

A Response To Intervention Model for English Learners: A Practitioner's Perspective

TIER 1 DESCRIPTION: Core Instruction which includes English language development; support to access core; prevention of failure with differentiation; General Education with in-class small group re-teaching/intervention; adjustments to General Education

Considerations:

- a) Primary language reading instruction 1) develops literacy skills quickly, 2) promotes reading in English, and can be carried out as children are learning other academic content in English.
- b) If primary language instruction is not available, classroom re-teaching (i.e. small-group intervention) and support should use preview-review in primary language.
- c) Effective ELD should provide explicit teaching of features of English syntax, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation in meaningful contexts.
- d) Direct teach transfer of skills; we should not assume that this is automatic.
- e) In attempts to construct L2, E1 will use L1 and mix grammars. This “language interference” is common.
- f) Silent period may be longer for students with L1 delays. Respond and don't wait.
- g) EL may have developed receptive in English and both receptive/expressive in primary language. Expect vocabulary domains to develop unequally. Need to assess both languages to get a true understanding of what the student knows.
- h) Language assessment (CELDT) may indicate beginning levels in both languages. A popular school recommendation is to place in ENGLISH ONLY. It is better to place in primary language instruction or support to be able to bridge the receptive home language to English.
- i.) Examine the match between curriculum demands and level of English proficiency to provide appropriate sheltered content.
- j) Language and culture are viewed as an additive resource to plan lessons.
- k) Teacher's response to “lack of progress” should be immediate and not “wait and see”.
- l) Use of instructional aides is dependent on their level of training. In other words, don't give the lowest EL to the individual with the least amount of training.
- m) Universal screenings (especially in primary grades) do not take into account developmental language levels of the variety of English Learners. See e and g.
- n) ELD standards are used throughout the day to provide pathways to academic standards.
- o) Teams needs to understand normal progression of English Language Development in order to not overestimate the amount students who should go to Tier 2 and to examine ELD program implementation.
- p) 80% of students will respond to interventions and will not necessitate Tier 2.

Guiding Questions:

1. How has general education instruction considered the cultural and linguistic need of the EL? (ELD and content areas)
2. Is instruction targeted to student's level of English proficiency?
3. How has the pacing been adjusted for ELs?
4. How prepared is the teacher to meet the needs of the English Learner? (go beyond the "authorization")
5. What was the student's last grade attendance in the native country?
6. How many years has this student received instruction in the USA?
7. Have there been any gaps in the educational history?
8. What is the student's level of academic and linguistic proficiency in the native language?
9. What types of code switching does the EL display? Is he/she effective?
10. Has language loss been considered?
11. Was this student an infant bilingual?
12. Are both languages monitored regularly?
13. What were the EL preschool experiences?
14. How does the target EL compare with other peers?
15. What specific strategies for EL have been used in general education and in intervention?
16. How has primary language been used to support learning?
17. What baseline data has been gathered?
18. What were the results of in-class interventions of 6-8 weeks?
19. What specific Tier 1 interventions have been implemented and documented that address appropriate linguistic and culturally appropriate instruction?
20. Who on the RTI/SST Team is well grounded in the research on EL?
21. Who has collaborated to identify problem areas, identify intervention solutions, investigate student background, and monitor progress?
22. How have the parents been involved in the addressing of the problem?
23. How are site administrators monitoring the performance of EL at Tier 1 Intervention?
24. What funds will support Tier 1 activities to adequately address the needs of ELs?
25. OTHER?

