment, increased comprehensibility, and meaningfulness rather than remediation.
❑ Customize RtI^2 systems according to a school or district's individual needs, and select multiple and different practices for the multiple tiers of support. Implement these practices in a cohesive, contextualized, and comprehensible way from a sociocultural perspective.
❑ Make certain that all educators are aware of the research on what practices, strategies, approaches, and interventions work with whom, by whom, and in what contexts (Klingner & Edwards, 2006).
❑ Ensure that students receive culturally responsive, appropriate, quality content and language instruction that is evidence-based at all levels.
❑ Provide **linguistic supports** when assessing students' content knowledge.
❑ Provide time for team members to plan for students' instruction, resulting in instruction and intervention strategies that are cohesive, authentic and meaningful, and connected to the core curriculum.
❑ Include approaches that focus on complex sociocultural phenomena and better address students' unique educational contexts.
❑ Look not only at classrooms, but also at languages and outside social/educational settings for insights into students' performance.
❑ Recognize the need for both appropriate ELL literacy instruction as well as academic language instruction across content areas.
❑ Differentiate at all tiers of support according to students' academic language proficiency levels.

Table 1. *Adapted from: Damico (2009)*

Professional Development Opportunity
Teams can use the checklist above to reflect on existing practices in their schools or districts. What are ways that your school/district is moving towards a more culturally and linguistically responsive RtI^2 process?

Assessment as Part of RtI^2

When assessing ELLs' performance in school, a distinction must be made between their academic achievement and their academic language proficiency. Academic achievement measures ELLs' content area knowledge, skills, and processes independent of their academic language proficiency. In contrast, academic language proficiency measures an ELL's competence in processing (listening and reading) and producing (speaking and writing) academic language across the content areas. ELLs' performance in school is always influenced by their academic language proficiency. School teams must take into account students' level of English language proficiency when selecting assessment measures and interpreting data. WIDA tools and resources (Part 3) can help support teams in making the assessment process more responsive to ELLs.

Effective assessment of ELLs' language development and content knowledge makes teaching more instructionally-responsive and action-oriented. An RtI^2 model incorporates formative assessments (observations, performance-based projects, conversations, writing samples, standardized assessments, to name a few) in all three tiers to provide information for different purposes. First, RtI^2 uses the data from the various assessments to identify the students whose educational needs may not be met by the existing program of instruction or approach to instruction. For example, some students may need to receive additional support

within Tiers 2 or 3, whereas other students may need more advanced opportunities to develop their skills within Tier 1. Secondly, the data collected from the assessments administered in each tier can be used as a mechanism to improve the instructional methods as well as evaluate the appropriateness of the curriculum for these students. More specific information about each type of assessment is outlined in the following paragraphs.

System-Wide Screening: The purpose of administering screenings as part of Tier 1 is to identify any students within the classroom and school who may be in need of additional support. The screening data collected can provide information about the quality of the instructional program currently in place and provide feedback about the classroom performance of groups of students and grade-level patterns of performance. The data can also provide feedback about the impact of the wider learning environment and school climate on student achievement, academic language development, behavior, and social-emotional well-being. **In this document, screening is broadly defined to include tools that measure both ELLs' English language development and academic performance.**

Sources of Screening Data

- Intake interviews in home language and English
- School demographic data
- Grade level meeting notes
- Academic achievement data
- ACCESS for ELLs® scores
- School records (cumulative folders)
- Title program data
- Cultural information
- Community organizations
- Ethnographic research

Monitoring (Assessing) Student Progress: Monitoring students' progress is a crucial component of the RtI^2 model. In this document, the broader term "monitoring student progress" will be used rather than the more traditional term "progress monitoring." In a culturally and linguistically responsive multi-tiered system of support, it is essential that the assessment procedures used with students are as responsive as the instructional approaches used. To date, a limited number of assessment tools have been researched specifically for use with ELLs (National Center on Response to Intervention, 2011). While LEAs may already have certain uniform assessment practices in place, it is important that they review and evaluate these assessment practices and the processes used with ELLs to ensure that they are providing an appropriate context for interpreting student performance. When school teams monitor students' progress, this should include gathering information from a comprehensive set of **authentic assessment procedures** that emphasize assessment for learning (Chappuis et al., 2012) including: observations, collection and evaluation of student work (digital, written, recorded, performed), common language and academic achievement assessments, conferencing with students, teacher anecdotal and field notes, checklists, rubrics, rating scales, portfolios, performance tasks, paper-pencil tasks, student self-assessments, surveys, and questionnaires, among others. All decisions about students' instructional services should be based on **multiple measures** that more readily capture the complex nature of the learning process.

Authentic Formative Assessment Tools

- Observations
- Collection and evaluation of student work (digital, written, recorded, performed)
- Common language and academic achievement assessments
- Conferencing with students
- Teacher anecdotal and field notes
- Checklists
- Rubrics
- Rating scales
- Portfolios
- Performance tasks
- Paper-pencil tasks
- Student self-assessments
- Surveys
- Questionnaires

In Tier 1, monitoring students' progress provides educators with information about how well the general education instruction and curriculum is meeting students' needs. Monitoring student progress in Tiers 2 and 3 enables the solution-seeking teams to determine if students are responding adequately to the interventions or other supports delivered in the general education setting. The results from these assessments determine if the targeted or intensive supports need to be modified or if the student(s) may return to only receiving Tier 1 instruction. When monitoring students' progress, this model ensures that students' content and language development are assessed in authentic ways at regular intervals throughout the instructional cycle. School teams might decide that students who still do not respond adequately to culturally and linguistically responsive, research-based interventions in Tier 3 may benefit from special education services.

PART 2: Factors that May Impact ELLs' Academic Progress, Linguistic Development, and Response to Instruction & Intervention

One way to make a school's existing multi-tiered system of support more culturally and linguistically responsive is to consider the sociocultural context for learning. School districts can develop a protocol for proactively gathering important descriptive information about all the students they serve. This guide proposes that the protocol include information along seven factors that may influence students' academic achievement, linguistic development (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) across the content areas, and responses to instruction and intervention. This information will help school teams develop appropriate instruction, interventions, and assessments for those students who are not performing as would be expected during their culturally and linguistically responsive core instructional time. Figure 2 below lists seven factors to consider for ELLs during the solution-seeking process. While information along these seven factors is important to gather for all students, this section will focus solely on ELLs and how the factors provide an **authentic context** in which to understand ELL student performance.

Seven factors that may influence ELLs' linguistic and academic development

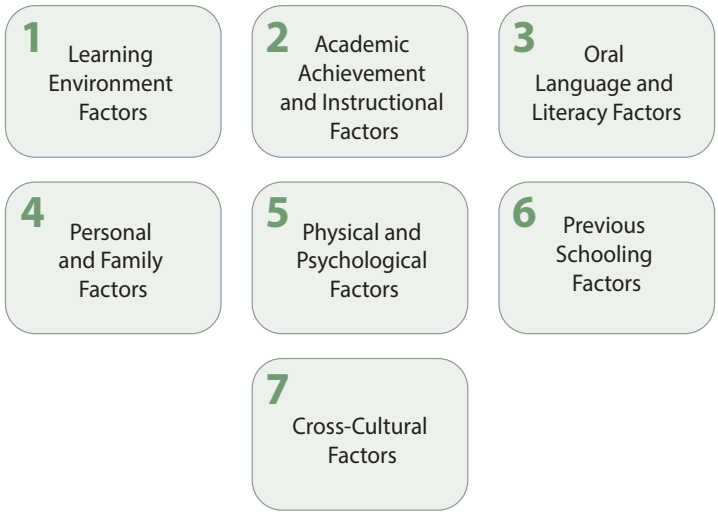

Figure 2. *Adapted from: Hamayan, Marler, Sanchez-Lopez, & Damico (2013)*

Considering the Sociocultural Context for ELLs' Performance in School: Seven Integral Factors

#1: Learning Environment Factors

"Opportunity to learn" (Gee, 2008) refers to equitable conditions or circumstances within the school or classroom that promote learning for all students. It includes careful consideration of what curricula are chosen, that the learning materials are culturally and linguistically responsive, that the physical learning facilities are equitable, and that teachers who work with diverse learners are appropriately certified and have ongoing opportunities to learn about their students' unique educational needs. This term also relates to ongoing efforts,

innovations, and reforms that begin to remove barriers to learning for all students. "Opportunity to learn the designated curriculum for a grade level or age group is a major equity issue for students who are at risk of not developing academically to their fullest potential" (Stevens & Grymes, 1993).

The learning environment created for ELLs is the most comprehensive of the seven factors. Within the learning environment, there are aspects that are unique to educating ELLs and should be discussed when seeking solutions for these students:

- ***Teachers:*** Ensure that ELLs spend the majority of their instructional day with teachers who are knowledgeable about the acquisition of a second or additional language (Hill & Flynn, 2006) and have received professional development and/or coursework in delivering culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy. School districts can support teachers to gain advanced coursework and credentials in the area of ESL/bilingual education as well as establishing those structures (e.g., common planning time, professional learning communities) that allow for meaningful collaboration among all teachers (ESL/bilingual, general education, and special education) to enhance all educators' abilities to address a range of diverse student needs (Frattura & Capper, 2007; Hamayan et al., 2013).

- ***Services & Resources:*** The human, material, and physical resources provided to ELLs should be comparable with those provided for all students. For example, multi-level reading materials that support all the content areas help ELLs gain access to the curriculum. The quality of the classroom space in which ELLs are taught can also have an impact on their achievement. What is important is that the programming ELLs receive is coordinated and implemented in a cohesive manner in order to maximize meaningfulness and comprehensibility.

- ***Service Delivery Models:*** Research has found that (1) ELLs benefit from receiving services that provide instruction in their home language while they are also taught academic English (Greene, 1998); (2) ELLs benefit when they are in service delivery models that allow for the English portion of their day to be made comprehensible through sheltered instruction (Echevarria et al., 2012); and (3) ELLs benefit the most academically when they are provided high-quality, sustained academic language instruction in English (Collier & Thomas, 2002).

- ***Role of Home Language:*** ELLs' home languages support the acquisition of English, and so it is crucial that schools begin by raising the prestige of students' home languages within the school environment. When educators and school communities value ELLs' home languages, these students are more likely to continue using these languages at home and at school while they are in the process of developing English. Another important strategy is to ask students to preview (think about, discuss, research, etc.) material or concepts in their home languages to the greatest extent possible, and then to bridge to the English component of the lesson (Beeman & Urow, 2012). There are many ways that monolingual educators can support multilingualism on an everyday basis (Schecter & Cummins, 2003).

- ***Role of Home Culture:*** School teams must assess how culturally responsive they are to the diverse students in their schools. What steps have been taken in developing a process of **cultural reciprocity** (Harry, Kalyanpur, & Day, 1999a; Harry, Rueda, & Kalyanpur, 1999b; Warger, 2001) in school policies and by the school personnel at all levels? What is the curriculum and does it reflect the diverse experiences of the students? Are students' cultural and ethnic backgrounds viewed as resources and **funds of knowledge** (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992)?

- ***Role of Instruction and Assessment:*** Students should be able to practice and show what they know in multiple modalities and in all of their languages both orally and in writing. Many ELLs know, understand, and can express different ideas, processes, and concepts in each of their languages depending on the contexts in which they were learned and experienced (Beeman & Urow, 2012; Escamilla, 2000; Pearson, 1998; Pearson, Fernández, & Oller, 1993). When interpreting student performance, it is essential that educators consider the potential limitations of standardized assessment tools that are not normed on diverse populations. A balanced assessment system in a district will support both instructional assessment as well as summative, large-scale assessment. Both should be valued in decision-making (Gottlieb & Nguyen, 2007).

