



## **Identifying and Serving English Language Learners with Special Needs: Part 2**

Presented by:  
Lynore M. Carnuccio  
WIDA Consortium

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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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### **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.**

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## C & L Responsive Instruction



### Instruction:

The most “effective” instruction for ELLs is predicated on continued development of native language while English is also being developed. But ESL is by far the most common type of instruction given in schools today creating an artificial linguistic “handicap” that when combined with a bicultural experiential background puts otherwise capable children at levels well below, often substantially below, their age and grade-related peers in terms of school achievement. What is “effective instruction” for the average 3rd grader may be totally inappropriate for the average ELL who, nonetheless is in 3rd grade.

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## C & L Responsive Assessment



### Assessment:

Unless measurement methods, whether formative or summative, account for the differential rates of development that are occurring in the processes related to native language acquisition, English acquisition, and acculturation to the mainstream, there is no guarantee that results will be valid, reliable or any more “fair.”

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## IDEA



1. Culturally competent evaluations
2. Requires that students be assessed in their dominant language
3. The primary factor for learning difficulties cannot be due to Limited English Proficiency

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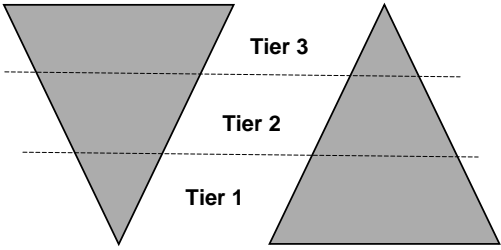
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## RTI Framework

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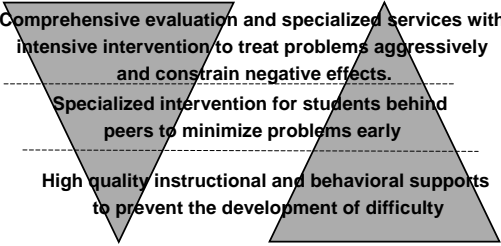
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## RTI Framework cont'd

Comprehensive evaluation and specialized services with intensive intervention to treat problems aggressively and constrain negative effects.

Specialized intervention for students behind peers to minimize problems early

High quality instructional and behavioral supports to prevent the development of difficulty

NJCLD (2005); DLD (2007)

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## Where to begin.....



*Let's begin at the beginning....*

Tarheena arrives at the Pensey School. She is 12 years old and obviously an English Language Learner.



Now What?

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## Who are ELLs



According to NCLB, an LEP/ELL student is a student:

- who was not born in the United States and/or
- whose native language is other than English and/or
- who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant.



Pennsylvania Department of Education

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## Age and Grade Appropriate



Tarheena's language proficiency should not enter into grade placement. Grade placement should be based on age. Which grade would be the appropriate grade for Tarheena?

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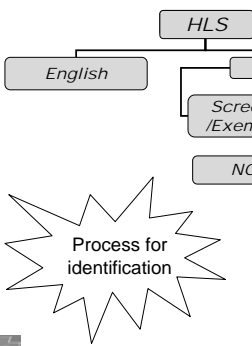
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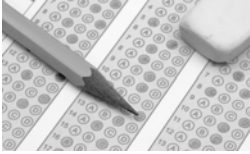
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## Assessment & Placement



Pennsylvania uses a variety language proficiency assessments for placement (e.g. W-APT, IPT, Woodcock Munoz). These scores must direct decision making for instruction, and both formative and summative assessment.



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## What is the ACCESS score?



The score report yields an English Language Proficiency score.  
W-APT scores align with the PA ELPS and fall between 0 and 6, 0 being absolutely no English Language Proficiency and 6 being parity with native English speakers.

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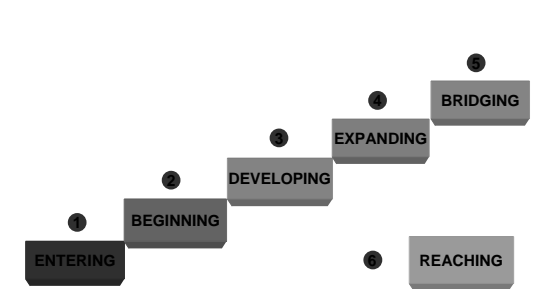
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## Levels of English Language Proficiency



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## ACCESS score cont'd



Explanations of these scores/language proficiency levels can be found in the Performance Definitions and/or the Can Do Descriptors.

