Response to Intervention for English Learners: Big Ideas and Myth Busters

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What are the Key Features of RTI?

- A systems-approach that assesses all learners early in the instructional process to identify those who may have difficulties becoming a reader.
- At the bottom tiers, decision-making teams may include members similar to a pre-referral team but the focus is on intervention, not referral to special education.
- When EL students are the focus of concern, an ESL/bilingual specialist must be included throughout all tiers and decisions.
- Provides tiered-levels of support for students identified through screening that need instruction beyond core to acquire reading skills.
What are the Key Features of RTI (cont.)?

- The levels of support become increasingly intense through three or four tiers (e.g., smaller group sizes, frequency and amount of intervention, frequency of progress monitoring).
- Uses data to make instructional decisions.
- All Instruction and interventions are research-based.
- At the highest tier, students may be referred for a special education evaluation.
- One of the main goals is to ensure that all students are proficient readers by third grade.
RTI for ELs

**Tier 1: Universal**
- Appropriate, effective and evidence-based core curriculum and instruction for ALL students
- For English Learners, ELD is provided and is a core subject—NOT an intervention
- 80% of each student group are successful

**Tier 2: Strategic**
- Core plus strategic, evidence-based intervention; a “double dose;”
- Must include an oracy component for Els
- 15% of each subgroup may need instruction at this intensity

**Tier 3: Intensive**
- Intensive instruction
- Must include an oracy component for Els
- 5% of each subgroup may need instruction at this intensity

**Interventions**
- Supplant core
- Supplement core
- Support core
### RTI IS:

- A schoolwide process
- Everyone’s responsibility
- Collaborative teams determining what will work for each student
- Recursive
- Predicated upon effective intervention for all students in general education

### RTI IS NOT

- A path toward special education
- The responsibility of any one person
- A one-size-fits-all approach
- Unidirectional
- Evidence-based instruction and interventions for some
Overarching Principles and Myth Busters

- For English Learners (ELs) literacy and language instruction must be aligned and language is intentionally taught throughout curriculum matched to students’ proficiency level in the language of instruction.
- Research on general outcome measures, such as DIBELs/IDEL and Aimsweb/MIDE, indicate the measures predict as well for EL students as English-only (EO) students.
Overarching Principles and Myth Busters

- These types of measures are **not** appropriate for students:
  - who are deaf (fine for students with mild to moderate hearing loss)
  - with fluency or oral motor speech disabilities (e.g., dysfluent speech)
  - learning to read in a language other than English. If they are receiving Spanish literacy instruction, IDEL or MIDE measures should be used.
  - with severe disabilities whose long-term goal is functional use of environmental print
Overarching Principles and Myth Busters

- Placement into special education programs in order to provide small group and/or intensive support for ELs must NOT occur. This is a violation of a child’s civil right to appropriate instruction.
- ESL/ELD program instruction IS an entitlement program and must be provided to all eligible students.
- For ELs, ESL/ELD instruction is a core program just as reading and math is.
- In other words, ESL/ELD is NOT an intervention.
Overarching Principles and Myth Busters

- The IDEL (Indicadores Dinámicos del Éxito en la Lectura) is not a direct translation of DIBELs.
- IDEL takes into account the linguistic structure of Spanish.
- IDEL is based on the principles of how children learn to read in an alphabetic language.
Common Questions

Are general outcome measures such as curriculum-based instruction (CBMs) valid for ELs?

- Yes. Research indicates that they identify which students likely need additional support to become good readers and are effective in monitoring their progress in acquiring those skills (Domínguez de Ramírez & Shapiro, 2007; Fien, Baker, Chaparro, Baker, & Preciado, J., 2011; Leafstedt, Richards & Gerber, 2004).
Common Questions

How do I know what to instruct and assess at each grade level?
See next slides...
Aimsweb

- LNF: Letter Naming Fluency
- LSF: Letter Sound Fluency
- PSF: Phoneme Segmentation Fluency
- NWF: Nonsense Word Fluency
- R-CBM: Reading-Curriculum Based Measurement
- MAZE: (measure of comprehension)
- WE-CBM: Written Expression Curriculum-Based Measure
## Aimsweb

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<th>KINDERGARTEN</th>
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# AIMSweb

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<tr>
<th>GRADE 2</th>
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<tr>
<td>Winter; R-CBM Reading</td>
<td>Fall; R-CBM Reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring; R-CBM Reading</td>
<td>Winter; R-CBM Reading</td>
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<td>WE-CBM Writing (Pilot Only)</td>
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DIBELS

Retell Fluency (RTF)

Oral Reading Fluency (ORF)

Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF)

Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF)

Word Use Fluency (WUF)

Letter Naming Fluency (LNF)

Initial Sound Fluency (ISF)

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| Kindergarten | First Grade | Second Grade | Third Grade | Fourth Grade | Fifth Grade | Sixth Grade

= required

= optional
Common Questions

What should be the focus of interventions?