#2: Academic Achievement and Instructional Factors

When developing instructional units of study, teachers and other personnel can collaboratively plan how they will systematically integrate academic language and literacy instruction into each of their content lessons through clearly stated language and content objectives (Commins & Miramontes, 2005). Professional Learning Communities (DuFour, 2004) represent one strategy that can support this process by helping teams examine:

- Where these students seem to flourish and share these "bright spots" with all staff (Heath & Heath, 2010);
- Where and how students are able to show what they know across the curriculum;
- What particular contexts present the most challenges for ELLs;
- Ways that both ELLs' academic language development and their academic achievement are supported.

When ELLs are assessed on their content knowledge (academic achievement), good assessments look primarily at what the students know and can do in the content area without interference from their English language proficiency and literacy levels. Authentic, project-based assessments are best suited to help ELLs show what they have actually learned in the content areas. Before ELLs reach a high level of academic language proficiency (between a composite score of 4.8 to 5.2 and above on the ACCESS for ELLs language proficiency test) traditional English academic achievement tests (e.g., multiple-choice or true/false formats) may not capture students' true content knowledge/academic achievement (Cook, 2009).

#3: Oral Language and Literacy Factors

This factor is one of the most complex for all students, but it plays an especially important role in ELLs' academic performance. **Oral language and literacy development are closely connected,** but for the purposes of more specific discussion, they will be addressed separately in this section.

Oral Language Development

Schools and school systems that already emphasize oral (listening and speaking) academic language development for all their K–12 students have established an excellent foundation for supporting ELLs. Teachers can create opportunities for students to use and practice oral academic language throughout a unit of study (Bailey, 2007) as this will support them when they encounter the same language in print. The following sections summarize the process of acquiring a first language and acquiring an additional language as well as point out some considerations for teachers to keep in mind with ELLs during these developmental processes.

- **First Language Acquisition:** It is helpful to gain information on the experiences that ELLs have had in first language development from birth until they entered school (Kuhl, 2004; Kuhl, 2010; Paradis, Genesee, & Crago, 2011; Pinker, 1994). Gathering this information about whether a student's language

development was progressing typically before they entered the school setting will help educators understand whether any issues are developmental or related to language acquisition. If children were experiencing some delays in their home language (e.g., not understood by parents, not uttering first words until well past what would be considered typical) prior to entering school, this would indicate a developmental delay rather than a language acquisition issue. Having this information would allow school teams to intervene, support, and enrich the instruction these children receive early on in their oral language development in all of their languages, and possibly prevent some of the challenges that might emerge when the children encounter print.

- **Acquisition of a Second or Additional Language:** Students acquiring a new language will go through various stages of language acquisition. The time that students spend in each stage varies greatly. Developing proficiency for social purposes in this new, additional language depends on many factors including: similarity of the language to English, amount of prior exposure to English, and temperament such as shyness or an outgoing personality. As students enter school, the focus shifts from social language proficiency to development of academic language proficiency (Bailey, 2007; Gottlieb, 2006; Krashen, 1982; Schleppegrell, 2001).

The Stages of Acquiring a New or Additional Language

As ELLs begin the process of learning a new language, they often go through a silent phase. They begin to understand some of the new language before they are able to speak it. The next phase is characterized by one or two-word utterances. Students then will be able to understand and use longer phrases in English. Later, students are able to use longer sentences with more advanced grammatical constructions. The final phase is when an ELL reaches almost native-like proficiency in their new language. ELLs who are developing language in a typical manner can be at different levels of proficiency at any given point in time for each language domain (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Some students may have stronger listening and speaking skills in one context, say science, and stronger reading and writing skills in another context, such as language arts. Students' language proficiency can also vary depending on the affective environment in each setting. Students often develop social language skills in the new language before their academic language proficiency, but the process is not uniform for everyone (Gottlieb, 2006). Some take longer at one stage and quickly pass through another stage. ELLs who grow up in the United States are often considered **simultaneous bilingual learners** whose full language skills would be a composite of both the home language and English (Beeman & Urow, 2012; Escamilla, 2000). A bilingual student may demonstrate strengths and challenges in either or both languages depending on instruction and usage of a student's home language and English at home and school.

Literacy Factors

- ***Literacy in English:*** Approximately 80% of research on reading has been done by monolingual English researchers on monolingual English children learning to read in their first language, English (Herrera, Perez, & Escamilla, 2010). The principles from this monolingual research have then been applied to literacy instruction in a second or new language. It is important for school personnel (reading teachers, classroom teachers, ESL/bilingual teachers, etc.) to understand the unique differences students encounter when reading in a new language. When ELLs' literacy instruction focuses primarily on developing bottom-up phonics and phonemic awareness skills in the early grades outside of any meaningful contexts, these students often develop the ability to word-call and decode in English without comprehension of what they are reading. Likewise, the teaching and learning of fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension may look different for ELLs than for monolingual English speaking students in important ways (August & Shanahan, 2006).

  It is essential then that ELLs' literacy instruction in English begin always with a meaningful context connected to the curricular themes and big ideas. Then, teachers can help students connect their experiences to the topic of the reading and build the necessary schema through visuals, experiences, previewing, and discussions (in the home language and English). Next, teachers must work on the oral language students need in order to recognize and comprehend what they are reading. The skill work can be embedded into this meaningful context rather than taught in isolation. The more connected all the elements of literacy are to the main theme, the more cohesive and meaningful literacy instruction will be for ELLs.

- ***Literacy for Academic and Social Purposes:*** ELLs should develop both their social as well as their academic literacy abilities in all of their languages to the greatest extent possible. Helping students develop biliteracy or multiliteracies (Cazden et al., 1996) will better prepare them for success in school, home, and the future. Developing students' literacy in social settings based on their experiences and interests provides an excellent bridge to developing the academic literacy they need in school.

- ***Literacy in the Home Language:*** Literacy in students' home languages supports, and can even accelerate, literacy development in the new language. It does not hinder literacy development in the new language, as many of the components of literacy, once learned in one language, have the potential to transfer across the student's other languages (August & Shanahan, 2006).

- ***Reinforcing Literacy at Home:*** Supporting literacy in ELLs' home languages is crucial in helping them develop their identities as readers and writers in all languages.

Professional Development Opportunity

All staff who work with ELLs can benefit from ongoing/sustained professional development on principles of acquisition of a new language. Knowing what stage of the acquisition process a student is in allows team members to more accurately interpret assessment information. In addition, helping ELLs and their families learn about the stages of acquisition of a new language allows them to better understand the developmental nature of this process and be more engaged in its advancement.

Strategies to Reinforce Literacy in the Home Language

- Working with local public libraries as well as the school library to increase the number of volumes and titles in the languages of the school community.
- Working collaboratively with public libraries to make certain that ELLs and their families have library cards.
- Working with older students to read and record books on CDs and podcasts, and then having these students present the materials to the students in the elementary grades. This can also give younger students access to biliteracy sooner.
- Having ELLs create culturally relevant dual language texts and stories (Cummins et. al., 2005) with the help of their families and community members.
- Using technology, have students develop dual language digital memoirs, with audio and visual components.
- Encouraging students and parents to discuss what students are studying in school.
- Connecting units of study to family's and community's funds of knowledge.

#4: Personal and Family Factors

Getting to know more about students' families, communities, and home life can help schools build instruction on ELLs' funds of knowledge, experiences, and skills (Moll et al., 1992) into instruction, intervention, and assessment.

- ***Socioeconomic Status:*** Knowing this information about a student or group of students can help inform instruction and intervention. ELLs' economic conditions are not uniform. Some students may come from middle-class or upper-socioeconomic situations prior to coming to the U.S. Others are faced with complex issues related to poverty.

- ***Family Dynamics:*** Gathering information about how students' families are organized and function can give insight into school behavior and achievement. Some students, for example, may have a great deal of responsibility at home or have to work outside of the home, and this can impact how much time they have to complete homework assignments. As with all factors, it is essential for schools to engage professionals who know how to conduct culturally and linguistically responsive and confidential interviews (Thorp, 1997).

- ***Expectations & Aspirations:*** Finding out what is expected of ELLs by their families and their communities, and knowing what they expect from themselves, can be very helpful in finding ways to support the students. Having this information can help teams avoid making generalizations or assumptions about individual students or their families. It's better to hear directly from families and students what their aspirations are. Schools, school teams, teachers, and mentors can also help support students' and families' future goals.

- ***Parental Engagement:*** Schools can begin to use nontraditional means to engage the families and communities of the ELLs. When schools value ELLs' home languages and cultures and respect and promote diversity and multicultural principles, families will be more likely to engage with that school. When schools support students' bicultural and multicultural identity development, families

will be more likely to feel that they are educational partners with their children's school.

- ***Student Interests:*** Matching instruction, assessment, intervention, etc. to students' interests can be a bridge to academic achievement and connect student motivation to learning. Exposing and introducing ELLs to new hobbies in the arts, technology, and sports can become motivating and expand their interests. It is also beneficial to ask students to introduce and share their interests, customs, and other activities with the school community.

- ***Experiential Background:*** At times, there may be a difference between diverse students' experiences and what is embedded in the texts and curricula used in U.S. schools. Incorporating ELLs' backgrounds can often add richness to the curriculum. A lesson on the U.S. Bill of Rights, for example, that includes a comparison among the different Bill of Rights from other countries' constitutions, would engage not only the ELLs, but would also broaden the perspective of all students.

#5: Physical and Psychological Factors

Students' physical and psychological well-being is foundational and inextricably connected to their learning and how they feel at school. Due to this reality, schools may develop a protocol for addressing issues within this factor in a systematic way with all students, including ELLs. Challenges within this factor may be present and undetected. School personnel should persist in their concern for addressing this area systemically with all students, especially those who are experiencing significant difficulties. School personnel might easily overlook many of these areas if there is no formal protocol put in place (at all grade levels) to check for these concerns in a proactive manner.

Physical and Psychological Factors

- Disease or medical conditions
- Health (including dental, vision, and hearing)
- Nutrition and access to food
- Ability to access treatment for health conditions
- Mental health (including anxiety, depression, etc.)
- Social and emotional development
- Feelings of belonging to school and the wider community

Both the physical and psychological well-being of ELLs play a significant role in their academic achievement and overall school success. For example, a safe, welcoming school environment with minimal anxiety about performing in a second or additional language is essential for ELLs to learn (Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008). Anxiety can interfere with learning by distracting ELLs from the linguistic input that they encounter and can lead them to withdraw from social interaction, which is critical to helping these students learn English and access academic content. ELLs may feel anxious in school for a variety of reasons, such as peer harassment, unfamiliarity with the people in the school, and with the institution of schooling in the U.S. (Pappamihiel, 2002). ELLs may also experience a significant amount of stress associated with negotiating differences between their home and school culture. This acculturative stress can result in the form of feelings of isolation, anxiety, and/or depression (Berry, 2003). For this reason, teams must also consider students' stage of **acculturation** when assessing ELLs for learning, social-emotional well-being, or behavior.

Given that learning is enhanced in safe environments, it is especially important that school personnel help make students from diverse backgrounds feel welcomed, that they belong, and are valued and included in every aspect of school life. Educators should become aware of cultural differences that may explain students' forms of communication and behavior and be vigilant about creating anxiety-free educational environments (Lucas et al., 2008). ELLs' identities as bicultural or multicultural individuals should be affirmed and supported in the social and academic aspects of their school experience (Cummins et al., 2005; Osterman, 2000). In this way, schools can foster learning environments that are supportive of ELLs' academic achievement and social-emotional competence.

Professional Development Opportunity

It is beneficial when all school personnel (e.g., general education teachers, special education teachers, interventionists, school psychologists, counselors, social-workers, speech-language clinicians) build expertise related to the education of ELLs. Whenever possible, schools should increase the number of staff who are proficient in the languages of the ELLs as well as have an understanding of the cultural backgrounds and contexts of the families and communities represented in the school population. When the school staff possess these skills and knowledge, this helps provide access for the students and their families early on so that they do not have to wait too long to address any physical or psychological concerns they may have. When concerns arise, the linguistic and cultural expertise of the staff will allow ELLs to receive the culturally and linguistically responsive support they need and deserve in a timely manner.