See Handouts

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## LA Process



The Levels of Language Proficiency described in the Performance Definitions represent the process of language acquisition.

This process is similar in both L1 and L2.

However, if a child is literate in L1, this has a positive influence on the development of L2.

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## Descriptors



Remember Tarheena? She was given the Language Proficiency Assessment to determine her English language skills. She scored a composite score of 1.7.

Read over the Performance Definitions and Can Do Descriptors for Level 1. Then read over those for Level 2.

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## RTI Framework cont'd



Comprehensive evaluation and specialized services with intensive intervention to treat problems aggressively and constrain negative effects.

Specialized intervention for students behind peers to minimize problems early

High quality instructional and behavioral supports to prevent the development of difficulty

NICLD (2005); DLD (2007)

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## Tier 1



At Tier 1, all students should be receiving high quality, research and standards based instruction. For ELL that means both language instruction and content instruction across the curriculum. This is an important "first step."

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## Team- Tier 1



At this point, who should be the members of the Instructional Team?

What is the role of each member?

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## Assumption



**Assumption:** *Students who fail to respond to research-based instruction have some sort of learning problem or internal deficit, and perhaps even a learning disability.*

Klingner, 2007

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## Reasons



- **There are many reasons a child may not respond to instruction.**
  - The method is not effective with this child, and a different approach would yield better results.
  - The level of instruction might not be a good match for the child.
  - The environment might not be conducive to learning.
  - The instruction was neither linguistically nor culturally responsive

Klingner, 2007

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## RTI and Diverse Children: Effective Instruction and Intervention



### Reading

- "Front load" lesson by spending time developing the "into" part of lesson tapping into student's prior knowledge and providing first-hand experience with the new ideas
- Preview in native language if possible
- Utilize graphic organizers
- Provide reading material at all levels related to your topic of study
- Utilize Read Alouds
- Utilize Language Experience

### Writing

- Students illustrate and label objects and diagrams
- Model writing through the Language Experience Approach
- Use "Read Around Groups" (RAGS) so students will have an opportunity to listen to exemplary models of writing
- Encourage the use of vocabulary books

Ortiz, S., 2006

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## Tier 1 and ELPS



Let's go back to Tarheena and her level of English language proficiency.

Look at the PA ELPS rubrics for Standards 1 through 5. Focus on Tarheena's language proficiency level: Level 1 & 2. Observe some of the tasks and expectations of a student at that level.

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## Questions for Tier 1



When a child shows signs of struggling, the first step should be to observe in her classroom.

- Is instruction targeted to and appropriate for the student's level of English proficiency and learning needs?
- Is the teacher implementing appropriate research-based practices with fidelity?
- Does the classroom environment seem conducive to learning?
- **Are the student's true peers succeeding?**

(Klinger [NCCRES], 2007)

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The whole Class is sitting in a circle (on the A-B-C rug), with the teacher seated at the head. Teacher says, "Yesterday, how many of you knew your sight words? One student speaks out, "One?" Another, "Three?" Teacher replies, "You are right. Three students were able to tell me their sight words. We need to practice these words; we are really behind. Every one of you should know these sight words by now. You need to practice these at home. Don't you practice these at home?" Teacher says this with frustration in her face and voice. Teacher states, "Only those 3 students will be able to pull from the treasure chest." ... Teacher begins sight words practice and holds up index cards with *Big, My, See, Like, I, At, This, And, Up, Have, Too*. Students repeat sight words as Teacher holds up index cards. This is a repetitive process. She holds up the word "Big" without saying anything. One student says the word "Big." She holds up a another. "See." The same student says the word again. She holds up the word "see" again and tells the student who knew the previous answer not to say anything. Pause. Another says "see." She continues to go through this process with all the words, and says, "Okay guys, you need to practice these at home, you are not paying attention, you should have known these words by now." (Orosco, 2007)

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## Responsive Teaching



- 1) Read Handout labeled Tier 1 Scenario.
- 2) Reread with a focus on linguistically and culturally responsive pedagogy. Identify problems.
- 3) Discuss with a partner.

