



Identifying and Serving English Language Learners with Special Needs: Part I

Presented by:
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Learning Outcomes



Following these presentations, participants will be able to:

- Accurately identify English Language Learners (ELL) with special needs
- Develop appropriate standards-based and legally sufficient programs to serve the needs of ELL with special needs
- Apply the RTI (Response to Intervention) Model to ELL with special needs
- Develop and participate in collaborative teams to address the needs of students identified as ELL with special needs

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Who are ELLs?



English language learners are students who have a first language other than English, are in the process of acquiring English, and are not yet able to profit fully from English-only instruction.



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What is a disability?



A disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking and working.

Disability – Supreme Court



Disability

Disability cannot be measured solely on the ability to do certain tasks.

- Disability depends also on the ease with which they perform activities that are of central importance to most people's daily lives.
- The disability must also be permanent or long-lasting.

O'Connor, U.S. Supreme Court 2002

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Examples of Disabilities



Some examples of disabilities include:

- Autism
- Deafness
- Blindness
- Mental retardation
- Orthopedic impairment
- Communication disorders such as stuttering, impaired articulation or a voice impairment which adversely affects educational performance

Note that...



even though it may be hindering the student's academic progress, the inability to understand, speak, read and write English should **not** be considered a disability

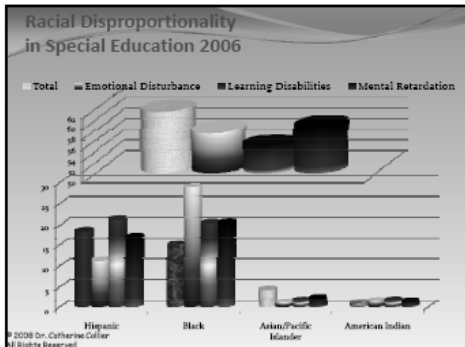


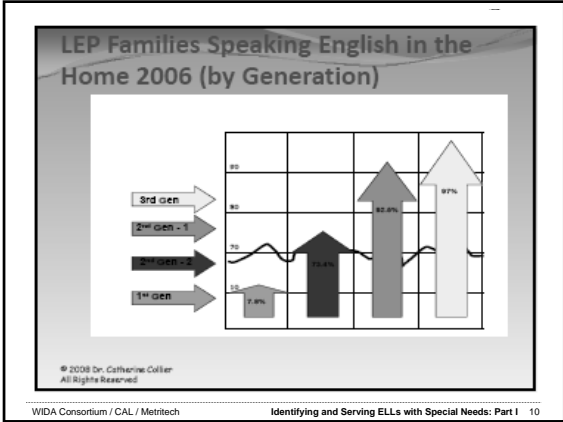
Not speaking English is not a disability



Background Information

Review of Collier's Presentation



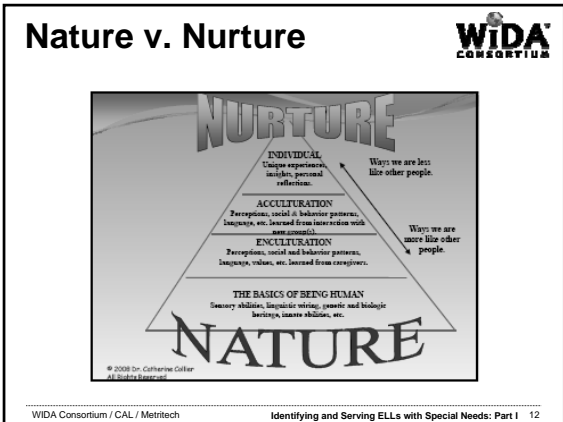


In Between

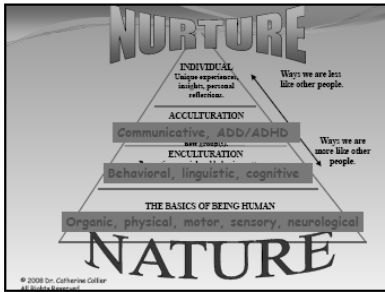
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English Language Learners are functioning between 2 distinct languages and cultures. For families, this may continue for 2 or 3 generations and impact adjustment to the new language and new cultural environment.