#6: Previous Schooling Factors

Many of the challenges that ELLs experience in school can be explained by looking back to previous schooling experiences that have been less than optimal, interrupted, or conflicting in terms of philosophy, implementation, amount of support, etc. Inconsistent support or support that is not coordinated, cohesive, and integrated can also help explain why some ELLs are not performing at expected levels. For this reason, it is helpful to gather information that is as accurate as possible about students' previous schooling at the time of intake procedures and after. Gathering information about this factor is as important when a student is moving from one school to another within the same district as it is when he or she is coming from another country.

The lack of a cohesive instructional program can result in a form of "interrupted schooling" even when students' entire experience has been within one school system. It is important to look deeper into students' previous schooling experiences, well beyond what is documented on official school records and transcripts. Often what is captured in documents does not necessarily represent the kind of support the student actually received. This reflection about the student's prior formal and informal schooling experiences will help enormously in explaining an ELL's present performance, and will aid the team in deciding how to support that student. The following are two examples of these unique experiences that are not always captured in official documents. If ELLs begin their school experience in English-only settings, instruction is often incomprehensible to them. Students may be present in the classroom, but if they do not understand most of what is said in English, they miss out on learning important concepts, ideas, and skills. Another example of a type of "interrupted schooling" is when schools emphasize reading and mathematics instruction in the early grades to the exclusion of other content areas. ELLs may not be getting exposure to science and social studies curricula until the intermediate grades. This may cause

students to fall very behind in these areas by the time they reach the middle grades.

#7: Cross-Cultural Factors

ELLs are going through a process of acculturation as they move daily between their home culture and school culture. Creating a supportive learning environment in which ELLs can successfully develop their multicultural identities must be a priority in any RtI^2 system. School teams that learn about and meaningfully incorporate students' cultural and linguistic funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) into every aspect of teaching and learning for these students make it more likely that ELLs (and indeed all learners) will be successful in school (Howard, 2010). They must also be in classrooms where the adults value these diverse students and use every cultural and linguistic resource as a bridge toward high academic achievement and academic language development.

Professional Development Opportunity

Schools can develop a process for educators and students to look at the curriculum across grade levels to evaluate the images, resources, strategies, activities, and other materials used in instruction to see if they reflect the experiences and backgrounds of the diverse student body. District and school administrators can support teachers by providing materials and time in which to produce units of study that incorporate diverse perspectives. School teams can also periodically survey school personnel, students, and families to get a sense of the school climate with regard to multicultural principles (Harry et al., 1999a; Harry et al., 1999b; Warger, 2001).

Schools and districts must work diligently to reduce and eliminate cultural and linguistic biases, prejudices, stereotypes, and any other discriminatory elements in the school environment. Free of these barriers, ELLs (and all learners) will be able to work toward reaching their potential. It is critical that diverse learners see themselves, their historical and cultural perspectives and their languages reflected in the school curriculum from PreK through Grade 12.

Asking team members, teachers, administrators, and all school personnel who work with ELLs to examine their own cultural identities along a variety of cultural variables can be an excellent way of beginning the conversation on how to develop cultural reciprocity (Harry et al., 1999a; Harry et al., 1999b; Warger, 2001) as practitioners and, consequently, how to deliver culturally responsive instruction, intervention, and assessment. This will help schools become safe places where all students will be able to freely pursue their academic, personal, intellectual, and creative goals, and will not be burdened by the weight of inequitable and prejudicial treatment, attitudes, and language.

Part 3: Using WIDA Resources to Screen, Assess, and Monitor the Progress of ELLs' Academic Language Development (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing)

As a school or district endeavors to develop an RtI^2 system that is more culturally and linguistically responsive, issues of equitable, effective, and relevant assessment practices become a great concern. If our systems promote and support innovative instructional and intervention strategies and approaches, it is vital that the methods used to assess the effectiveness of these strategies are equally innovative and progressive.

Screening

Schools and school districts may find it useful to examine the appropriateness of existing screening tools with regard to ELLs as well as the disaggregate data on ELLs' performance at all the levels of English language proficiency. Each state education agency (SEA) may develop guidance for administering and interpreting screening and other assessment data within RtI^2. As mentioned earlier in this document (See Part 1), it is essential to consider each student's language proficiency level when interpreting results of any assessment administered in English.

Home Language Survey

There are some assessments that can be appropriately administered to ELLs as they were designed exclusively with these students in mind. When students enter the U.S. school system, federal law requires that states and school systems first administer a Home Language Survey. Most surveys have three broad questions: What language did your child first learn to speak? What language(s) does your child use at home? Has your child had extended exposure to a language other than English? When parents/guardians answer "yes" to any of these questions, a language screener is administered.

WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT™)

The W-APT is an individually-administered adaptive language screener that assesses the four domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It was designed to be used as:

- An indicator of a student's English language proficiency (ELP) level
- One of several criteria to determine eligibility for language support services as determined by the state's entrance criteria

Unlike other universal screeners, the W-APT should be a one-time only event in the educational life of a student and should not be administered multiple times throughout the year. The W-APT yields proficiency levels and not scale scores. Therefore, its purpose is limited to the points above. When used in conjunction with the Can Do Descriptors (www.wida.us/candos) and the WIDA English Language Development Standards (www.wida.us/eld), the W-APT results can be a good starting point for differentiating and scaffolding language instruction for ELLs.

WIDA Measure of Developing English Language (MODEL™)

Like the W-APT, MODEL can be used as an individually-administered and adaptive assessment designed as a preliminary language screener for the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. As such,

MODEL may also be used as:

- An indicator of a student's ELP level
- One of several criteria to determine eligibility for language support services as determined by the state's entrance criteria

As a flexible, on-demand language proficiency assessment, MODEL can be administered at any time during the school year, depending on the needs of the district, school, teacher, or student. As such, it serves an additional purpose as an interim assessment during the school year, providing information that informs instructional planning and other decisions related to students' education. MODEL yields proficiency levels as well as scale scores that are aligned to the ACCESS for ELLs scale scores.

Monitoring Progress for Language Development

Second language acquisition is a complex, developmental process. Because of this, it can be challenging to determine pathways for monitoring the language development of a student as students may progress through domains at different rates. A deep understanding of the language continuum that exists is necessary before making any inferences regarding students' linguistic progress. WIDA offers several assessments that, combined with English language development standards, offer one reference point to monitor language progress.

Interim and Benchmark Assessment

Interim assessments are standardized assessments that may be used to measure outcomes in a longer instructional sequence. Typically, they are designed to evaluate students' knowledge and skills relative to a specific set of goals to inform decisions for the classroom as well as programs. They may predict a student's ability to perform on a large-scale summative assessment, evaluate a particular educational program, or determine opportunities for student learning. Some interim assessments may include benchmarks. That is, they may include pre-determined goals that students are expected to reach during set assessment periods throughout the school year (e.g., reading benchmarks for text reading level). As stated above, MODEL may be used as an interim assessment throughout the school year, but it does not provide benchmarks.

Language Assessment for Formative Purposes

The primary purpose of formative language assessment is to inform instruction. Generally, it is used to measure whether students have learned, but perhaps not mastered, what was just taught before moving to new instructional goals. Dynamic **formative assessment** involves both teachers and students.

Margaret Heritage (2007) states that formative assessment:

- Establishes clear learning goal(s) and criteria for success
- Elicits evidence about student learning
- Provides feedback to teachers and students about learning
- Uses feedback to adjust instruction and learning tactics in real time
- Involves students actively in their learning

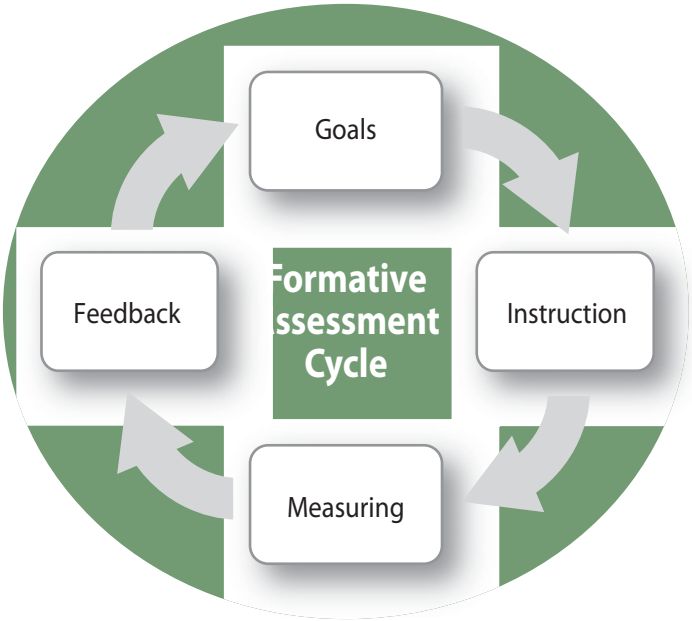

Figure 3. *(Heritage, 2007)*

When thinking of formative language assessment as a process embedded in instruction, WIDA resources can be used in each of the phases. Model performance indicators (MPIs) within the WIDA standards matrix are an excellent starting place for setting standards-based goals for a unit of study or objectives for a lesson. The MPIs are samples of what students can understand or produce at each language proficiency level.

The Performance Definitions (Appendix B) and Can Do Descriptors (www.wida.us/candos) can guide the differentiation of instructional tasks at students' linguistic levels. The *WIDA ELP Standards and Resource Guide, 2007 Edition* contains many useful definitions and examples of language supports (sensory, graphic, or interactive), which can be very valuable for instructing and assessing ELLs' knowledge and skills.

To measure each instructional task, the WIDA Writing and Speaking Rubrics (Appendices C & D) can be used to create student-centered rubrics, checklists, or rating scales to measure developing language. A comprehensive assessment system places a strong emphasis on collecting multiple (authentic) student work samples (including those scored with the rubrics) throughout the school year. These artifacts are gathered into a portfolio for each student. Time is set aside periodically throughout the school year for students, teachers and parents to review the portfolio, discuss the work, reflect on the learning that occurred, and develop instructional goals. Growth in academic language is a developmental process that takes time. Work samples taken over a period of time demonstrate growth tangibly for students, parents, and teachers.

The feedback phase of the formative assessment cycle has the greatest impact on improving student's awareness of and ability to advance their own language development. Students who can articulate what they are learning significantly outperform students who cannot (Marzano & Pickering, 2005). Observational notes, conferences comparing student rubrics or checklists with teacher observation, and exit slips are examples of feedback that will guide educators in setting new language goals.

Language Assessments for Summative Purposes

For members of the WIDA Consortium, the ACCESS for ELLs test is the large-scale summative language assessment utilized to measure the language proficiency of students identified as ELLs each year. ACCESS for ELLs is a comprehensive exam, which assesses the four domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Testing windows, set by each consortium state, occur at the same time each year to ensure validity and reliability. The ACCESS for ELLs also undergoes rigorous bias and content reviews before items are released for student use.

The ACCESS for ELLs test generates various score reports that schools and school districts can use to inform their decision-making and to improve the quality of the programming developed for ELLs. District and school administrators can use the school frequency and district frequency reports to plan their Tier 1 core instructional programs in the elementary and middle grades, and to decide what course offerings will be available at the secondary level. The student roster reports are useful to classroom teachers, bilingual/ESL teachers and building principals as they develop their services for ELLs, create their class lists and develop collaborative partnerships. These reports help educators look for patterns in ELLs' performance and development across classrooms and grade levels.

WIDA Percentile Growth Charts are developed each year for each grade level cluster after data from ACCESS for ELLs has been gathered and interpreted. The scale scores from each assessment may be plotted on the charts to determine whether average growth has occurred for an individual student. **Please note: if average growth has not been met in one or more domains, this does not indicate a language disability.** Rather, this can be used to determine where instruction and intervention must be modified in order to meet the student's language needs. For more information on Percentile Growth Charts, please refer to *WIDA Focus on Language Growth.*

Percentile Growth Charts indicate whether a student has made average growth (percentile 60 or above) from year to year. By plotting several years' growth of student cohorts, data-savvy districts could set benchmarks for language growth. While an individual student's chart may garner information, it would be important to chart cohorts to make programmatic decisions. WIDA offers various professional development opportunities to support schools and school systems with this type of data analysis.

