

***General Education Interventions/Problem Solving Procedures
For English Language Learners***

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Philosophy and Beliefs

All students have the right to a free and appropriate education, which is responsive to their skills, needs, learning styles, cultures, and languages.

Since Central Iowa is becoming a more diverse community than it was ten years ago, we need to recognize that there are more students coming to us with diverse needs, skills, and challenges. These skills, needs, and challenges are impacted by individual student characteristics such as health, family background, socio-economic level, cultural background, native language, educational experiences, and individual abilities/disabilities.

As responsible educators committed to offering and maximizing learning opportunities for all students, we need to develop a system to assess these students' strengths, needs, skills, and challenges using this information to plan instructional strategies.

Overview and Legal Requirements

There is a considerable body of federal legislation and court cases that impact instruction for English Language Learners (ELLs), beginning with Title VI, *Civil Rights Act*, 1964. A *May 25, 1970, Memorandum* from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare interpreted the *Civil Rights Act* to include the provision of equal educational opportunity to national origin minority group students whose English language proficiency is limited. The memorandum requires districts to open all instructional programs to ELLs by specifically addressing their language needs, but prohibits districts from assigning ELLs to special education programs based solely on language proficiency. It further requires districts to provide information to parents in a language that they understand. Chapter 280.4, *Uniform School Requirement, Iowa Code*, likewise requires special instruction in English as a second language or transitional bilingual education that must continue until the student is fully English proficient (*Educating Iowa's English Language Learners: A Handbook for Administrators and Teachers*, Iowa Department of Education, 2000). Title III, Part A of the 2002 reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind)* specifically addresses the requirements for school districts to identify, provide specialized language instruction, and provide the full range of academic content instruction to ELLs.

Sometimes English Language Learners do not make the progress in learning the English language and/or in learning academic content that their teachers believe they should. As part of the general education population, ELLs should participate in the General Education Intervention/Problem Solving (GEI/PS) process, as described in the *AEA 267 Special Education Procedures Manual* as a means of determining which interventions will enable the student to meet with success, or as the first step in identifying a true disability.

General Education Interventions/Problem Solving Process

According to the *AEA 267 Special Education Procedures Manual*, the GEI/PS process is “an interactive, ongoing process that requires parents, educators, caregivers, administrators, and support staff to collaborate to create interventions to meet the diverse needs of individuals.

The GEI/PS process shall be handled in a professional and confidential manner, and all documents shall be handled to preserve confidentiality.

The purposes of the GEI/PS process are:

- To identify and implement general education interventions which will lead to successful performance for individuals who are experiencing developmental, behavioral and/or academic learning problems.
- To monitor individual's performance directly and frequently over time.
- To use data-based decisions to design, implement and to make adjustments in interventions.
- To identify those individuals who require special education. (*GEI/Problem Solving*, 08/2003, 4-1)

Additional Considerations for English Language Learners

Throughout the GEI/PS process it is important to understand that students who are speakers of other languages need consideration of legal requirements and best practice. Additional requirements are stated in the *Iowa Administrative Rules of Special Education* and in Chapter 281.41.48(4)–104.(2) of the *Uniform School Requirement of the State of Iowa*. It is important not to discriminate against students who are learners of English by inappropriately providing special education services to students based on language or cultural variables rather than due to disability.

Ortiz and Yates provide several questions to be considered to help the team rule out factors other than disability as the source of difficulties. Some of these are:

- In addition to the general education teacher, have others (e.g., the ESL teacher, remedial program personnel, and parents) noted similar difficulties?
- Does the problem exist across contexts (e.g., in general education and ESL classes, at school, and at home)?
- Are the problems evident in the student's first language? For example, do native speakers of the student's language have difficulty understanding him or her? Does the student have difficulty following instructions in the native language as well as in English? Has the student not learned to read in the native language, despite effective literacy instruction in that language?
- Is the student's progress in acquiring English significantly different from that of peers who started at about the same level of English language proficiency and have had comparable instruction?
- Is there evidence that difficulties can be explained by cross-cultural differences?
- Are there other variables that could explain the difficulties? Such variables might include inconsistent school attendance or language variations typical of English Language Learners.
- Is there evidence of extreme test anxiety?
- Can problematic behaviors be explained by procedural mistakes in the assessment process (e.g., the child's age was calculated incorrectly)?