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Nature v. Nurture cont'd



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Culture Shock



Culture Shock

- Behavior
- Attention
- Language
- Control
- Cognitive Styles
- Knowledge
- Performance

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Acculturation Process Side Effects

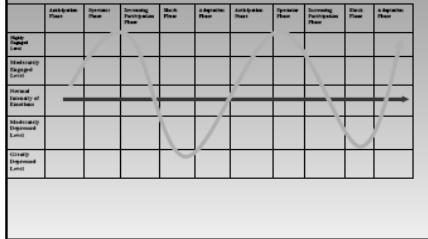


- Heightened anxiety
- Confusion in locus control
- Withdrawal
- Silence/unresponsiveness
- Response fatigue
- Code switching
- Distractibility
- Resistance to change
- Disorientation
- Stress related behaviors

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The Intensity of Culture Shock is Cyclical



Child Study Team

Traditional Child Study Team

- School Psychologist
- Classroom teacher
- Counselor/Special Educator
- Speech/Language specialist
- Nurse
- Administrator
- Community Resource people
- Caregiver



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Activity: CST Members

- Find the Handout labeled *Child Study Team Members*.
- List the members of the Child Study Team in your site/district by both title and name.

Child Study Team cont'd



Who is missing ?



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Instructional Intervention Team



- Classroom teacher
- Bilingual/ESL teacher
- Cross-cultural & classroom instructional assistants
- Learning assistance teacher & other direct support personnel
- Community resource people
- Advocate/Caregiver

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So, what about...



Prevention and Intervention?



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How can inappropriate referrals of ESL students be avoided?



- Documentation of pre-referral interventions is a required part of the special education evaluation process
- Many schools have developed problem solving teams (M-teams, Building Teams, etc.)
- When interventions suggested by such teams are successful, a referral to special education may no longer be necessary
- It is **important** that ESL teachers are part of these teams in order to bring their knowledge and skills to the problem-solving process

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This knowledge includes:



- Awareness of the second language acquisition process
- Appropriate instructional strategies for ESL students
- Sensitivity to cultural diversity
- Sensitivity to child-rearing practices in immigrant families that may be different from the U.S.
- The importance of native language support

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Classroom Behavior & Performance



Characteristics and behaviors often associated with various learning problems	Common manifestations of English Language Learners (ELLs) during classroom instruction that may mimic various disorders or cognitive deficits.
Slow to begin tasks	ELLs may have limited comprehension of the classroom language so that they are not always clear on how to properly begin tasks or what must be done in order to start them or complete them correctly.
Slow to finish tasks	ELLs, especially those with very limited English skills, often need to translate material from English into their native language in order to be able to work with it and then must translate it back to English in order to demonstrate it. This process extends the time for completion of their assigned tasks that may be expected in the classroom.
Forgetful	ELLs cannot always fully encode information as efficiently into memory as monolinguals because of their limited comprehension of the language and will often appear to be forgetful when in fact the issue relates more to their lack of proficiency with English.
Inattentive	ELLs may not fully understand what is being said to them in the classroom and consequently they don't know when to pay attention or what exactly they should be paying attention to.
Hyperactive	ELLs may appear to be hyperactive because they are unaware of situation-specific behavioral norms, classroom rules, and other rules of social behavior.
Impulsive	ELLs may lack the ability to fully comprehend instructions so that they display a tendency to act impulsively in their work rather than following classroom instructions systematically.
Distractible	ELLs may not fully comprehend the language being spoken in the classroom and therefore will move their attention to whatever they can comprehend appearing to be distractible in the process.
Disruptive	ELLs may exhibit disruptive behavior, particularly excessive talking—often with other ELLs, due to a need to try and figure out what is expected of them or to frustration about not knowing what to do or how to do it.
Disorganized	ELLs often display strategies and work habits that appear disorganized because they don't comprehend instructions or how to organize or arrange materials and may never have been taught efficient learning and problem solving strategies.