WIDA offers a variety of workshops to explore ELL data that can be tailored for different audiences. LADDER is the most comprehensive data offering. The principal mission of the LADDER program is to develop and build the capacity of ELL leadership teams to systematically use data for improving programming and instruction for English Language Learners. This 12-18 month-long professional development offering is supported by the WIDA professional development staff (www.wida.us/ladder).

Spanish Language Development Standards and Assessment

Currently, WIDA is working on Spanish Language Development standards and an aligned assessment. Through use of these standards and assessments, educators will gain knowledge about academic Spanish language development and their students' progress, and will be able to shape instruction and develop curriculum to enable students to achieve high academic standards in Spanish. The standards and assessment will be applicable to any student receiving content area instruction in Spanish (www.wida.us/salsa).

Part 4: Culturally and Linguistically Responsive RtI^2 - Considerations for ELLs

Part 4 of this document introduces a framework for proactively supporting instruction, intervention, and assessment for ELLs within an RtI^2 process. The framework described in this section can be an overlay onto an existing solution-seeking process with the goal of helping to make the existing process more culturally and linguistically responsive to the needs of ELLs. In Figure 4, teams can observe that the steps in this process are complementary to those they may already have in place in their school districts for all students. This process begins by convening collaborative, multi-perspective teams. Next, teams develop an understanding of the seven integral factors that may impact achievement for ELLs and begin gathering information along those seven factors. Teams will identify ELLs' strengths as well as their cultural, linguistic, and community funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992). Then, they will design and implement systemic (e.g., district, school, grade level) and specific (e.g., classroom, small group, individual) interventions based on the information gathered about the seven integral factors for these students. The team monitors progress of the students' responses to these interventions, and the process begins again in an effort to support students in an authentic, contextualized, and responsive way.

Collaborative solution-seeking process used in all three tiers of RtI^2 for ELLs

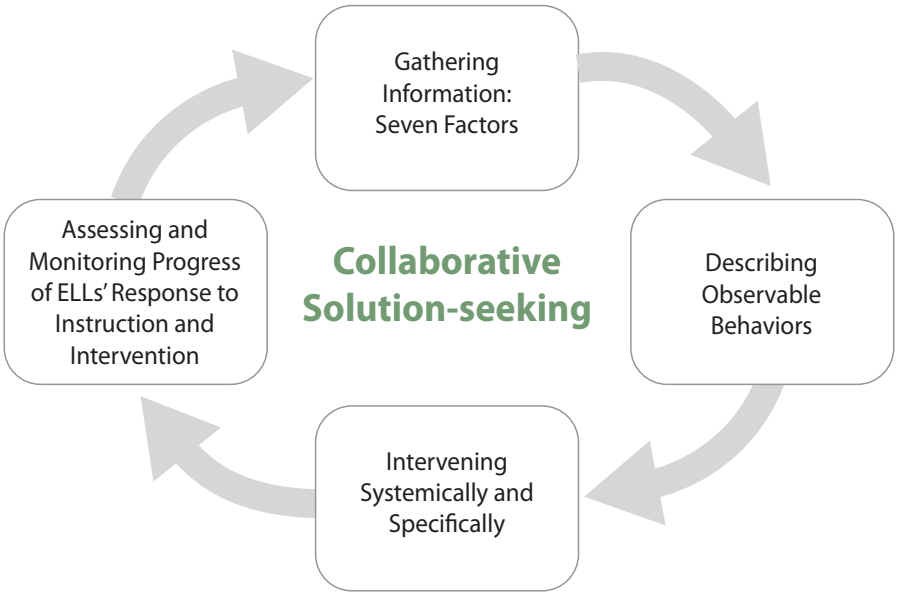

Figure 4. *Adapted from: Hamayan et al. (2013)*

Collaborative Solution-Seeking Teams

Central to any effective solution-seeking process is a collaborative, **multi-perspective team.** Teams should include classroom teachers and professionals from the fields of ESL/bilingual as well as from special education and related services (e.g., speech-language clinicians, school psychologists, social workers) reading specialists, administrators, cultural liaisons, and parents, among others. These teams work more effectively and productively when they share certain pedagogical and interpersonal principles.

Tips for Collaboration

***Value students' home languages and cultures*:** When team members view what students bring with them (their experiences, languages, and cultural backgrounds) as assets and strengths to build upon, the process of gathering information and crafting interventions becomes more productive.

Remain open to other perspectives: Team members who are learners, reflective practitioners (Schön, 1987), and who *listen to other perspectives,* will work productively with one another to create solutions to even the most difficult situations. These teams use their time together effectively.

Foster mutual respect among colleagues: If the leader creates an environment in which members respect one another, team members will be more likely to speak up and share their perspectives.

Depersonalize difficult exchanges: When team members respect one another, then the focus of the solution-seeking teams remains on the students and their needs. Members of this sort of team can more easily put aside their professional egos and get down to the difficult work of asking questions, gathering information, and developing cohesive and comprehensive services to support students.

***Seek to develop common language*:** When bringing together professionals from different fields and backgrounds, it is essential that team members recognize that miscommunication can arise. One of the main causes of miscommunications might be that professionals from different disciplines use similar language when referring to different phenomena. Unless team members take the time to discuss these terms from their different professional perspectives, confusion and frustration may arise on the part of the team members, and in the end, the students' needs may not be fully addressed.

***Ask for clarification or examples*:** Even when team members make an effort to develop understanding of common terms and acronyms, everyone should feel comfortable asking for clarification at any point during the conversation. Taking the time to ask, "Can you give me an example of what you mean?" or "What does it look like when the student does such and such?" can help redirect the conversation during the solution-seeking process.

Triangulate data from multiple sources: Teams can develop a more accurate profile of students' performance when they consider qualitative as well as quantitative information from multiple sources. Collecting examples of students' work throughout an RtI[2] process helps the team validate strengths and areas that need improvement in order to intervene appropriately. WIDA's standardized language proficiency assessments (ACCESS for ELLs, MODEL, W-APT), like all standardized assessments, do not provide the complete picture of students' progress. It is recommended that school systems monitor students' language progress through the use of formative instructional language assessments (Gottlieb, 2012; Gottlieb & Nguyen, 2007).

***Use ethnographic approaches*:** Focusing on asking open-ended questions (Westby, 1990; Westby, Burda, & Mehta, 2003) allows teams to gather descriptive information about a student's performance and background. Shifting away from questions that lead to Yes/No responses makes the information gathering process more productive. For example, asking a teacher on the solution-seeking team, "Do you use graphic organizers when you teach ELLs?" will elicit a very narrow (and perhaps defensive) answer of "yes!" or "no!" The answer might be quite different if someone asks the question in a more open-ended manner such as, "Can you describe how the student responds when you use graphic organizers during content area instruction?" In this approach to solution-seeking, team members take the context for the students' performance into account when discussing how to best support them.

Reflect on the process: When teams take the time to reflect after a solution-seeking session, they are better able to adjust their practice and remain innovative and effective. Just taking the time to ask, "What worked?," "What didn't work?," and "What are we going to do differently in our next meeting?" can allow a team to remain progressive and relevant (Schön, 1987).

Adapted from: Hamayan et al. (2013); Sanchez-Lopez & Young (2003)

Professional Development Opportunity

Using the above Tips for Collaboration, teams can evaluate which of these characteristics are strengths for their teams and target characteristics to focus on throughout the school year.

Gathering Information on Seven Integral Factors

Part 2 of this document addressed in-depth the seven factors that can be considered when looking at ELLs within any culturally and linguistically responsive RtI^2 system. Gathering information about these seven factors related to the ELLs in one's state, district, school, and classroom contributes to a better sense of who the ELLs are. This information also helps educators to better anticipate the needs of their students, enrich the learning environment, intervene in a timely and appropriate manner, and assess students' responses to instruction and interventions in a more holistic manner. Teams can develop protocols (see example in Table 2 on the next page), checklists, charts and other tools that incorporate these seven factors so that they can be certain to look through these lenses when serving ELLs within an RtI^2 model of support.

It is useful if schools develop a protocol that includes the integral factors that influence all students', including ELLs', success in school. The sample protocol in Table 2 on the following page is a short list of possible information that can be collected. It is not an exhaustive list of data. The information gathered from such a protocol can be used at both the **systemic level:** looking across an entire school/school district, or at a particular grade level; as well as the **specific level:** for a small group of students or an individual student. Developing and using such a protocol in a proactive manner will allow school teams to begin answering the question, "What do we already know about the students in our schools?" The information gathered would also highlight areas of need for professional development within a school or district as well as provide information as to where potential challenges may arise that will need intervention. Information from this process will also assist solution-seeking teams to contextualize individual student performance within their schools.

SAMPLE PROTOCOL Gathering Data Along Seven Integral Factors: Examining the Sociocultural Context for ELLs' Performance in School	
Integral Factors	**Examples of Data**
Learning Environment Factors	• Collect information on the number of teachers who provide services to ELLs as well as information on their degrees, certification (e.g., ESL), endorsements, and/or experience • Gather information about the kinds of program models and program designs offered for ELLs in the school or school district • Collect information on professional learning opportunities offered to all educators of ELLs (e.g., topics, frequency, types, and modalities) • Reflect on teacher self-assessment checklists (with elements of culturally and linguistically responsive instruction) • Conduct observations to gather evidence of culturally and linguistically responsive instructional practices and materials
Academic Achievement & Instructional Factors	• Gather longitudinal information on students' academic performance based on classroom observations, grades, notes from teacher/student conferences, credits earned, standardized test scores, etc. • Gather information on high school completion rates of former elementary and middle school students • Collect information on students' attendance patterns • Collect and examine performance-based tasks with rubrics across the content areas (common assessments) • Have students complete performance-based tasks (with low linguistic demands and accompanying visual supports) and examine outcomes over time (complement to standardized test scores)
Oral Language & Literacy Factors	• Record oral language samples over time across content areas (e.g., retellings of narratives or explanations of events, digital story telling, interviews, video film making, oral presentations, impromptu classroom conversations) • Analyze recordings or transcriptions of students' oral language over time using the WIDA Speaking Rubric • Ask students to periodically read back the texts from their orally dictated stories and other narratives (note the nature of miscues, fluency, and comprehension of these re-readings) • Complete running records and miscue analysis for each student on the reading of their own transcribed retellings or based on a text that is at students' language proficiency level • Examine writing samples over time using the WIDA Writing Rubrics • Examine W-APT scores to identify students' initial English language proficiency levels upon entering the district • Examine MODEL scores for students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing periodically throughout the year • Conduct study groups with team members to gather information about the students' home languages including grammatical structures and potential areas of transfer to English

SAMPLE PROTOCOL Gathering Data Along Seven Integral Factors: Examining the Sociocultural Context for ELLs' Performance in School	
Integral Factors	**Examples of Data**
Personal & Family Factors	• Gather general demographic information about the families in a school's community • Complete a linguistic inventory of all the languages represented in a school • Interview families and students in culturally and linguistically responsive ways to gather information about their interests, goals, funds of knowledge, expertise, and strengths that can be incorporated into curricular units of study, enriching multicultural learning environments, and school improvement plans • Inquire about how much time students have to work on homework assignments and whether they have space to complete their work at home
Physical & Psychological Factors	• Conduct well-being surveys (e.g., depression, anxiety, trauma) school-wide to all students • Conduct school climate surveys to students and their families to identify what aspects of the school climate support a positive learning and working environment and what aspects are in need of improvement • Conduct school climate surveys to all school staff to assess staff perceptions about learning and teaching conditions • Conduct dental, vision, hearing, and other general health screenings periodically throughout the school year • Administer acculturation self-assessments to students
Previous Schooling Factors	• Gather records from the schools that students have previously attended in another country and within the U.S. • Conduct interviews with students and families about previous schooling, apprenticeships, and life experiences • Research the school systems of students' countries of origin and previous school districts attended in the U.S.
Cross-Cultural Factors *(Note: cross-cultural considerations must be taken into account within all of the above integral factors)*	• Interview students and families with regard to their expectations, values, and beliefs towards the educational experience as well as any strengths, knowledge, and expertise they possess • Consider student, parent/family, and staff expectations in decision-making processes • Survey staff about their knowledge of students' home languages, English proficiency levels, and countries of origin • Ensure appropriate use of interpreters, translators, and cultural brokers as a vehicle for communication and collaboration with students and their parents/families • Survey students and parents/families to gather information on their interests for topics as well as their preferred times and places for school-related meetings • Coordinate transportation for students and parents/families for school-based activities and meetings

Note: This data should be collected in students' home languages and English, to the greatest extent possible

Table 2.