- Can problematic behaviors be explained by bias in operation before, during, or after the assessment? For example, bias is an issue when the student’s teacher refers all English Language Learners in the classroom for special education, when the instruments used are not normed for English Language Learners or the adaptations used are inappropriate, and when the assessor’s low expectations for student performance influence the administration and interpretation of results.
- Do data show that the student did not respond well to general education interventions?
- Are the assessment results consistent with the concerns of the student’s teachers and parents?” (A. Ortiz and J. Yates, “Considerations in the Assessment of English Language Learners Referred to Special Education,” in A. J. Artiles and A. A. Ortiz, Eds., *English Language Learners with Special Education Needs: Identification, Assessment, and Instruction*, Washington, D. C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 2002, pp 80 - 82).

During the GEI/PS process, participants will utilize the components described in the *AEA 267 Special Education Procedures Manual*. “These essential components are designed to meet the needs of the individual and ensure that the process is collaborative, ongoing, and data-driven. These components may be completed at various times throughout the process; however, all components will be implemented with integrity before consideration is given to entitlement to special education services” (pp. 4-1 – 4-2).

The following guidelines developed by Judith Placencia-Peinado will assist staff in ruling out language and acculturation through the use of the RIOT process:

Ruling Out Language and Acculturation through Reviews, Interviews, Observations, and Tests

Developed by Judith Plasencia-Peinado, Ph.D.

1. Provide services for English Language Learners (e.g., ESL, Sheltered English).
2. Compare the student's performance to the performance of similar acculturation peers who have had approximately the same number of years in: (a) school, (b) the US, (c) English-language instruction, (d) native-language instruction, and (e) ESL instruction.
3. Develop interventions based on the student's instructional level. For example, Maria is a 6th grader who has difficulty with completing math work. A problem analysis shows she can solve addition/subtraction problems with regrouping. However, she cannot solve multi-digit multiplication and division problems and has not mastered basic multiplication facts. An intervention may focus on teaching basic multiplication facts rather than focusing on work completion.
4. Collect weekly data (preferably two times per week) to monitor the effectiveness of the intervention and to graph the student's rate of progress.
5. English Language Learners need more interventions than English-speaking students because one is ruling out language and acculturation. Thus, one **must** demonstrate that several interventions were implemented, at the student's instructional level, and that the rate of progress was less than expected.
6. Set realistic intervention goals. For instance, if baseline data reveals that Jose, a 2nd grader, reads 15 words correctly in grade-level material in one minute, a realistic goal may be for Jose to gain 2 words per week. Thus, his goal may be, "in 4 weeks, given a 2nd grade passage, Jose will read aloud 23 words correctly in one minute."

In following the RIOT matrix (i.e., review, interview, observe, test) the same procedures that are used to assess English-speaking students are applicable when assessing English Language Learners. However, some of the following additional information may be needed:

Review

1. Review records to find out the student's home language.
2. Review records to find out the number of years the student has been in school. Often times students have interrupted schooling due to different circumstances, such as (a) war, (b) the distance between home and school, and (c) lack of transportation.
3. Review records to find out frequency of school changes. Students who move often may miss instruction of important concepts (e.g., subtraction with regrouping).

4. Review records to find out how many years of English-language instruction the student has received.
5. Review records to find out how many years of support services the student has received (e.g., ESL, Sheltered English, Title I, Bilingual Education).
6. Review records to find out how the student has performed when instructed in their primary language.
7. Review work samples and compare them to those of similar acculturation peers.

Interview

When working with interpreters: (a) inform them of their role, (b) make certain they are aware of the student's culture, and (c) make certain they know the educational terminology in both languages.

1. Interview parents, student, and significant others such as grandparents and older siblings. Grandparents and older siblings are often the primary caregivers. Ask them about items 1 – 6 in the Review section if you did not find that information when you reviewed the student's records. You may also wish to complete acculturation checklists/rating scales.
2. Interview the student about his/her understanding of the English language. Ask if he/she is able to speak to and understand peers and teachers when speaking in English.
3. Interview ESL teacher(s) regarding the student's performance compared to ESL students.
4. Interview classroom teacher(s) regarding the student's performance compared to other English Language Learners. Ask about the student's rate of acquisition of classroom rules and expectations.