Samuel Ortiz, 1998

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Characteristics of Positive School Climates for ELLs



- Shared knowledge among teachers about the education of ELLs
- Respect for linguistic and cultural diversity of students
- Effective and collaborative school, home and community relationships
- Academically rich programs
- High expectations for all students
- Challenging curriculum
- Ongoing systemic evaluation of student's linguistic and academic progress

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What about effective instruction?



- Instruction in the native language and in English
- Tapping into students' prior knowledge
- Culturally relevant curriculum
- Meaningful and standards-based language use across the curriculum at student's instructional level
- Thematic instruction
- Individual guidance and support
- Scaffolding & differentiation
- Interactive discourse
- Collaborative learning

(Artiles & Ortiz, 2002)

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RTI and Diverse Children: Listening Comprehension and Receptive Language

"I pledge a lesson to the frog of the United States of America, and to the wee puppet for witches hands. One Asian, under God, in the vestibule, with little tea and just rice for all."

Source: In the Year of the Bear and Jackie Robinson by Bette Bao Lord. © 1986. Harper Trophy.

Children who are learning a second language hear and interpret sounds in a manner that conforms to words that already exist in their vocabulary. This is a natural part of the first and second language acquisition processes and should not be considered abnormal in any way. It represents the brain's attempt to make sense and meaning of what it perceives by connecting it to what it already knows. The well known song lyrics: "There's a bathroom on the right," "Excuse me while I kiss this guy," "Doughnuts make my brown eyes blue," and "Midnight after you're wasted" are classic examples of this linguistic phenomenon for native English speakers.

Samuel Ortiz, 1998

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What if some ELLs still struggle?

- One-on-one tutoring
- Cross-age tutoring
- Remedial programs
- Student and family support groups
- Family counseling

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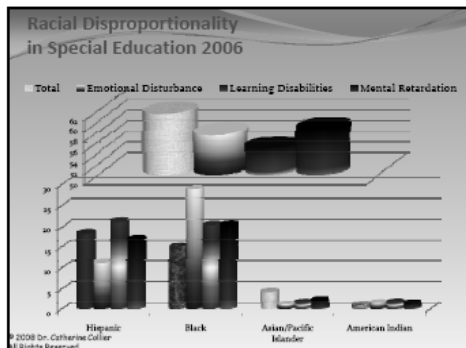
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Some students may still struggle.

- Assess school and classes
- Review data regarding level of language proficiency
- Review data regarding instruction
- Review data regarding interventions
- Develop additional interventions if appropriate
- Implement recommendation(s) and monitor progress
- If problems persist, recommend a comprehensive individual assessment

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Issues of ELLs in Special Education



- Overrepresentation
 - Size of ELL population/Proportionality
 - Availability of language support programs
 - Grade level
 - Limited proficiency

- Underrepresentation
 - Subjectivity in classification of student in high incidence disability categories
 - Variability in state practices
 - Lack of resources and staff

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Consequences



Overrepresentation

- Lowered expectations for performance
- Reduced potential for academic, social, and economic advancement

Under representation

- Lack of special services to which students are legally entitled
- Lack of services that could help students reach their potential

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Consequences



For districts...

Civil and administrative sanctions and penalties

For students...

irreparable harm (Rice & Ortiz, 1994)

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RTI & Instructional Intervention

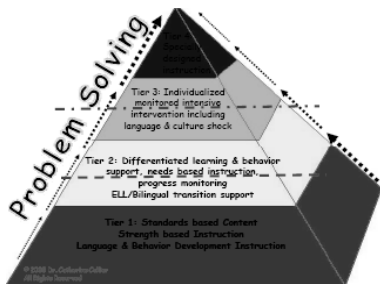
Response to Intervention (RTI) is a multi-step approach to providing services to struggling students. Teachers provide instruction and interventions to them at increasing levels of intensity. They also monitor the progress students make at each intervention level and use the assessment results to decide whether the students need additional instruction or intervention in general education or referral to special education.