Describing Observable Behaviors

When ELLs' academic progress is not what would be expected, it is important that team members and others first focus on describing what they see a student doing and the context for learning (i.e., considering information from all seven factors) rather than jumping too quickly to explaining the source of a student's challenges as intrinsic to the student. For example, a teacher might come to the team expressing concern that a group of ELLs in her classroom "have poor or no comprehension." This statement is very broad and places the challenges within the students themselves (intrinsic explanation). Before proceeding, team members should pause and ask the teacher to describe under what circumstances the students show that they are having difficulty "comprehending" and to give some examples. The teacher may respond to this request by noting that whenever she reads a story aloud to the ELLs in English, they are not able to retell the events back to her in English. This is quite a different scenario from one in which the students "can't comprehend" or have "poor comprehension." Describing rather than trying to identify a special education need early in the solution-seeking process allows teams to work more effectively in developing appropriate interventions in the general education setting.

Intervening Systemically and Specifically

Teams should address the areas where ELLs experience both strengths and challenges in a systemic and specific manner. Solution-seeking teams can look to certain principles and guidelines such as the ones listed on the right side of the page when designing appropriate instruction and intervention for ELLs.

Additionally, teams should select and craft interventions based on best practices and research specific to ELLs. These interventions should not be restricted to a particular "program" or "strategy." Rather, they should be implemented across various contexts, and linked strongly to core instruction so as to create a cohesive instructional day for students. Finally, they should be delivered by staff who are knowledgeable about the process students go through in acquiring a new language.

Instruction and Intervention Should:

- Be comprehensible in all of the students' languages and be culturally responsive (Banks, 2005; Bialystock, 2001).
- Actively engage students in contextualized and authentic language use (Bialystock, 2001; Lightbown & Spada, 2003).
- Facilitate transfer of concepts, language, and skills across contexts and languages (Cummins, 2000; Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2006).
- Promote **additive bilingualism** (Genesee et al., 2006).
- Be provided at the students' language proficiency levels in home language(s) and English, to the greatest extent possible (Bialystock, 2001; Genesee et al., 2006; Paradis et al., 2011).
- Employ the students' conversational and academic proficiency in home language(s) and English (Cummins, 2000; Genesee et al., 2006).
- Take place throughout the time period necessary for ELLs to develop academic language proficiency, which may be more than five years (Cummins, 2000; Lightbown & Spada, 2003).

Adapted from: Hamayan et al. (2013)

Once teams have chosen instructional supports and interventions that are responsive and correspond to the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students, it is time to look for assessments to measure students' responses.

Monitoring Progress

By selecting and designing assessments (rubrics, rating scales, observation checklists, **norm-referenced assessments,** etc.), that can authentically monitor the progress of ELLs and their response to instruction and interventions, school teams can continuously inform and support instruction and intervention. Monitoring students' progress can help make teaching more responsive by providing feedback to students, parents, teachers, and administrators in a timely manner and help team members determine if the interventions sufficiently improved student performance or if different interventions and supports may be needed. Figure 5 outlines various components of a culturally and linguistically responsive progress monitoring system.

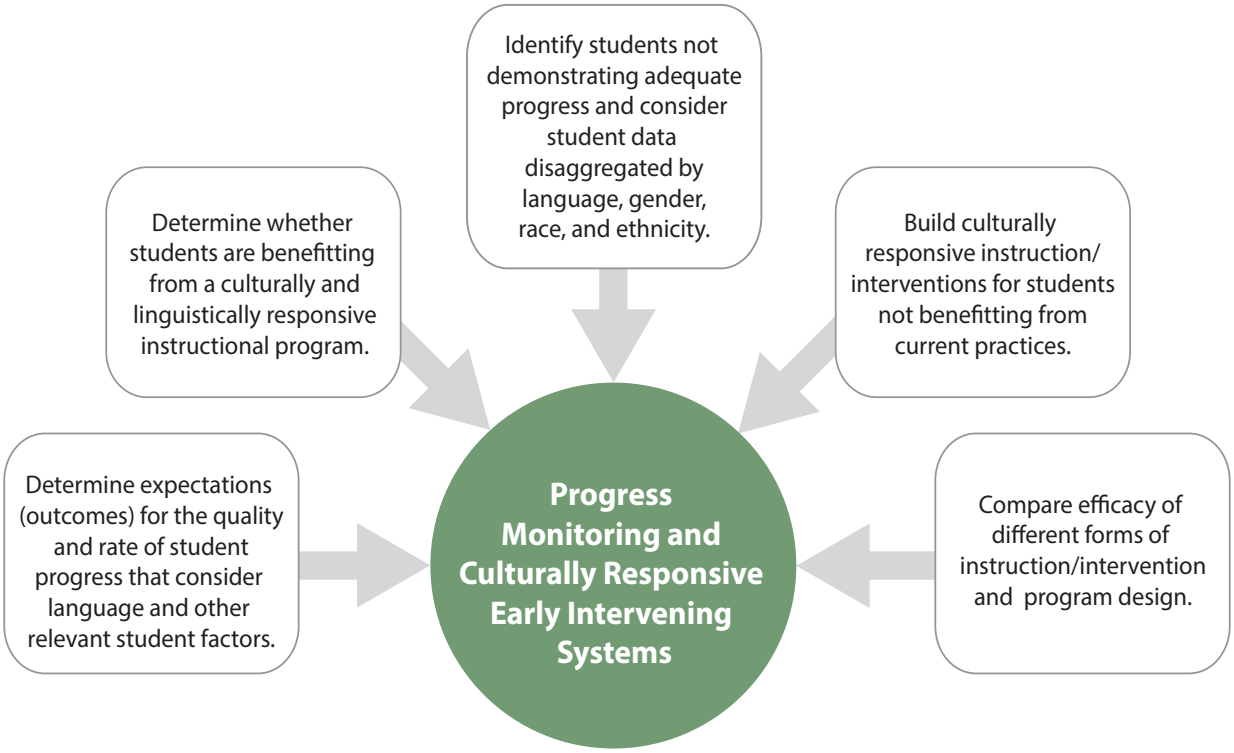

Figure 5. *Adapted from: Kozelski, Sullivan, & King (2009)*

Part 5: English Language Learners with Special Education Needs

State education agencies, districts, and schools can develop culturally and linguistically responsive educational systems that will make progress in closing the achievement gap between students from diverse backgrounds and their peers, and in reducing disproportionate representation in special education (National Center for Culturally Responsive Education Systems, 2005). This WIDA resource document may provide a context within which to examine ELLs' performance in school. The enriched and cohesive support that can be provided for these students through a culturally and linguistically responsive multi-tiered RtI^2 system can form the basis for more valid evaluation and effective programming for ELLs.

> "A culturally responsive RtI model has tremendous potential to … more appropriately differentiate between culturally and linguistically diverse learners who do and do not have true disabilities. Only by doing so can all children achieve their full potential."
>
> —Klingner, Sorrels, & Barrera (2007)

When school teams work within a culturally and linguistically responsive RtI^2 system to support ELLs, they may find that certain challenges that particular students experience can be observed across many contexts, in both social and academic settings, and across their different languages. It is possible in some of these cases that ELLs may also have special education needs. In these cases, students would need to receive *both* English language support and special education support in a cohesive and integrated manner. However, if the team finds that particular ELLs only experience challenges when learning in English academic settings, then it would be improbable that the difficulties are due to a disability. For example, if an ELL appears to have difficulty remembering oral or written directions given during an English academic class, but the student is able to follow oral or written directions in her/his home language and/or in social English settings, then the difficulty is not likely an underlying disability. **A student cannot have a disability in one language or a particular context and not another. These special education needs would manifest themselves across languages and contexts.**

Learners with Exceptionalities

In many ways, children with disabilities are not different from their typically developing peers. For example, students with disabilities require instruction and support that is embedded in meaningful contexts, engages them cognitively in an active manner, is interesting and authentic, gives them opportunities to compare and contrast, and is recurrent in that it provides exposure to concepts and skills in multiple contexts and settings (Bruner, 1990; Cambourne, 1988; Damico & Nelson, 2005; Perkins, 2005; Smith, 2004; Vygotsky, 1978; Wells, 1986; Wells, 2003).

Instruction for children with disabilities does differ from that given to their typically developing peers in some respects. A central difference seems to lie in the amount and duration of the scaffolding that is provided to these students. Another important difference is that students with disabilities may not acquire skills or knowledge as efficiently, easily, or quickly as their typically developing peers. They may need more focused support and mediation within their zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). Students with

disabilities may need additional support in generating efficient learning strategies. Teachers may provide these strategies and be prepared to model their use in various contexts with multiple examples. Another characteristic that is often associated with students with disabilities is that they may experience difficulty extending their learning across contexts or applying their newly learned skills in novel situations. Teachers need to give these students many opportunities to practice using effective meaning-making strategies within authentic contexts (Cloud, 1994; Damico & Hamayan, 1992; Dundaway, 2004; Paradis et al., 2011; Westby & Vining, 2002).

Conclusion

This guide presents a framework that can support schools and districts in implementing culturally and linguistically responsive RtI^2 systems. It highlights the importance of considering the sociocultural contexts (home, community, and school) in which students learn and how these contexts impact students' language development and academic achievement. The framework can provide each school district and school RtI^2 team with a way to look systematically at issues of equity and diversity, and thus help in implementing culturally-appropriate instruction and assessment practices for all students. As part of WIDA's mission to advance the academic language development and academic achievement of ELLs, this guide provides tools and resources for educators as they serve culturally and linguistically diverse students within their school systems and to help them reach for success.

APPENDIX A: Protocol Template for Gathering Data Along the Seven Integral Factors

Protocol for Gathering Data Along Seven Integral Factors	
Integral Factors	**Examples of Data**
Learning Environment Factors	
Academic Achievement & Instructional Factors	
Oral Language & Literacy Factors	
Personal & Family Factors	
Physical & Psychological Factors	
Previous Schooling Factors	
Cross-Cultural Factors *(*Note: cross-cultural considerations must be taken into account within all of the above integral factors)*	

Note: This data should be collected in students' home languages and English, to the greatest extent possible.

WIDA Performance Definitions - Speaking and Writing Grades K-12

At each grade, toward the end of a given level of English language proficiency, and with instructional support, English language learners will produce…

	Discourse Level	Sentence Level	Word/Phrase Level
	Linguistic Complexity	**Language Forms and Conventions**	**Vocabulary Usage**
Level 6 - Reaching Language that meets all criteria through Level 5, Bridging			
Level 5 Bridging	• Multiple, complex sentences • Organized, cohesive, and coherent expression of ideas	• A variety of grammatical structures matched to purpose • A broad range of sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas	• Technical and abstract content-area language, including content-specific collocations • Words and expressions with shades of meaning across content areas
Level 4 Expanding	• Short, expanded, and some complex sentences • Organized expression of ideas with emerging cohesion	• A variety of grammatical structures • Sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas	• Specific and some technical content-area language • Words and expressions with expressive meaning through use of collocations and idioms across content areas
Level 3 Developing	• Short and some expanded sentences with emerging complexity • Expanded expression of one idea or emerging expression of multiple related ideas	• Repetitive grammatical structures with occasional variation • Sentence patterns across content areas	• Specific content language, including cognates and expressions • Words or expressions with multiple meanings used across content areas
Level 2 Emerging	• Phrases or short sentences • Emerging expression of ideas	• Formulaic grammatical structures • Repetitive phrasal and sentence patterns across content areas	• General content words and expressions • Social and instructional words and expressions across content areas
Level 1 Entering	• Words, phrases, or chunks of language • Single words used to represent ideas	• Phrase-level grammatical structures • Phrasal patterns associated with common social and instructional situations	• General content-related words • Everyday social and instructional words and expressions

…within sociocultural contexts for language use.