Observe

1. Observe the student in different settings (e.g., math class, recess). Note the language the student uses to communicate with English-speaking peers, ELL peers, teachers, and family.
2. Observe the student and compare to similar acculturation peers in regular and ESL classrooms.
3. Observe the instruction to see if effective teaching strategies for English Language Learners are utilized and if attempts are made to modify instruction for the student.

Test

1. We expect students to perform at grade level English-language instruction. Thus, when assessing English Language Learners, test at grade level in English and compare their results to results of average students in the general population.
2. Test the student in his/her native language when a significant discrepancy is found between the student's performance and that of English speaking peers. Federal law mandates that students be tested in their native language to whatever extent possible.
3. Next, compare the student's test results to those of similar acculturation peers.
4. Test the student to determine language dominance and language proficiency.

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The following R.I.O.T. Table, adapted from *English Language Learners (ELL) Technical Manual* (Johnston, IA: Heartland Area Education Agency 11, 1999, pp. 26-29), presents language and cultural considerations for the domains of Instruction, Curriculum, Environment, and the Learner (I.C.E.L.).

R.I.O.T. Table

Review

DOMAINS	LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS	SOURCE	DATA OUTCOMES
I Instruction	How does the student respond to the instruction? Are instructional practices that are effective for ELL students utilized?	Permanent Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature of instructional demands reflected in paper-pencil tasks and materials (e.g., instructional approaches, pacing, highlighted books, pre-taught vocabulary)
C Curriculum	Are the curriculum materials appropriate for the language proficiency and acculturation of the student?	Permanent Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature of instructional demands reflected in curricular materials (e.g., books, worksheets, curriculum guides, task demands, pre-requisite skills, scope and sequence of curriculum)
E Environment	Are policies and procedures different for linguistically and culturally diverse students? Are policies and procedures culturally biased?	School Rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discipline policies and procedures that define what is deemed as “situationally appropriate”
L Learner	How does student's work compare to general peers? How does student's work compare to linguistically and culturally similar peers?	Permanent Products - General Peers' Work Similar Peers' Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard of performance of peers
		Cumulative Records <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language the student uses at home Number of years the student has been in school, yrs. Student has attended school in the United States, years of English language instruction Frequency of school changes General education services the student has received (e.g., ESL, Bilingual Education, Sheltered English, Title I) Consistency of academic performance from year to year Academic performance when instructed in native language Relationship of past test scores to present academic performance Past teachers/administrators experiences with child/home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patterns of behavior as reflected in teacher reports (teacher perceptions of the problem) and discipline records Onset and duration of the problem Interference with personal, interpersonal, and academic adjustment Settings where behavior of concern has occurred
		Health Records <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have translator available if student records are in native language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of health, vision, and/or hearing problems potentially related to the academic or behavior concern
		Student Work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the pattern of performance errors reflecting a lack of language proficiency or a skill deficit? Has the pattern of errors changed as the student has become more proficient in English? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patterns of performance errors reflecting skill deficits Interference with ability to profit from general education instruction Consistent skill and/or performance problems over time Settings where behavior of concern is evident
		Teacher's Grade Book	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student performance in relationship to setting demands (e.g., teacher expectations, task demands)
		BAT Records and Teacher Intervention Documentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What instructional strategies were used? What type of progress did the student make with individualized interventions? Is progress comparable to other similar peers? How many resources does the intervention require? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response to interventions as reflected in “Action Plans” and Progress Monitoring

