

RTI for English Language Learners: Appropriate Screening, Progress Monitoring, and Instructional Planning

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Know Your Students

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- Know your students' backgrounds in terms of:
 - First language skills
 - Second language skills
 - Formal education (in L1 and L2)
 - Life experiences and assets
 - Cultural values and beliefs
 - This information will inform instruction and interventions.
 - Students may need to develop background knowledge, learn new sounds that are foreign in their native language, learn a new alphabet, etc.



There is No Silver Bullet for Assessment or Instruction of ELs

- **Reliability:** does the assessment produce similar scores across conditions and situations?
 - Reliability is not a particular problem if the tool has good psychometric properties.
- **Validity:** does the test measure what you want to assess?
 - Validity may be a problem because assessment results could be influenced by students' language, cultural and experiential backgrounds.
 - Have they had the opportunity to learn the skill, do they know it in a different language?
- There are limited number of tools that have been researched on ELs.



Unique Considerations for Screening ELLs

(Brown & Sanford, in preparation)

1. Use tools with demonstrated reliability and validity to identify and monitor students' needs for instructional support in reading in both L1 and L2.
2. Assess students' language skills in L1 and L2 to provide an appropriate context regarding evaluation of current levels of performance.
3. Plan instruction based on what you know about the student's performance and literacy experiences in L1 and L2 and teach for transfer if needed.



What is Progress? – It's Not Teaching as Usual

- How do you determine what is legitimate progress with ELs?
- Set the same goals – grade level standards.
- Rigorous instruction must consider students' cultural and linguistic needs and adjust accordingly.
- Short and long term goals may need to be set.
- It may take longer for instruction to have desired impact but this does not necessarily mean a disability.



Using Evidence-Based Interventions

- Currently, there are very few intervention programs that have included ELL students in their research.
- We must use what we know about effective instruction in literacy and instruction for ELLs.
- The PLUSS Model (Brown & Sanford, 2010) is an intervention framework on research-based instruction for ELL students.



The PLUSS Model for Interventions

(Brown & Sanford, in preparation)

- P: Preteach critical vocabulary
- L: Language modeling and opportunities for using academic language
- U: Use visuals and graphic organizers
- S: Systematic and explicit instruction in reading components and strategies
- S: Strategic use of native language