WIDA Performance Definitions - Listening and Reading Grades K-12

At each grade, toward the end of a given level of English language proficiency, and with instructional support, English language learners will process…

	Discourse Level	Sentence Level	Word/Phrase Level
	Linguistic Complexity	**Language Forms and Conventions**	**Vocabulary Usage**
Level 6 - Reaching Language that meets all criteria through Level 5 - Bridging			
Level 5 Bridging	• Rich descriptive discourse with complex sentences • Cohesive and organized related ideas	• Compound, complex grammatical constructions (e.g., multiple phrases and clauses) • A broad range of sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas	• Technical and abstract content-area language, including content-specific collocations • Words and expressions with shades of meaning across content areas
Level 4 Expanding	• Connected discourse with a variety of sentences • Expanded related ideas	• A variety of complex grammatical constructions • Sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas	• Specific and some technical content-area language • Words or expressions with multiple meanings across content areas
Level 3 Developing	• Discourse with a series of extended sentences • Related ideas	• Compound and some complex (e.g., noun phrase, verb phrase, prepositional phrase) grammatical constructions • Sentence patterns across content areas	• Specific content language, including expressions • Words and expressions with common collocations and idioms across content areas
Level 2 Emerging	• Multiple related simple sentences • An idea with details	• Compound grammatical constructions • Repetitive phrasal and sentence patterns across content areas	• General content words and expressions, including cognates • Social and instructional words and expressions across content areas
Level 1 Entering	• Single statements or questions • An idea within words, phrases, or chunks of language	• Simple grammatical constructions (e.g., commands, Wh- questions, declaratives) • Common social and instructional forms and patterns	• General content-related words • Everyday social and instructional words and expressions

…within sociocultural contexts for language use.

APPENDIX C: WIDA Writing Rubrics

Writing Rubric of the WIDA™ Consortium Grades PreK-K			
Level	**Linguistic Complexity**	**Vocabulary Usage**	**Language Control**
6 Evidence: Complete "Story"	• Text presents **one** clear example of a successful attempt at producing related, connected English phrases and sentences • At least **two** clear sentences are present • A logical sequence or relationship between phrases and sentences is present • Each phrase or sentence contains at least **two** "words"	• "Words" go beyond memorized, high-frequency vocabulary, though some sight words and easily decodable words may be present and written accurately • "Words" are clearly recognizable and contain beginning, middle and ending sounds (in longer words)	• Invented spelling and/or lack of mechanics may impede full comprehensibility of the text • Inventive spelling closely approximates standard spelling • Evidence of capitalization and punctuation may be present • No clear observable influence of native language is present
5 Evidence: "Story"	• Text contains at least **one** clear example of a successful attempt at producing at least **two** related or connected English phrases or sentences • At least **one** clear sentence is present • A logical or sequential word order within phrases or sentences is present • Each phrase or sentence contains at least **two** "words"	• "Words" go beyond memorized, high-frequency vocabulary • "Words" are generally recognizable and contain attempts at beginning, middle and ending sounds (in longer words) • All key "words" in the related or connected phrases or sentences are attempted	• Invented spelling and/ or lack of mechanics may impede comprehensibility of the text • Evidence of word boundaries is present • Observable influence of native language may be present
4 Evidence: "Phrase or sentence"	• Text contains at least **one** clear example of a successful attempt at producing an English phrase or short sentence • The phrase or short sentence contains at least **three** "words"	• At least one "word" of the phrase or short sentence goes beyond "memorized" text (e.g. "I like…," "I play…") • "Words are generally recognizable and contain attempts at beginning, middle and ending sounds (in longer words) • Letter sounds within words may be out of order • All key "words" in the phrase of short sentence are attempted	• Invented spelling and lack of clear word boundaries may impede comprehensibility of the text • Attempts at word boundaries may be present • Observable influence of native language may be present

Writing Rubric of the WIDA™ Consortium Grades PreK-K			
Level	**Linguistic Complexity**	**Vocabulary Usage**	**Language Control**
3 Evidence: "Words"	• Text contains at least **two** clear, independently produced examples of success attempts at producing English words	• At least one "word" goes beyond memorized, high-frequency words (e.g., "car," "dog") • "Words" may be recognizable and contain attempts at beginning, middle and ending sounds (in longer words) • Letter sounds within words may be out of order	• Invented spelling and lack of clear word boundaries may impede comprehensibility of the words • Observable influence of native language may be present

2
Evidence:
Sound/ letter corre-spondence
	• Text contains at least **two** clear, independently produced examples of success attempts at producing English sound/letter correspondence	• Evidence of knowledge of sound/letter correspondence may be provided by attempts at any of the following
		  • beginning and ending word sounds
		  • beginning and middle word sounds
		  • middle and ending word sounds
		  • beginning word sounds only a single sound representing a word
		• Examples of letters may be in list form, written vertically or horizontally
		• Evidence of "memorized" writing in English (e.g., proper names, "mom," "dad") may be present
			• Poor letter formation and/ or lack of any type of boundaries within text may impede recognition of attempts of producing sound/letter correspondences

1
Evidence:
Letter copying
	• Text contains clear evidence of successful attempts at writing at least **two** letters, of which one may display knowledge of sound/letter correspondence	• Evidence of ability to write letters may be provide by any of the following:
		  • writing own name
		  • copied letter(s)
		  • random letter(s)
		  • traced letter(s)
		  • scribble writing
			• Poor letter formation quality may impede recognition of letters

0 Evidence: Letter and/ or picture	• Text contains no more than **one** clear, independently written latter • No response	• Symbols of pictures, perhaps copied from graphics, may be present	• No language control is evident due to lack of text

Writing Rubric of the WIDA™ Consortium Grades 1-12			
Level	**Linguistic Complexity**	**Vocabulary Usage**	**Language Control**
6 Reaching*	A variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in a single tightly organized paragraph or in well-organized extended text; tight cohesion and organization	Consistent use of just the right word in just the right place; precise Vocabulary Usage in general, specific or technical language.	Has reached comparability to that of English proficient peers functioning at the "proficient" level in state-wide assessments.
5 Bridging	A variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in a single organized paragraph or in extended text; cohesion and organization	Usage of technical language related to the content area; evident facility with needed vocabulary.	Approaching comparability to that of English proficient peers; errors don't impede comprehensibility.
4 Expanding	A variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity; emerging cohesion used to provide detail and clarity.	Usage of specific and some technical language related to the content area; lack of needed vocabulary may be occasionally evident.	Generally comprehensible at all times, errors don't impede the overall meaning; such errors may reflect first language interference.
3 Developing	Simple and expanded sentences that show emerging complexity used to provide detail.	Usage of general and some specific language related to the content area; lack of needed vocabulary may be evident.	Generally comprehensible when writing in sentences; comprehensibility may from time to time be impeded by errors when attempting to produce more complex text.
2 Beginning	Phrases and short sentences; varying amount of text may be copied or adapted; some attempt at organization may be evidenced.	Usage of general language related to the content area; lack of vocabulary may be evident.	Generally comprehensible when text is adapted from model or source text, or when original text is limited to simple text; comprehensibility may be often impeded by errors.
1 Entering	Single words, set phrases or chunks of simple language; varying amounts of text may be copied or adapted; adapted text contains original language.	Usage of highest frequency vocabulary from school setting and content areas.	Generally comprehensible when text is copied or adapted from model or source text; comprehensibility may be significantly impeded in original text.

*Level 6 is reserved for students whose written English is comparable to that of their English-proficient peers.

Adapted from: ACCESS for ELLs® Training Toolkit and *Test Administration Manuals, Series 103 (2007-08)*

APPENDIX D: WIDA Speaking Rubric

Speaking Rubric of the WIDA™ Consortium*			
Task Level	**Linguistic Complexity**	**Vocabulary Usage**	**Language Control**
1 Entering	Single words, set phrases or chunks of memorized oral language	Highest frequency vocabulary from school setting and content areas	When using memorized language, is generally comprehensible; communication may be significantly impeded when going beyond the highly familiar
2 Beginning	Phrases, short oral sentences	General language related to the content area; groping for vocabulary when going beyond the highly familiar is evident	When using simple discourse, is generally comprehensible and fluent; communication may be impeded by groping for language structures or by phonological, syntactic or semantic errors when going beyond phrases and short, simple sentences
3 Developing	Simple and expanded oral sentences; responses show emerging complexity used to add detail	General and some specific language related to the content area; may grope for needed vocabulary at times	When communicating in sentences, is generally comprehensible and fluent; communication may from time to time be impeded by groping for language structures or by phonological, syntactic or semantic errors, especially when attempting more complex oral discourse
4 Expanding	A variety of oral sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity; responses show emerging cohesion used to provide detail and clarity	Specific and some technical language related to the content area; groping for needed vocabulary may be occasionally evident	At all times generally comprehensible and fluent, though phonological, syntactic or semantic errors that don't impede the overall meaning of the communication may appear at times; such errors may reflect first language interference
5 Bridging	A variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral discourse; responses show cohesion and organization used to support main ideas	Technical language related to the content area; facility with needed vocabulary is evident	Approaching comparability to that of English proficient peers in terms of comprehensibility and fluency; errors don't impede communication and may be typical of those an English proficient peer might make

*English proficiency level 6 is not included in the Speaking Rubric as it is reserved for students whose oral English is comparable to that of their English-proficient peers.

Adapted from: ACCESS for ELLs® Training Toolkit and *Test Administration Manuals, Series 103 (2007-08)*

APPENDIX E: Statutory Basis for the Education of ELLs

Clarification of Terms

The two terms below are used interchangeably.

LEP = Limited English Proficient, common in legal/regulatory documents, refers to programs
ELL = English Language Learner, coined recently and used in professional literature, refers to students

Legislation, Judicial Precedence (case law), and the Rights of English Language Learners

The following information highlights relevant federal guidance and Supreme Court decisions regarding the education of ELLs:

The Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution (1868)

caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/data/constitution/amendment14/

- "No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; not deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."
- This amendment established the constitutional basis for the educational rights language of minority students.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/nonpublic.html and
www.usdoj.gov/crt/coord/titlevistat.htm

- Prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin.
- Prohibits denial of equal access to education due to limited English proficiency.
- Such students need equal opportunity to benefit from educational programs.

Bilingual Education Act (BEA): Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1968

- Recognized the unique educational disadvantages faced by non-English speaking students.
- Established a federal policy to assist educational agencies to serve students with limited-English-proficiency by authorizing funding to support such efforts.
- Provided supplemental funding for school districts establishing programs to meet the "special educational needs" of large numbers of children with limited English speaking ability. It provided funds to support the students as well as professional development and research activities.

Diana v. Board of Education of California (1970)

For students from language minority backgrounds whose homes included a spoken language other than English, the decision mandates:

- The implementation of nondiscriminatory procedures and
- The utilization of appropriate culturally and linguistically relevant assessment instruments.