Interview

DOMAINS	LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS	SOURCE	DATA OUTCOMES
I Instruction	<p>Are the instructional strategies appropriate?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperative Learning • Direct Instruction <p>Are the expectations for pacing and coverage of the curriculum realistic for linguistically and culturally diverse students? (Oral language proficiency will advance faster than academic skills)</p> <p>What is the student's degree of acculturation in the mainstream culture at school?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers' Expectations • Teachers' instructional practices • Teachers' reinforcement strategies • Expectations of the district for pacing and coverage of the curriculum
C Curriculum	<p>Is the philosophical orientation compatible with techniques that are appropriate for linguistically and culturally diverse students (e.g., theme units vs. concepts taught in isolation)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers • Relevant LEA personnel (e.g., curriculum directors, principals, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philosophical orientation of the curriculum (e.g., phonics, whole language, whole class reading, etc.)
E Environment	<p>How is the teacher assisting linguistically and culturally diverse students regarding classroom routines, rules, and procedures?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers • LEA personnel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom routines, rules, behavior management plans • School rules, discipline policy, etc.
	<p>Are the expectations significantly different at home for social skills, behavior, and responsibility?</p> <p>Is the expectation to responding to authority different at home than at school?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents • Home Language Surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavior management strategies reflecting parent expectations
L Learner	<p>How much does the student understand in English and in their native language?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directions • Instruction • Routines • Rules <p>Are there certain classes that are more successful for the student? If so, why?</p> <p>How does the student's behavior compare to general peers?</p> <p>How does the student's behavior compare to similar peers?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers (especially ESL teachers) • Relevant LEA personnel • Parents • Student • Significant others (e.g., older siblings, aunts/uncles, grandparents) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewees' perceptions of the problem – patterns, settings, nature of the problem, intensity, significance
	<p>What is the student's degree of acculturation to the US culture?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents • Significant others (e.g., older siblings, aunts/uncles, grandparents) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewee's provide information on important cultural and environmental factors (e.g., number of years in the US, native language proficiency, English language proficiency)

Observe

DOMAINS	LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS	SOURCE	DATA OUTCOMES
I Instruction	What are the instructional strategies used in the classroom?	Setting Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective teaching practices, teacher expectations
	<p>Does it appear that the student is benefiting from the instructional strategies?</p> <p>What variables of effective instruction for ELL students are being utilized? (e.g., pre-teaching vocabulary, use of visuals aids, highlighted text, cooperative learning, use of controlled vocabulary)</p> <p>After instruction has been provided can the student accurately complete the work?</p> <p>Is teacher sensitive to linguistically and culturally diverse students' difficulty in understanding the instruction?</p>	Systematic Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Antecedents, consequences
C Curriculum			
E Environment	<p>Is the classroom culturally sensitive to linguistically and culturally diverse students?</p> <p>Are the policies and procedures culturally biased?</p> <p>Which classroom setting is the student most successful? (e.g., ESL, Migrant Education, Title I, General Education)</p>	Setting Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical environment (seating arrangement, equipment, lighting, furniture, temperature, noise levels) Classroom routines and behavior management Demographics of peer group
	<p>Are the expectations for the student and general peers comparable?</p> <p>Are the expectations for the student and similar peers comparable?</p>	Systematic Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer performance as performance standard Interaction patterns
L Learner	<p>What language does the student use in different settings? (e.g., recess, hallway, classroom)</p> <p>What language does the student use when speaking to different people? (e.g., teacher, general peers, similar peers, family, siblings)</p> <p>Does student interact appropriately with grade-level peers?</p> <p>Does student demonstrate skills necessary to be successful in the different educational environments?</p>	<p>Anecdotal Recording</p> <p>Checklists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spotting Language Problems Checklist Student Oral Language Matrix (SOLOM) Teacher Rating Scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature of behavior of concern Patterns of behavior of concern Response to interventions as reflected in informal progress monitoring
	<p>How does the student's behavior compare to general peers?</p> <p>How does the student's behavior compare to similar peers?</p>	Systematic Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature and dimensions (frequency, duration, latency, intensity) of target behavior
		Systematic progress monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response to interventions