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## Tier 2



After linguistically and culturally responsive teaching has been applied over a reasonable time to a linguistically and culturally sensitive standards based curriculum, and no progress can be noted with an English Language Learner, proceed to Tier 2.

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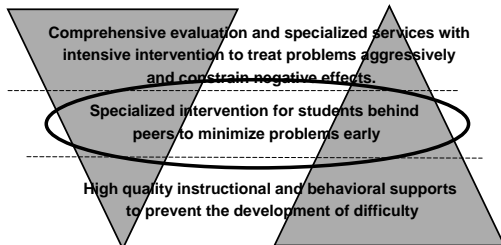
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## RTI Framework cont'd



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## Tier 2 cont'd



Tier 2 students need different, more intensive instruction than students at Tier 1. The optimal setting for Tier 2 instruction is in small groups.

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## Tier 2 for Tarheena



Assuming Tarheena has received instruction which has taken into account the language acquisition process, culture, and proficiency in English, we can move to Tier 2 and implement more intensive, small group instruction. Look at the Performance Definitions and Can Do Descriptors again. These parameters should govern the instruction Tarheena receives in Tier 2.

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## Team- Tier 2



At this point, who should be the members of the Instructional Team?

What is the role of each member?

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## Challenge



**Challenge:** *School personnel are confused about Tier 2 interventions. They wonder: (a) whether ELL services "count" as a secondary intervention, and (b) whether a special education teacher can provide Tier 2 interventions for ELL.*

Klingner; 2007

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## Tier 2 characteristics



*At Tier 2, teachers provide more intensive effective instruction to target students, most often in small groups or one-to-one settings.*



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## Observing Tier 2



- Are the teachers implementing evidence-based instruction?
- What do you conclude about these students' opportunity to learn?

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## Challenge



*Teachers and other school personnel are not clear how the RTI process is similar to and different from the Pre-Referral Process they used in previous years. Their RTI meetings look very much like the Child Study Team Meetings of old.*

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- Discussions still center on possible reasons for a child's struggles from a deficit perspective.
  - There still seems to be a push to place students in special education.
- It is natural that it will take time for school personnel to shift their thinking from one of figuring out what is wrong with a student to one of looking more broadly at the instructional context and at how to provide support for all students who need help, regardless of label.
  - During this transition period, try focusing on ways to improve Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction and interventions to be more appropriate for ELLs, and for all students.
- Make sure someone on the team is well-prepared in how to work with ELLs and in how to distinguish between language acquisition and a learning disability.

(Klinger [NCCRES], 2007)

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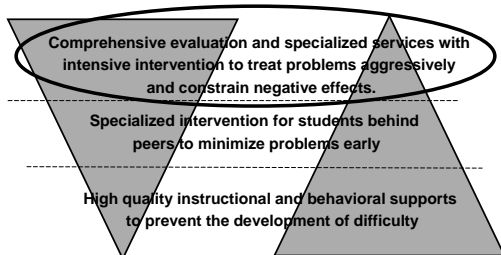
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## RTI Framework cont'd



NJCLD (2005); DLD (2007)

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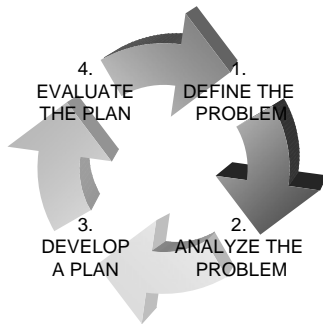
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## Problem Solving Approach



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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 (language & content).
- 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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## NASP



RTI requires a “shift from a within-child deficit paradigm to an eco-behavioral perspective” (NASP, 2006).

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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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## 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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## Learning Outcomes



Following these presentations, participants will be able to:

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## Questions or Comments?

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



World Class Instructional Design and Assessment, [www.wida.us](http://www.wida.us)



Center for Applied Linguistics, [www.cal.org](http://www.cal.org)



Metritech, Inc., [www.metritech.com](http://www.metritech.com)

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