U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights Policies and Guidance

Office for Civil Rights (OCR) Policy on Language Minority Students

OCR May 25, 1970 Memorandum: Identification of Discrimination and Denial of Services on the Basis of National Origin.

www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/lau1970.html

- "Where the inability to speak and understand the English language excludes national origin minority group children from effective participation in the educational program offered by a school district, the district must take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency in order to open its instructional program to these students."
- School districts must open their instructional programs to national origin minority students who are excluded from effective participation in the district's educational programs due to their inability to speak and understand English.
- Schools must take affirmative steps to rectify such language deficiencies.
- School districts are prohibited from assigning ELLs to special education classes on the basis of criteria that essentially measure or evaluate English language skills.
- Specialized programs for ELLs must not operate as an educational dead-end or permanent track.
- School districts must adequately notify language minority parents of school activities that are called to the attention of other parents.

Lau v. Nichols (1974)

U.S. Supreme Court ruling (1974) that upheld the 1970 OCR Memorandum's interpretation of Title VI requirements. The Court stated that:

"There is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education." 414 U.S. 563 (1974).

Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 (EEOA) - 20 USC Sec 1703

- Prohibits specific discrimination, including segregating students on the basis of race, color, or national origin, and discrimination against faculty and staff.
- Requires school districts to take action to overcome students' language barriers that impede equal participation in educational programs.

Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Reauthorization of 1978

Amendments to Title VII emphasize the strictly transitional nature of native language instruction, expand eligibility to students who are limited English proficient, permit enrollment of English-speaking students in bilingual programs and eliminate the low income criteria of the BEA of 1968.

Dyrcia v. Board of Education of New York City **(1979)**

www.advocatesforchildren.org/litigation/litdocs/josepdocs/ConsolidatedJudgment.pdf

Extended local education agencies' (LEA) responsibility beyond case study evaluation and staffing procedures to include bilingual special education instruction.

Castañeda v. Pickard **(1981)**

- Ruling by 5th Circuit Court based on Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974.
- The three-pronged test set out in this case was adopted by OCR to determine compliance with Title VI regulation 648 F. 2d 989.

  i. The school must pursue a program based on educational theory recognized as sound or, at least, as a legitimate experimental strategy by experts in the field;
  ii. The school must actually implement the program with instructional practices, resources, and personnel necessary to transfer theory to reality;

The following applications are examples of how the second prong has been interpreted and are widely applied in the field based on numerous investigations over the years:

- *Staffing requirements.* Teacher numbers are sufficient, meet formal qualifications, and match program needs. If program offers native language support through teacher aides, school should show how it determined that they have adequate proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing in both languages.
- *Adequacy of resources.* The school district must provide adequate resources: Required and necessary equipment and instructional materials must be available on a timely basis.
- *Exit criteria.* Students are ready to participate meaningfully in regular education programs. ELLs are provided services until they are proficient enough in English to participate meaningfully in the regular education program. Exit criteria should include objective standards, such as standardized test scores. Students should continue to receive services until they can read, write, speak, and comprehend English well enough to participate meaningfully in the district's program.
- *Special education programs.* ELLs are not inappropriately placed in special education classes. ELLs with special needs are in special education programs that also address their inability to speak or understand English (i.e., they receive special education and alternative language services).
- *Gifted and Talented Programs/other specialized programs.* ELLs have access, unless exclusion is justified by a student's needs or by specialized program's nature. The process for identifying and locating gifted/talented students must include ELLs.

  iii. The school must not persist in a program that fails to produce results.

The following applications are examples of how the third prong has been interpreted and are widely applied in the field based on numerous investigations over the years:

- Success means either attaining established program goals or, in their absence, helping students overcome language barriers within a reasonable timeframe. Gauging success is dependent upon collection and periodic review of appropriate (valid and reliable) student data.

- Need for formal program: Have procedures in place for identification and assessment of ELLs. Not serving ELLs through alternative language programs constitutes a violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

Plyler v. Doe **(1982)**

caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=US&vol=457&invol=202

- Under the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, a state and its agents do not have the right to deny a free public education to undocumented (illegal) immigrant children.
- School systems are not agents for enforcing immigration law and are therefore forbidden to make public any information about the legal status of their students, or inform other agencies about such status.

Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Reauthorization of 1982

Amendments to Title VII allow for native language maintenance, provide program funding for limited English proficient students with special needs, support family English literacy programs and emphasize the importance of teacher training.

U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights Policies and Guidance OCR Memorandum (1985): Policy Regarding the Treatment of National Origin Minority Students Who Are Limited English Proficiency (LEP students).

Reissued on April 6, 1990

This document reasserts the relevance and validity of the OCR May 25th, 1970 Memorandum and declares that the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) will not prescribe the type of program, model, and/or approach a district may choose to implement/ensure the effective participation of language minority students in the district's educational program, so long as that program/approach:

- Has proven to be effective, or
- Promises to be effective based on either past practice or judgments from experts in the field.

a. OCR conducts investigations of the educational services provided for language minority students either as a result of a complaint, allegation, or through a compliance review.

   To determine Title VI compliance, the following areas are examined:
   - Is there a need for the district to provide an alternative program designed to meet the educational needs of all its language minority students?
   - Is the district's program likely to be effective in meeting the educational needs of its language minority students?

   To determine the need for alternative language services:
   - School districts should have established procedures to identify and assess students in need of alternative language services to enable them to meaningfully participate in the schools' educational programs.
   - School districts should have established procedures to identify and assess students in need of alternative language services to enable them to meaningfully participate in the schools' educational programs.

To determine adequacy of program, OCR applies the three prongs of the Castañeda standard:

- First prong: Sound Educational Theory
- Second prong: Effective Practice
- Third prong: Program Evaluation and Modification

A program for ELLs is acceptable if:

- It is based on sound theory recognized by experts in the field or it is deemed a legitimate experimental strategy.
- Program practices and resources allow for effective implementation of the theory adopted by the school.
- The program, after a legitimate trial, succeeds in producing results showing ELLs are overcoming language barriers.

b. OCR will monitor the compliance of school districts on a case-by-case basis.
c. OCR will not require the submission of a written compliance agreement/plan unless a violation of Title VI has been established.
d. OCR will utilize the three point test established in Castañeda v. Pickard (1981) to determine the adequacy of district services.

ESEA No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 or Public Law 107-110

Title III Part A or The English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement and Academic Achievement Act (Section 3101) and **Title III Part B** or The Improving Language Instruction Educational Programs for Academic Achievement Act (Section 3201) and **Title III Part C** or The General Provisions Act (Section 3301)

- This act is the federal reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The Act establishes nine purposes for language assistance programs, all of which are supposed to ensure that children who are limited English proficient (LEP) attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment, and meet the same challenging state academic standards as all children are expected to meet. Details grants for states and local education agencies (LEAs), accountability for achievement of LEP students and national activities, especially under Titles I and III of the Act.

(Compiled by Barbara Marler, Illinois Resource Center)

APPENDIX F: Federal Regulations for RtI^2 and Special Education Determination

THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA) OF 2004

Evaluations and Reevaluations

34 C.F.R. § 300.302 Screening for instructional purposes is not evaluation.

The screening of a student by a teacher or specialist to determine appropriate instructional strategies for curriculum implementation shall not be considered to be an evaluation for eligibility for special education and related services.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1414(a)(1)(E))

34 C.F.R. § 300.304 Evaluation procedures.

(a) Notice. The public agency must provide notice to the parents of a child with a disability, in accordance with § 300.503, that describes any evaluation procedures the agency proposes to conduct.

(b) *Conduct of evaluation.* In conducting the evaluation, the public agency must—

(1) Use a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental, and academic information about the child, including information provided by the parent, that may assist in determining—

(i) Whether the child is a child with a disability under § 300.8; and

(ii) The content of the child's IEP, including information related to enabling the child to be involved in and progress in the general education curriculum (or for a preschool child, to participate in appropriate activities);

(2) Not use any single measure or assessment as the sole criterion for determining whether a child is a child with a disability and for determining an appropriate educational program for the child; and

(3) Use technically sound instruments that may assess the relative contribution of cognitive and behavioral factors, in addition to physical or developmental factors.

(c) *Other evaluation procedures.* Each public agency must ensure that—

(1) Assessments and other evaluation materials used to assess a child under this part—

(i) Are selected and administered so as not to be discriminatory on a racial or cultural basis;

(ii) Are provided and administered in the child's native language or other mode of communication and in the form most likely to yield accurate information on what the child knows and can do academically, developmentally, and functionally, unless it is clearly not feasible to so provide or administer;

(iii) Are used for the purposes for which the assessments or measures are valid and reliable;

(iv) Are administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel; and

(v) Are administered in accordance with any instructions provided by the producer of the assessments.

(2) Assessments and other evaluation materials include those tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely those that are designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient.

(3) Assessments are selected and administered so as best to ensure that if an assessment is administered to a child with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills, the assessment results accurately reflect the child's aptitude or achievement level or whatever other factors the test purports to measure, rather than reflecting the child's impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills (unless those skills are the factors that the test purports to measure).

(4) The child is assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, if appropriate, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status, and motor abilities;

(5) Assessments of children with disabilities who transfer from one public agency to another public agency in the same school year are coordinated with those children's prior and subsequent schools, as necessary and as expeditiously as possible, consistent with § 300.301(d)(2) and (e), to ensure prompt completion of full evaluations.

(6) In evaluating each child with a disability under §§ 300.304 through 300.306, the evaluation is sufficiently comprehensive to identify all of the child's special education and related services needs, whether or not commonly linked to the disability category in which the child has been classified.

(7) Assessment tools and strategies that provide relevant information that directly assists persons in determining the educational needs of the child are provided.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1414(b)(1)-(3), 1412(a)(6)(B))

34 C.F.R. § 300.306 Determination of eligibility.

(a) General. Upon completion of the administration of assessments and other evaluation measures—

(1) A group of qualified professionals and the parent of the child determines whether the child is a child with a disability, as defined in § 300.8, in accordance with paragraph (b) of this section and the educational needs of the child; and

(2) The public agency provides a copy of the evaluation report and the documentation of determination of eligibility at no cost to the parent.

(b) *Special rule for eligibility determination.* A child must not be determined to be a child with a disability under this part—

(1) If the determinant factor for that determination is—

(i) Lack of appropriate instruction in reading, including the essential components of reading instruction (as defined in section 1208(3) of the ESEA);

(ii) Lack of appropriate instruction in math; or

(iii) Limited English proficiency; and

(2) If the child does not otherwise meet the eligibility criteria under § 300.8(a).

(c) *Procedures for determining eligibility and educational need.* (1) In interpreting evaluation data for the purpose of determining if a child is a child with a disability under § 300.8, and the educational needs of the child, each public agency must—

(i) Draw upon information from a variety of sources, including aptitude and achievement tests, parent input, and teacher recommendations, as well as information about the child's physical condition, social or cultural background, and adaptive behavior; and

(ii) Ensure that information obtained from all of these sources is documented and carefully considered.

(2) If a determination is made that a child has a disability and needs special education and related services, an IEP must be developed for the child in accordance with §§ 300.320 through 300.324.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1414(b)(4) and (5))

Additional Procedures for Identifying Children With Specific Learning Disabilities

34 C.F.R. § 300.307 Specific learning disabilities.

(a) General. A State must adopt, consistent with § 300.309, criteria for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability as defined in § 300.8(c)(10). In addition, the criteria adopted by the State—

(1) Must not require the use of a severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability, as defined in § 300.8(c)(10);

(2) Must permit the use of a process based on the child's response to scientific, research-based intervention; and

(3) May permit the use of other alternative research-based procedures for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability, as defined in § 300.8(c)(10).

(b) *Consistency with State criteria.* A public agency must use the State criteria adopted pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section in determining whether a child has a specific learning disability.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e–3; 1401(30); 1414(b)(6))

34 C.F.R. § 300.309 Determining the existence of a specific learning disability.

(a) The group described in § 300.306 may determine that a child has a specific learning disability, as defined in § 300.8(c)(10), if—

(1) The child does not achieve adequately for the child's age or to meet State-approved grade-level standards in one or more of the following areas, when provided with learning experiences and instruction appropriate for the child's age or State-approved grade-level standards:

(i) Oral expression.

(ii) Listening comprehension.

(iii) Written expression.