Test

DOMAINS	LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS	SOURCE	DATA OUTCOMES
I Instruction			
C Curriculum		Readability of texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty levels of textbooks
E Environment			
L Learner	<p>How do the student's academic skills compare to the general education population at grade level?</p> <p>How do the student's academic skills compare to the culturally and linguistically similar population at grade level?</p>	<p>Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • Spanish <p>District-wide Assessments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluency in oral reading, math computation, and written expression • If significant discrepancy is found between the student's performance and that of general peers, test the student in native language
		Curriculum Based Assessment (CBA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student performance on curriculum-based tasks in specific skill areas (including oral language – may want to use story retells)
	<p>How do the student's classroom test results compare to general peers?</p> <p>How do the student's classroom test results compare to similar peers?</p> <p>Are the tests modified?</p> <p>What does the data indicate from interventions regarding student's needs?</p>	Classroom tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student academic performance on classroom measures of achievement • Interference with ability to profit from general ed. instruction • Resistance to intervention (informal progress monitoring)
	<p>What is the student's language proficiency in English?</p> <p>What is the student's language proficiency in their native language?</p>	Norm-referenced tests (individual and group)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student academic performance in relationship to a norm group as a performance standard • Personal trait data in relationship to a norm group as a standard of appropriateness and reflecting personal adjustment
	Which is the student's dominant language English or native language?	Criterion-referenced tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student academic performance, including identifying skill strengths and weaknesses
		Self-reports (e.g., checklists, inventories, rating scales, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal trait data reflecting student perception of the problematic situation and student's personal adjustment

Language Proficiency Measures

An essential step in any evaluation process for an ELL student is to evaluate the student's level of English language proficiency. One of the requirements of the *No Child Left Behind* legislation is to evaluate language proficiency annually with a standardized measure and the team should determine if a complete standardized language assessment has been given within the preceding six months. This assessment will yield scores in the listening, speaking, reading, writing domains of second language acquisition, and a composite score for comprehension. Contact the AEA 267 ELL Consultant for guidance as to approved standardized language assessments.

Informal language assessments can also add important information about the student's proficiency in English. One example of an informal assessment is the Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM), which is given below with directions for administration and interpretation. Contact the AEA 267 ELL Consultant for additional informal assessment techniques that can yield valuable information about an individual ELL student.

Student Oral Language Observation Matrix SOLOM

Purpose:

The SOLOM is an informal rating tool that has proven a useful guide for teacher judgment of oral language proficiency as observed in a school setting. It can be used to determine English acquisition phase, diagnose student needs, and record the progress of individuals and groups. Some success has been reported in using the SOLOM to rate languages other than English.

Description:

The SOLOM has five scales for rating key dimensions of oral language. Each of these five scales may be rated from one to five, yielding a total score range from five to twenty-five. A higher score indicates greater proficiency in that area of language. The scales are:

1. Comprehension – the degree to which a person understands spoken language.
2. Fluency – the degree to which a person speaks effortlessly and without hesitation.
3. Vocabulary – the degree to which a person uses a wide variety of words appropriately.
4. Pronunciation – the degree to which a person's speech is readily comprehensible.
5. Grammar – the degree to which a person uses the language correctly.

The SOLOM is not a standardized test but has been used widely throughout California since about 1978 to supplement language proficiency assessments based on standardized language proficiency tests. Preliminary work has been done to standardize training or

raters and to ascertain the validity and reliability of the SOLOM. A one hour training session is recommended for those who will use this instrument.

Administration:

The SOLOM should be used by persons who are native speakers of the language and who are familiar with the student to be rated. Ideally, the classroom teacher will rate the English language proficiency of a student after several weeks of instruction. There is no test to be administered; rather, the teacher needs a few quiet moments to reflect on the language skill of the given student and to select the description that most closely matches the current proficiency of that student.

A rating is immediately available and can be used to group or regroup students for ESL lessons, to report student progress, or to guide refinements to instructional methods and materials.

From: *Language Proficiency Handbook: A Practitioners' Guide to Instructional Assessment*, January 1999.