TIER 2 DECSRIPTION: Supplemental; Core Replacement with Intervention; Small Group Setting outside of general education/ double block/ core replacement. Before and after school intervention. Problem-solving approach or program approach

Considerations:

- a) Strategic interventions should specifically address the instructional areas the EL is doing poorly in.
- b) A specialist or teacher that is highly trained should provide interventions.
- c) Use of primary language for targeted intensive instruction, one-on-one, should provide data needed to determine “language difference” versus “learning disability.
- d) SBE adopted intervention programs should address the language needs of EL.
- e) Assessments are analyzed to determine progress in learning.
- f) Intervention in L1 is supported by research (i.e. receptive vocabulary in English was enhanced when words were first taught in Spanish).
- g) Intervention in L2 is supported by research (i.e. develop listening/speaking before introducing print; lexical work is done with familiar concepts and language).
- h) Stuttering, hesitations, repetitions may occur at the beginning levels of English with no history of the occurrence in L1. Students don’t need therapy. Teachers need to examine to determine if high anxiety classrooms. Children who may have outgrown these manifestations in L1 but reoccurrence are observed in L2, may need therapy. Parent interviews will rule out cause.
- i) Intermediate EL may “fossilize” at this level as further language development is halted in many ELD programs. There are many assumptions made: ELs don’t speak with an accent so they don’t need ELD; that this is the best the immigrants can do; that students are not motivated to succeed and speak correct English, etc.
- j) At the intermediate level, more referrals occur for EL. This is the thinking: since students can speak “English”, language assistance as an intervention has been provided, So if the level of reading and writing is not at grade level, then perhaps there is a handicapping condition. Testing in L1 may also yield low results (actually language loss of the primary language) and confirms the assumption that the EL is disabled. An over representation of EL thus occurs.
- k) Identify primary language support/instruction who are bilingual with academic preparation. Language Tutors can be located at universities, court services, places of worship, and hospitals. They need training to be able to target instruction.
- l) Adhere to all of Tier 1 as best practices for differentiation.
- m) 15% of students will respond at this level and will not necessitate Tier III.

Guiding Questions

1. How will the Master schedule be adjusted to accommodate this targeted group?
2. What are the criteria for placement in intervention courses?
3. What curriculum-based assessments will provide valuable baseline data?
4. Will instruction/intervention be in a small group during school time? If outside of the day, how will you guarantee that students will come (before/after school/Saturday)?
5. What areas does the EL respond to in intervention?
6. What adjustments can be made to ensure that if the EL is recycled back to Tier 1, that general education will support his/her needs?
7. Are teachers, language tutors, specialists, etc aware of the English Learner's language and cultural background?
8. How has primary language instruction been documented for targeted intervention to determine "language difference" versus "learning disability"?
9. Do teachers know how to analyze writing samples to determine E1 level of mastery of English?
10. Do work samples exhibit the same problems across content?
11. What test modifications/ interpretations take into account the EL language proficiency levels across the four domains of listening, speaking, reading and writing in progressing monitoring?
12. How has the teacher made a special effort to establish a relationship?
13. Have you shadowed this student to further determine his/her needs?
14. Are the teachers providing intervention given time to collaborate, discuss and analyze EL data?

TIER 3 DISCRPTION: Intervention Programs; Assessment Referral and Instructional Placement outside of General Education

Considerations

- a) Intensive Interventions use SBE adopted programs that are designed for EL.
- b) Multidisciplinary teams need training and experience in differentiating language differences from learning disabilities from the available student data.
- c) Special Education Interventions continue with differentiation.
- d) Adhere to all of Tier 1 and 2 linguistic differentiations.
- e) 2-7% will need Tier 3 level of intervention throughout most of their educational experience.

Guiding Questions

1. How has the ELL Specialist collaborated with intervention teachers?
2. How does the EL differ from peers in level of performance across time?
3. How has the site administrator as part of the RTI Team collaborated to identify problem area, identify intervention solutions, investigate student background, and monitor progress?
4. If RTI intervention results of analysis reveal a “suspected handicap”, how will the team ensure that the primary language is used in cognitive and academic testing?
5. How will the district obtain a qualified examiner?
6. Who will ensure that at the IEP development, the linguistic needs of the student is included?
7. What training has the teacher to address the unique needs of EL with special needs?
8. Have attempts been made to place EL with low-incidence special needs with bilingual staff?