(iv) Basic reading skill.

(v) Reading fluency skills.

(vi) Reading comprehension.

(vii) Mathematics calculation.

(viii) Mathematics problem solving.

(2)(i) The child does not make sufficient progress to meet age or State-approved grade-level standards in one or more of the areas identified in paragraph (a)(1) of this section when using a process based on the child's response to scientific, research-based intervention; or

(ii) The child exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both, relative to age, State-approved grade-level standards, or intellectual development, that is determined by the group to be relevant to the identification of a specific learning disability, using appropriate assessments, consistent with §§ 300.304 and 300.305; and

(3) The group determines that its findings under paragraphs (a)(1) and (2) of this section are not primarily the result of—

(i) A visual, hearing, or motor disability;

(ii) Mental retardation;

(iii) Emotional disturbance;

(iv) Cultural factors;

(v) Environmental or economic disadvantage; or

(vi) Limited English proficiency.

(b) To ensure that underachievement in a child suspected of having a specific learning disability is not due to lack of appropriate instruction in reading or math, the group must consider, as part of the evaluation described in §§ 300.304 through 300.306—

(1) Data that demonstrate that prior to, or as a part of, the referral process, the child was provided appropriate instruction in regular education settings, delivered by qualified personnel; and

(2) Data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals, reflecting formal assessment of student progress during instruction, which was provided to the child's parents.

(c) The public agency must promptly request parental consent to evaluate the child to determine if the child needs special education and related services, and must adhere to the timeframes described in §§ 300.301 and 300.303, unless extended by mutual written agreement of the child's parents and a group of qualified professionals, as described in § 300.306(a)(1)—

(1) If, prior to a referral, a child has not made adequate progress after an appropriate period of time when provided instruction, as described in paragraphs (b)(1) and (b)(2) of this section; and

(2) Whenever a child is referred for an evaluation.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e–3; 1401(30); 1414(b)(6))

New Definitions

34 C.F.R. § 300.35 Scientifically based research —

(a) Means research that involves the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs; and

(b) Includes research that—

(1) Employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;

(2) Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;

(3) Relies on measurements or observational methods that provide reliable and valid data across evaluators and observers, across multiple measurements and observations, and across studies by the same or different investigators;

(4) Is evaluated using experimental or quasi-experimental designs in which individuals, entities, programs, or activities are assigned to different conditions and with appropriate controls to evaluate the effects of the condition of interest, with a preference for random-assignment experiments, or other designs to the extent that those designs contain within-condition or across-condition controls;

(5) Ensures that experimental studies are presented in sufficient detail and clarity to allow for replication or, at a minimum, offer the opportunity to build systematically on their findings; and

(6) Has been accepted by a peer- reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1411(e)(2)(C)(xi))

APPENDIX G: Glossary

Acculturation (p. 18)

Acculturation is the process that people experience when they encounter a new and different culture. In this process, individuals learn about the cultural norms and practices of the new culture but do not lose connection and access to their own culture. Similar to second language development, the process of acculturation takes time and is facilitated when individuals' home language and culture are affirmed in an additive environment while elements of the new culture are learned and experienced.

Additive bilingualism (p. 30)

Individuals who learn a new language in an environment in which their home language is honored, and encouraged to continue to develop, are learning in an additive bilingual environment. The new language is added onto learners' home language, and skills from one language have the potential to transfer to the other language and vice versa. Additive bilingualism differs from the process called *subtractive bilingualism* in which students learn a new language in an environment where their home language is not used and even discouraged until the student experiences language loss or language attrition in the home language.

Authentic contexts (p. 12)

Learning that occurs in real communicative settings is said to be authentic. In these contexts, students develop skills and strategies while they are cognitively engaged in learning about meaningful, relevant, and interesting curricular themes and units of study. This is in contrast to settings that are controlled in order to focus on developing particular surface skills in isolation and outside of real learning environments.

Cultural reciprocity (p. 13)

A process by which educators and other service providers recognize, examine and explain their own cultural perspectives taking time also to listen to and value the perspectives of the students and families they serve. School personnel can work collaboratively in order to provide services in a way that respects families' value systems.

Culturally responsive teaching (p. 3)

Culturally responsive teaching is a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994). According to The Educational Alliance (2006), some of the characteristics of culturally responsive teaching include:

- Positive perspectives on parents and families
- Communication of high expectations
- Learning within the context of culture
- Student-centered instruction
- Culturally mediated instruction
- Reshaping the curriculum
- Teacher as a facilitator

Differentiated instruction (p. 6)

This theory allows teachers to take students' diverse learning characteristics into account when planning and implementing instruction in order to give every student access to the curricular material, the thinking and the academic language of a unit of study. Teachers can organize instructional activities based on students' interests, abilities, language proficiency levels, preferred learning styles, or varying delivery modalities and build in the necessary learning scaffolds as well as extension activities to maximize access and engagement for all students.

Flexible grouping (p. 6)

As part of their instructional planning, teachers ask students to work in a variety of small groups for different purposes. Groups can be formed around particular topics of inquiry, similar interests, mixed-abilities, strengths, or language proficiency levels. Students may work in various group settings within the same lesson or unit of study.

Formative assessment (p. 22)

Formative assessment is an ongoing assessment process that provides students and teachers with feedback on progress toward instructional goals. Ongoing assessments could involve observation, student self-assessment, or projects rated using a rubric (see *WIDA Focus on Formative Assessment* for more information).

Funds of knowledge (p. 13)

All the linguistic, cultural, community, personal, and familial resources that students bring to the learning process are considered strengths or funds of knowledge. In order to maximize the learning experience for students, educators must gather information (through ethnographic approaches) about these resources and integrate them into instruction to build upon what students and their families already possess and what they know about themselves and about the world (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005).

Linguistic support (p. 9)

Support is an instructional strategy or tool used to assist students in accessing content necessary for classroom understanding or communication. Support may include teaching techniques, such as modeling, feedback, or questioning. Other types of support involve students using visuals or graphics, interacting with others, or using their senses to help construct meaning of oral or written language (TESOL, 2006). WIDA believes that support is important for all learners to gain access to meaning through multiple modalities, but it is absolutely essential for ELLs. WIDA feels that support for ELLs needs to be present in both instruction and assessment on both a formative and summative basis.

Norm-referenced assessment (p. 31)

Assessment tasks, tests, and procedures that are administered to a representative group of students who share particular characteristics are said to be normed on that population. The performance of students on those assessments are compared to other students of the same or like peer group. The data from these assessments are often collected on a large group of students to determine which students reach the benchmark criterion for their particular age group or grade level. When using norm-referenced measurement, it is important for a school-based team to find out if an assessment was primarily designed for use with ELLs before including it as part of an assessment system for ELLs. If an assessment was indeed normed on ELLs, it is essential to examine what languages were included in the normed sample to determine if it is a valid instrument to use with a particular group of ELLs.

Qualitative information/data (p. 4)

Descriptive (or qualitative) data about students' progress or performance in school comes from ethnographic approaches to gathering information through observation of students in authentic learning environments, conferencing with students about their work, and through the projects and products students create to demonstrate their thinking and learning.

Research-based instruction/intervention (p. 5)

These are instructional and intervention practices that are based on research conducted in the field with students for whom they will be implemented. The more authentic the setting in which the research was conducted, the more likely the results will be reflected in the classroom application. Ethnographic and other qualitative and mixed-methods research designs capture more of the complexities of the learning process within a sociocultural context.

Sheltered instruction (p. 6)

This instructional approach focuses on making the instructional input (oral and written) more comprehensible and understandable for students. This approach to instruction integrates the teaching of academic language together with academic content. Language and content can become more comprehensible through visual and linguistic scaffolds such as photographs, video clips, graphic organizers, sentence frames, math manipulatives, a variety of readings on a particular topic of instruction, and previewing instruction through the home language, among other strategies.

Simultaneous bilingual learners (p. 15)

Learners who are exposed to two languages before the age of 3 are considered simultaneous bilinguals. 80% of ELLs in the U.S. today are simultaneous bilinguals. They are students who are developing two languages at the same time. This process differs for students who are considered *sequential bilingual learners.* These students have already developed one language and are learning a second language.

Solution-seeking process (p. 4)

In the solution-seeking cycle represented in this document, team members work together to gather information about how students are doing academically, linguistically, behaviorally, and socially and emotionally. They develop an inventory of observable behaviors and then hypothesize from a culturally and linguistically responsive perspective why students may be exhibiting observable behaviors. Teams generate interventions, both systemic and specific, that seek to improve the learning environment that has been created for students. The solution-seeking process focuses on identifying strengths and existing resources as a way to enrich the learning experience for all students. WIDA conceptualizes problem-solving in a solution-oriented manner, focusing on strengths rather than problems or deficits.

Specific learning disability (p. 8)

According to IDEA (2004):

34 C.F.R. §300.8(c)(10) Child with a disability.

(10) Specific learning disability —(i) General. Specific learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.

(ii) Disorders not included. Specific learning disability does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1401(3); 1401(30))

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Author

Cristina Sanchez-Lopez, Education Specialist, Illinois Resource Center

Cristina collaborates with educators in the U.S. and Canada on English language learners (ELLs) and special education; middle school mathematics; literacy across the content areas; multilingual education; engaging parents; and supporting PreK educators who serve ELLs. Prior to coming to the IRC, Cristina taught at the elementary, middle school, and university levels in the U.S. and Mexico. At present, Cristina teaches graduate courses in the areas of ELL reading and the foundations of language minority education. She and her colleague Theresa Young extensively collaborate with school problem-solving teams as they support ELLs. Cristina is co-author on the book *Special Education Considerations for English Language Learners: Delivering a continuum of services* (Caslon Publishing, 2007/2nd edition 2013) as well as various articles and chapters on addressing the needs of ELLs.

Project Coordinator

Laurie Donnell, WIDA Publications Assistant and Ph.D. Candidate, University of Wisconsin–Madison Department of Educational Psychology

In her role as Project Coordinator, Laurie researched best practices in RtI implementation as well as culturally and linguistically responsive teaching and assessment practices. She also gathered feedback on the document from educators across the consortium and from WIDA staff to make this resource as helpful to educators as possible. Laurie compiled and carefully reviewed the feedback received and assisted Cristina in revising the document to reflect educators' comments and suggestions. Laurie's contributions were invaluable and essential in completing this publication.

WIDA Consortium Member State Project Contributors

Madison Metropolitan School District, High School ESL Teachers, WI
Julie DeCook, ELL Program Coordinator/Coordinator of Title Programs, School District of Janesville, WI
Donna DeVito, ESL Teacher, District 99, IL
Tammy King, Education Specialist, Illinois Resource Center
Jennifer Kuchno, ESOL Teacher, Fairfax County Schools, VA
Ruthann Lewis, ESL Teacher Leader, Madison Metropolitan School District, WI
James McCobb, ELL Program Coordinator, Vermont Department of Education
Cathy Nelson, Title III/ESL Specialist, Maryland State Department of Education

Judy Radford, ESL Coordinator, Virginia Department of Education
Robin Rivas, Curriculum Specialist ESL/FL, Milwaukee Public Schools, WI
Jamie Tucker, ELL Student Services Instructor, Pike County Schools, KY
Elizabeth Watkins, ELL & Minority Issues Specialist, Minnesota Department of Education
Vicki Weinberg, Specific Learning Disabilities Specialist, Minnesota Department of Education
Kerri Whipple, Assistant Director, ELL Programs, North Dakota Department of Public Instruction

WIDA Staff Member Project Contributors

Andrea Cammilleri, Assistant Director, Teaching & Learning
Mariana Castro, Director of Academic Language and Literacy Initiatives
M. Elizabeth Cranley, Ph.D., WIDA Associate Director
Margo Gottlieb, Ph.D., Lead Developer
Melissa Paton, Professional Development Outreach Specialist
Amanda Spalter, Professional Development Programs Specialist
Janet Trembley, Graphic Design
Sonia Upton, Ph.D., Consortium Policy Administrator

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