Student Oral Language Observation Matrix: SOLOM

Student Name: _____

Rater Name: _____

Language of Student _____

Grade: _____ School: _____ Date: _____

Total Score: _____

	1 Non English Speaker	2 Beginner	3 Limited English Speaker	4 High Intermediate	5 Fluent English Speaker	Score
Comprehension	Cannot understand even simple conversation.	Has great difficulty following everyday social conversation, even when words are spoken slowly and repeated frequently.	Understands most of what is said at slower than normal speed with some repetitions.	Understands nearly everything at normal speed, although occasional repetition may be necessary.	Understands everyday conversation and normal classroom discussion without difficulty.	
Fluency	Speech is so halting and fragmentary that conversation is virtually impossible.	Usually hesitant, often forced into silence because of language limitations.	Everyday conversation and classroom discussion frequently disrupted by student's search for correct manner of expression.	Everyday conversation and classroom discussion generally fluent, with occasional lapses while student searches for the correct manner of expression.	Everyday conversation and classroom discussion fluent and effortless; approximately those of a native speaker.	
Vocabulary	Vocabulary limitations so severe that conversation is virtually impossible.	Difficult to understand because of misuse of words and very limited vocabulary.	Frequent use of wrong words; conversation somewhat limited because of inadequate vocabulary.	Occasional use of inappropriate terms and/or rephrasing of the ideas because of limited vocabulary.	Vocabulary and idioms approximately those of a native speaker.	
Pronunciation	Pronunciation problems so severe that speech is virtually unintelligible.	Difficult to understand because of pronunciation problems; must frequently repeat in order to be understood.	Concentration required of listener; occasional misunderstandings caused by pronunciation problems.	Always intelligible, although listener conscious of a definite accent and occasional inappropriate intonation pattern.	Pronunciation and intonation approximately those of a native speaker.	
Grammar	Errors in grammar and word order so severe that speech is virtually unintelligible.	Difficult to understand because of errors in grammar and word order; must often rephrase or restrict speech to basic patterns.	Frequent errors in grammar and word order; meaning occasionally obscured.	Occasional errors in grammar or word order; meaning not obscured.	Grammar and word order approximately those of a native speaker.	

Parent Interview

The parents or guardians of the ELL student can also provide valuable information. It may be necessary to have an interpreter present while a team member interviews the parents. The following is a parent interview form recommended by the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE). Following that is guidance on the use of interpreters in the evaluative process.

NABE RECOMMENDED PARENT INTERVIEW

Name of the Student:

Date of Birth:

Grade:

Name of Teacher:

Name of Parent Interviewed:

Date of Parent Interview:

With whom does your child live? _____

How many siblings does your child have? _____

Where is your child in the birth order? _____

What language or languages are spoken in your home? _____

At what age did your child begin to speak? _____

Would you say your child speaks clearly for his or her age? Yes No

How would you describe your child's behavior at home? _____

What activities does your child enjoy at home? _____

Does your child enjoy reading or looking at books? _____

Did your child go to school before arriving in the U.S.? Yes No

If so, how many years did your child go to school? _____

Were there any years your child was not able to attend school? Yes No

How many? _____ Why was your child unable to attend school? _____

**NABE RECOMMENDED
PARENT INTERVIEW
(CONTINUED)**

Did your child learn to read in school before coming to the U.S.? Yes No

Did your child have any difficulty with reading in your native language? Yes No

If so, what type of difficulty? _____

Does your child enjoy coming to school? Yes No

What activities does your child enjoy the most in school? _____

Were there any complications during the pregnancy or delivery of this child? Please Explain. _____

Does your child have any health problems or has he or she had any in the past?
 Yes No

If so, what are/were they? _____

Is your child currently taking any medications? _____

Are there any other issues related to your child that you feel the school should know? _____

National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) & ILIAD Project (2002). *Determining Appropriate Referrals of English Language Learners to Special Education, A Self-Assessment Guide for Principals*. Washington, DC: National Association for Bilingual Education; and Arlington, VA: Council for Exceptional Children, pp.42-3. No copyright restrictions.

Use of Interpreters

Iowa Administrative Rules of Special Education (2000) state that agencies have a responsibility to ensure that parents understand the proceedings at a meeting. Therefore, an interpreter is needed when communicating with individuals who have limited English skills. This communication may include telephone calls, notifications of meetings, meetings, and home visits. The rules also state that agencies have a responsibility to assess students in their native language. When bilingual professionals are not available, interpreters may be utilized (Fradd & Wilen, 1990).

What is the role of the interpreter?

Fradd and Wilen (1990, p. 10) state that “The primary role of interpreters and translators in the school setting is to be a conduit for oral and written communication between limited English proficient students and families and English-speaking school personnel.” An interpreter conveys information from one language orally while a translator conveys information in writing (Langdon & Cheng 2002). The information in this section primarily applies to interpreters.

What skills should the interpreter have?