RTI models have several components in common. RTI uses tiers of interventions for struggling students, relies on research-based instruction and interventions, uses problem-solving to determine interventions for students, and monitors students regularly to determine if they are progressing, as they should academically and/or behaviorally.

Many models are based on three or four tiers. Generally, in Tiers 1 and 2, general education teachers provide instruction and interventions. When students fail to respond to small group and intense individualized interventions, they are referred for special education. Special education teachers may take direct interventions and/or plan assessments for students receiving instruction and interventions in Tiers 1 and 2. They may not provide instruction to students until Tier 3 or 4, when the student could be referred and identified for special education.

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RTI Model



Three Phase Model

- Phase/Tier 1: Determine whether effective instruction is in place for subgroups of students (e.g., ELL)
- Phase/Tier 2: Provide effective instruction to the target student/s and measure its effect on student performance
- Phase/Tier 3: Refer students whose RTI warrants additional or intensive continuing interventions

Stated Potential Benefits:

“Increased fairness in the assessment process, particularly for minority students”

(Kovaleski & Prasse, 2004)

Assessment Considerations

- Multidisciplinary teams must assure that the student's difficulties are the result of a disability and NOT a lack of appropriate instruction or second language acquisition.
- Assessment procedures must be valid.
- Administered in the language and form most likely to yield accurate academic developmental and function information; unless is not feasible to so provide or administer.
- Information to parents must be provided to the extent possible, in their preferred mode of communication.

(Rohena, 2005)

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A fair, non-biased psychological evaluation of an ESL student is best done by a certified school psychologist who is competent in the language and culture of the student.

If this is not possible, the psychologist should be assisted by a translator who is familiar with the student's native language and culture.

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Assessment Bottom Line

There is no perfect tool out there...



The key is in the analysis and contextualization of the results

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More than just a single test...

- In addition to the general education teacher, have others (ESL teachers, specialists, family) noted similar difficulties?
- Does the problem exist across contexts?
- Are the problems evident in the student's first language?
- Is the student's acquisition of English different to that of peers who started about the same level of ELP and had similar instruction?
- Can some difficulties be explained by cross-cultural differences?

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- Are there other variables, e.g. inconsistent school attendance, language variations typical of ELLs?
- Is there evidence of extreme test anxiety?
- Were there procedural mistakes in the assessment process?
- Can problematic behaviors be explained by bias in operation before, during or after the assessment?
- Do data show that the student did not respond to general education interventions?
- Are the assessment results consistent with the concerns of the general education teacher and parents?

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Steps



If all of the appropriate steps have been taken, including linguistic and cultural considerations, and the final determination moves to Tier 3.....

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Planning for Instruction: Program Considerations



The IEP must include:

- A statement of the child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance.
- Measurable annual goals.
- Description of how progress toward goals will be measured and how progress will be reported.
- Statement of services provided based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable.
- Statement of appropriate accommodations necessary to measure academic achievement and functional performance.

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Important



Once an ESL student has been placed in a special education program, it is important to note that **both** the bilingual education/ESL program and the special education department in the school district are **jointly responsible** for the ESL student's progress. Both sources of supplementary funding are applied to the student's educational program.

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Remember



It is more difficult to remediate a disability if instruction is provided in the student's weaker language.

(Rohano, 2005; Artilles & Ortiz, 2002)

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\$64,000.00 Question



Is it possible an ELL who has been properly identified as Learning Disabled will never exit the ESL Program?



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Answer



In the case of a severely LD student, the answer is yes. However, a more sound approach would be for the Team to develop appropriate exit criteria for the ELL as part of the initial process.

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Therefore...



- Whenever possible, native language support should be provided by teachers, paraprofessionals and tutors.
- Having a disability does **not** mean that the ESL student forfeits the right to bilingual education or ESL services.

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Questions or Comments?

For more information, please contact the
WIDA Help Desk:
1-866-276-7735 or help@wida.us



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