

RTI: Considerations for English Language Learners (ELLs)

Data-Based Decision Making

What information do I need in order to make appropriate decisions regarding ELLs?

When making decisions regarding appropriate placements for ELLs or the effectiveness of a particular intervention or curriculum for ELLs, school personnel must consider additional data points beyond screening and progress monitoring data. Factors such as first and second language acquisition; methods and programs for instruction in the native language; and the interaction among linguistic, cognitive, and academic development are all areas to be considered so that the evaluation of ELLs, whether through screening or progress monitoring, can be conducted equitably and appropriately. School personnel should review students' records and talk to students and their parents to obtain information on the following data points:

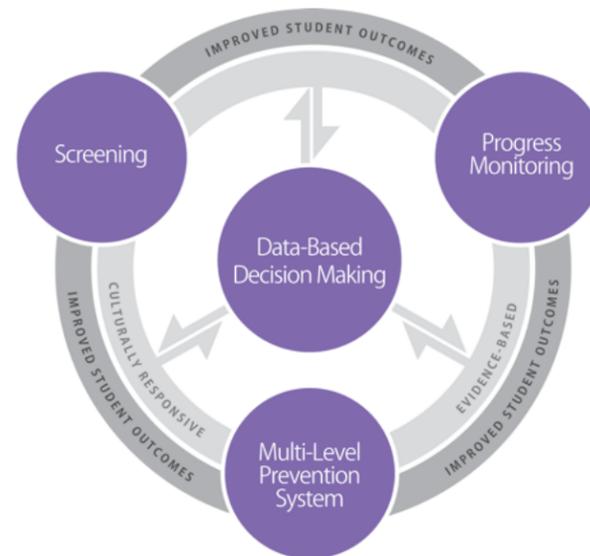
- Native language (L1) skills
- Cultural values and beliefs
- Life experiences and assets
- Prior formal education (in L1 and L2)
- Second language (L2) skills

Screening

How do you identify ELLs who are potentially at risk?

A limited number of tools have been researched specifically for use with ELLs. Validity may be a concern because assessment results could be influenced by students' language, cultural, and experiential backgrounds.

- Use tools with demonstrated reliability and validity to identify and monitor students' needs for instructional support in reading in both L1 and L2.
- Assess students' language skills in L1 and L2 to provide an appropriate context regarding evaluation of current levels of performance.



Defining RTI

- Response to intervention integrates assessment and intervention within a multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and to reduce behavioral problems.
- With RTI, schools use data to identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student's responsiveness.
- RTI may be used as part of the determination process for identifying students with specific learning disabilities or other disabilities.

Progress Monitoring

How do you determine adequate progress for ELLs?

It may take longer for instruction to have the desired impact with ELLs, but this does not necessarily mean the student has a specific learning disability.

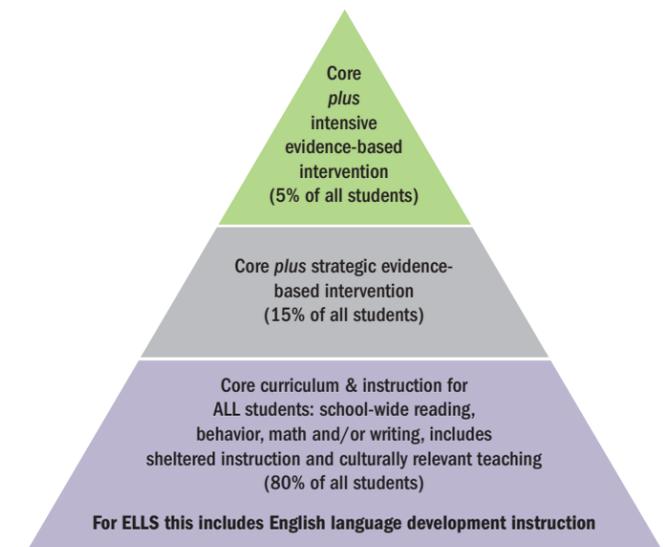
- Set the same goals—grade-level standards—for ELLs as for everyone else, and use the same measures to determine achievement.
- It may be helpful also to set short- and long-term intermediate goals as ELLs work toward meeting the grade-level standards. Depending on what these are, it may be appropriate to use a test or a portfolio to determine when these goals have been met.
- Monitor student progress in all languages of instruction.

Multi-Level Prevention System

What evidence-based interventions should be used with ELLs?

Few intervention programs have included ELLs in their norming samples. Therefore, we must use what we know about effective instruction in literacy and instruction for ELLs for instruction at all levels of the multi-level prevention system.

- 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.
- Consider students' cultural and linguistic needs, and adjust instruction accordingly.



Reference

Brown, J. E., & Sanford, A. (2011). *RTI for English language learners: Appropriately using screening and progress monitoring tools to improve instructional outcomes*. Washington, DC: National Center on Response to Intervention. Retrieved August 11, 2011, <http://www.rti4success.org/resourcetype/rti-english-language-learners-appropriately-using-screening-and-progress-monitoring-too>

National Center on Response to Intervention

1000 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW
Washington, DC 20007
Phone: 877-784-4225
Fax: 202-403-6844
Web: <http://www.rti4success.org>

Additional Contacts

Center on Instruction: www.centeroninstruction.org
IDEA Partnership: www.ideapartnership.org
RTI Action Network: www.rtinetwork.org

About the National Center on Response to Intervention

Through funding from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs, American Institutes for Research and researchers from Vanderbilt University and the University of Kansas have established the National Center on Response to Intervention. The Center provides technical assistance to states and districts and builds the capacity of states to assist districts in implementing proven response to intervention frameworks.



National Center on Response to Intervention
<http://www.rti4success.org>



This document was produced under U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs Grant No. H326E070004 to American Institutes for Research. Grace Zamora Durán and Tina Diamond served as the project officers. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the Department of Education. No official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any product, commodity, service or enterprise mentioned in this publication is intended or should be inferred. This product is public domain. Authorization to reproduce it in whole or in part is granted. While permission to reprint this publication is not necessary, the citation should be: National Center on Response to Intervention (August, 2011). *RTI Considerations for English Language Learners (ELLs)*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, National Center on Response to Intervention.