Langdon and Cheng (2002) describe six linguistic skills that an interpreter should have. They are as follows:

1. Oral or written proficiency with two languages.
2. Knowledge of two cultures with an understanding of the significance of nonverbal communication.
3. Ability to convey the same meaning in two languages.
4. Knowledge of terminology that applies to a designated specialty.
5. Familiarity with dialectal differences within a language.
6. Ability to adapt to and process various pronunciations and grammatical uses inherent in the speech of individuals with communication disorders. (pp. 101-102)

Collier (2000) recommends that the interpreter's linguistic skills include an ability to adjust to different types of language usage, e.g., colloquial or more dialectical variations and social and academic language. It is also emphasized that an interpreter should have the ability to memorize and recall auditory information (Collier, 2000; Kayser, 1998; Langdon, 1994; Roseberry-McKibbin, 2002).

Collier (2000) states that the preparation, orientation, and training of translators and interpreters must address the following competency expectations:

1. The ability to maintain professional conduct in all situations.
2. The ability to maintain and to explain the need for confidentiality.
3. The ability to remain impartial and neutral.
4. The ability to be straightforward, to not accept an assignment beyond one's capabilities, and being able to ask for help or clarification when necessary.

5. The capacity to display respect for the authority of the administrator or the diagnostician.
6. The ability to work as part of the team with the education staff. (p. 136-137)

What are the three steps in the interpretation process for meetings, assessment or intervention?

A number of authors (Artiles & Ortiz, 2002; Collier, 2000; Fradd & Wilen, 1990; Kayser, 1998; Langdon & Cheng, 2002) recommend that specific activities take place prior to, during, and after the process of interpreting. Langdon & Cheng (2002) state that the success of the interpreting process is enhanced when the following three steps are used:

1. Briefing: The team leader should inform the interpreter of the purpose and the desired outcomes of the conference, assessment session or intervention session. An agenda should be developed. The interpreter should provide input on methods that will facilitate the process.
2. Interaction: This step includes the actual time that the team leader and interpreter work together during the meeting or session. They should work together collaboratively and act as a united team.
3. Debriefing: The team leader and the interpreter should review the outcomes of the conference, assessment session or intervention session. The student's responses or the dynamics of the meeting or session should be reviewed. Follow-up plans should be outlined.

It should be noted that Collier (2000), Fradd & Wilen (1990), and Langdon & Cheng (2002) write at length about the kind of information that should be discussed during each step.

Do I need the consent of parents to use an interpreter?

When using an interpreter to conduct a formal assessment, it is best practice to obtain the written consent of the parent to use an interpreter. This permission can be documented on the parent consent for assessment form (Fradd & Wilen, 1990).

Selected References

- Artiles, A.J., & Ortiz, A.A. (2002). *English language learners with special education needs*. McHenry, IL: Center for Applied Linguistics and Delta Systems.
- Collier, C. (2000). *Separating difference from disability: Assessing diverse learners*. Ferndale, WA: CrossCultural Developmental Education Services.
- Fradd, S.H. & Wilen, D. K. (1990). *Using interpreters and translators to meet the needs of handicapped minority students and their families*. Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education.

- Kayser, H. (1998). *Assessment and intervention resources for Hispanic children*. San Diego, CA: Singular Publishing Group.
- Langdon, H.W., (1994). *The interpreter translator process in the educational setting*. Sacramento, CA: Resources in Special Education.
- Langdon, H.W. & Cheng, L.L. (2002). *Collaborating with interpreters and translators: A guide for communication disorders professionals*. Eau Claire, WI: Thinking Publications.
- Roseberry-McKibbin, C. (2002). *Multicultural students with special language needs* (2nd ed.). Oceanside, CA: Academic Communication Associates.

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Iowa Speech-Language Pathologist English Language Learner Guidelines Manual, 2004.

Reasonable Accommodations for English Language Learners

There are many strategies that teachers utilize to enhance the opportunities for English Language Learners to be successful in their classrooms. The following list provides specific ideas for classroom, ESL, and resource teachers to implement to assist ELLs who are experiencing difficulty in the classroom. It is important to recognize that this list is not exhaustive.

