

Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Pretest
3. Presentation
4. Posttest
5. Conclusion

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Finding Common Threads: Guidelines for Special Education Referrals for English Language Learners (ELLs)

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Introduction and Purpose

- To understand the appropriate process for evaluation and providing services to ELL students.
- Review procedures from: national, state, and district levels.
- Share existing data and information.

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Teacher Concerns/Questions

- Why do we need to wait “some time” (e.g. one year) before making a referral?
- Is it okay to refer a student to a psychological/special education evaluation when a teacher observes social/emotional difficulties (e.g. depression, anxiety symptoms)?
- If a student is found eligible, what are the available services?

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Pretest

1. Name one factor that can result in an immediate special education referral.
2. Are you familiar with BICS and CALP?
(yes/no)
3. How long does it take for newcomers to adjust to a new culture and academic setting?

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Goals for ELL Student Assessment

1. Follow a protocol for ELL referral and assessment.
2. Provide services to students who are in need.

Word of Caution:

- Avoiding over-identification
- Avoiding under-identification

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What's the harm in referring?

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Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

- Law
- Right



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Laws

- Civil Rights Act (1964)
- Diana vs. Board of Education (1970)
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act: IDEA (1975)
- Larry P. vs. Riles (1979)

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Not District Concern, Nationwide Problem

Studies found there is a misrepresentation of minority and ELL students in special education

- Artiles, Rueda, Salazar & Higareda, 2005
- Sullivan, 2011
- Valenzuela, Copeland, Qi, & Park, 2006

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Not District Concern, Nationwide Problem

- Overrepresentation begins in late elementary school and continues through the high school years.
- ELL students are:
 - less likely to be placed in Least Restrictive Environment
 - more likely to be labeled with multiple disabilities(than their White, monolingual counterparts)

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“Silent Phase”

- 6 weeks-6 months
- Does not produce or speak language
- Receptively understands
- Cannot assess for special education
 - Not an accurate representation of ability

(Tennessee Department of Education, 2006-2012)

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BICS vs. CALP

- Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS)
- Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)
 - CALP Level 1: Preproduction
 - CALP Level 2: Early Production
 - CALP Level 3: Speech Emergence
 - CALP Level 4: Intermediate Fluency
 - CALP Level 5: Advanced Fluency
- Rate of Language Acquisition

(Olbera & Gomez-Cerrillo, 2011)

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So....there is no clear 'recipe' to determine whether to assess or not to assess.



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- Literature review suggests that children generally need one year to adjust to life in the USA.
- **However**, we do not want to delay services to a student in need.

Robertson, 2007
Tennessee Department of Education, 2006-2012

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National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) Guidelines

- U.S. norms may be inappropriate
- Use nonverbal procedures
- Use bilingual scales
- Informal procedures
 - Interviews
 - Observations
 - Assessment of Adaptive Functioning
 - Test-Teach-Test Strategies

Blatchley & Lau, 2010

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Summary

School's responsibility to:

- Screening procedures
- Implement interventions

Gather information through:

- Interviews
- Classroom observations
- Collection of histories (developmental, educational, and social)
- Collect progress monitoring data
(Blatchley & Lau, 2010)

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Massachusetts School Psychologist Association (MSPA) Guidelines

Aligned with NASP's guidelines

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When is it okay to refer?

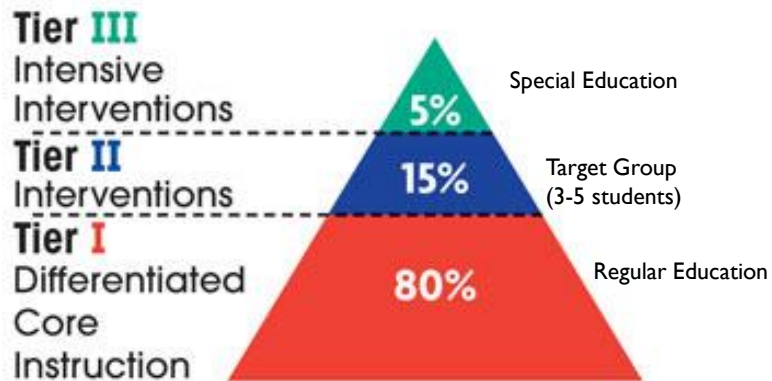
1. Documentation shows no progress or change resulting from instructional strategies, alternative instruction, or interventions.
2. The student has attended a U.S. school for a reasonable amount of time (e.g. one year).
3. ELL/bilingual staff show **data** supporting that the student is performing differently than peers (culture peers).
4. Parents have been contacted and agree.

(Robertson, 2007)

More than one recommended

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Response to Intervention (Rtl)



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Pre-referral Process

- Home language and culture
 - Acquisitions of both languages
 - Attendance history
 - Teacher concerns
 - Rate of Language Acquisition
 - Parent information: medical, developmental, academic history
- (Bender, 2009)

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Importance of Rtl with ELLs

- Progress compared to other ELLs with a similar background (culture peers).
- Data indicating that Tier I and Tier 2 interventions are not working.
Teachers should inform others about modifications to the content.

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Rtl: ELLs at High School Level

- Pre-referral Process
 - Easier at Elementary/Middle School level
 - Not necessarily a strength at High School level
- Should be utilized as:
 - Problem-solving
 - Intervention suggestions
 - Data gathering

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Special Education Referral \neq the solution

Special Education Referral =
part of the problem solving process


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Framingham Guidelines

- District Discussion Guidelines
 (“Red Flags”)

Elementary version

Secondary version



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District Discussion Guidelines (“Red Flags”)

- Background Information
 - Absences (interruptions in schooling or gaps in education)
 - Previous referrals
- Information Related to Language/ESL Status
 - Difficulty communicating effectively in native language
 - Lack of progress for two or more successive years on English proficiency records
- Information Related to Academic Performance
 - Documented teacher report of: poor comprehension/retention, inconsistent academic performance
 - (over a period of time, months and multiple modes of presentation)

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District Discussion Guidelines ("Red Flags")

- Social Emotional
 - Exposure to trauma
 - Medical difficulties
 - Adjusting to cultural changes
 - New rules/expectations
 - Family upbringing

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Posttest

1. Name one factor that can result in an immediate special education referral.
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(yes/no)
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Questions?



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