- Repeat, rephrase, reiterate, restate, reword
- Allow student to partner with English speaker
- Label items in the classroom
- Provide Cloze passages for the student from the text or from class notes
- Find lower grade or alternative materials that cover similar content but have more illustrations and less language
- Use videos and films when possible
- Allow oral assessment
- Use graphic organizers
- Use read-along cassettes and books
- Set up a listening station where the student can record his/her voice
- Use software
- Use jazz chants, choral reading, rhymes, drawing
- Accompany verbal directions with hand signals
- Introduce new words in context

- Use picture dictionaries – purchased or created by the student
- Model rather than correct mispronounced words
- Use pre-reading strategies
- Stick to routines
- List and review instructions frequently
- Summarize often
- Have students keep journals of pictures and writing
- Use language experience approach – follow event with student dictation
- Use cooperative learning
- Allow extended time for testing
- Provide one-on-one testing setting
- Read instructions of assessment aloud, repeat, translate
- Have familiar person administer test
- Allow student to use bilingual dictionary
- Shorten assignments
- Modify assignments
- Peer tutoring

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General Education Interventions/Problem Solving Team Decision

Once the GEI/PS process has been followed and the student is still experiencing difficulty in school, it is time to consider a referral for individual initial evaluation for special education support. However, it is important to make the referral only if each of the following items has been carefully considered and addressed:

- “The teacher uses instructional strategies known to be effective for English Language Learners.
- Neither clinical teaching nor interventions designed by teacher support teams have resolved learning difficulties.
- Other general education alternatives also have proven unsuccessful.” (Ortiz & Yates, *op. cit.*, p. 67).

Furthermore, according to Ortiz and Yates, “English Language Learners do not lose their right to bilingual education or ESL services when they qualify for special education services. On the contrary, students should be educated in the least restrictive environment (*Individuals with Disabilities Act Amendments*, 1997) – that is, they should have the opportunity to study with peers who are not disabled and to remain in bilingual education, general education, and ESL classes to the maximum extent possible. This guiding principle suggests that English Language Learners should be provided a continuum of placement alternatives that support native language and English language development needs at the same time that they address disability-related needs. A focus of the annual review is the appropriateness of the IEP, particularly regarding a student’s access to services from general and special education personnel qualified to meet the needs of English Language Learners with disabilities (Ortiz & Yates, *op.cit.*, p. 83).”

Recommended Resources for the General Education Intervention/Problem Solving Process for English Language Learners

Artiles, A. A., and Ortiz, A. A., Eds. *English Language Learners with Special Education Needs: Identification, Assessment, and Instruction*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics, 2002.

Banks, Ronald. *Sensitivity to Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in Early Intervention Family Information Gathering*, Technical Report #9, 2001.
<http://clas.uiuc.edu/techreport/tech9.html>

Bilingual Health and Developmental History Questionnaire, Academic Communication Associates, PO Box 586249, Oceanside, CA 92058-6249

Collier, C. *Separating Difference from Disability: Assessing Diverse Learners*. Cross Cultural Developmental Education Services, 2000. www.crosscultured.com

Determining Appropriate Referrals of English Language Learners to Special Education: A Self-Assessment Guide for Principals. Washington, DC: National Association for Bilingual Education; and Arlington, VA: Council for Exceptional Children, 2002.

ELL Companion to Reducing Bias in Special Education Evaluation. Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning, 2002.
http://cfl.state.mn.us/SPECED/ell_companion.htm/

Illinois State Board of Education, English Language Learning: Bilingual Special Education Resource Links, <http://www.isbe.net/bilingual/htmls/bilsp.htm>
Serving English Language Learners with Disabilities, 2002.

Iowa Department of Education
<http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/is/ell/documents.html>
Guidelines for the Inclusion of ELL in K-12 Assessment, 2004
Educating Iowa's English Language Learners: A Handbook for Administrators and Teachers, 2000.
<http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/cfcs/slp/index.html>
Iowa Speech-Language Pathologist English Language Learner Guidelines Manual, 2004.

Kayser, H. *Assessment and Intervention Resource for Hispanic Children*, 1998. Singular Publishing Group, Inc. 800-521-8545

Roseberry-McKibbin, C. *Multicultural Students with Special Language Needs: Practical Strategies for Assessment and Intervention*, 2002. Academic Communication Associates 888-758-9558