- The five big ideas of reading:
  - Phonemic awareness
  - Alphabetic principle/phonics
  - Vocabulary
  - Fluency
  - Comprehension
Common Questions

What should be the focus of interventions?

- Solari & Gerber (2008) found that interventions that incorporated instruction on at least two skills was more successful for ELs than interventions that focused on one skill only.
- Listening comprehension (e.g., through read alouds) appears to be a skill ELs should be taught.
  - Story structure
  - Main idea
  - Retell and summarizing
  - Recall of facts
Common Questions

What is an effective group size and length of time for interventions?

- Leafstedt, Richards & Gerber (2004) found that for phonemic awareness (PA) instruction a small group of 3-5 was most successful.
- Also, they provided interventions over ten weeks.
- However, students slow to respond may need more time and repetition of material to make growth.
Common Questions

Should PA activities be withheld until children reach a certain level of English proficiency?

- No. Interventions are most effective beginning with kindergarteners to improve both PA and word-reading (Leafstedt, et al., 2004).
Common Questions

Should I be teaching to the “test?”

- No. These measures are indicators or predictors of future reading behavior and used to measure specific skills.

- For example, Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) is not a skill that should be taught, but it is a powerful measure of decoding abilities.
Common Questions

What data should be used to make instructional decisions for ELs?

- The same measures used for EO students appear to predict as well for ELs with some exceptions.
- Research on Spanish reading measures is limited but also supports use of CBMs (Richards-Tutor, Sola ri, Leafstedt, Gerber, Filippini & Aceves, 2012).
- A recent study by Gutiérrez and Vanderwood (2013) suggests that for young ELs early screening measures may vary by the child’s language proficiency level.
What data should be used to make instructional decisions for ELs?

- “Based on our sample of second-graders, it appears ELs with Early Advanced and Advanced levels of English proficiency read at a level that was similar to English-proficient and native English-speaking students” (p. 16).
- “(E)Ls with lower ELP skills diverged from those of native English speakers” (p. 16).
Common Questions (cont.)

What data should be used to make instructional decisions for ELs?

- This suggests students at lower proficiency levels may benefit from more phonological awareness or vocabulary-focused support than ELs at higher levels.
- Also, some ELs may simply need more processing time to read whole words and thus may attenuate scores on reading tasks such as Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF).
Common Questions

How do I determine nonresponse?

- When provided with specific, explicit interventions in skills such as PA, most ELs outperform EO students who only receive grade-level core instruction (Snow, Burns, Griffith, 1998).
- Recent research indicates there is a group whose needs are not met by intervention strategies developed thus far (Leafstedt, et al., 2004).
- They are likely to need a referral for diagnostic assessment.
Common Questions

Should I use a Standard Protocol RTI Model for EL students?

✿ See next slides
RTI Models

The two most common RTI models are:
- Standard Treatment Protocol
- Problem-Solving

What model is best for culturally and linguistically diverse students?
Standard Treatment Protocol Model

- The same empirically validated treatment is used for all children with similar problems and achievement is measured against benchmarks (NASDSE, 2006).
- The interventions are chosen from an approved list or menu.
How appropriate is the standard protocol model with ELLs?

- Proponents argue that this is the most research-based of the RTI approaches, and leaves less room for error in professional judgment (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006).

- Yet the standard protocol model requires research-based interventions and there are only a few programs that have been researched specifically with ELLs and/or students in low SES communities.

- For example, a program may not provide enough focus on oracy and vocabulary for English language learners.
Problem-Solving Model

- The problem-solving model is a more individualized or personalized approach.
- Interventions are planned specifically for the targeted student and are provided over a reasonable period of time.
- This approach maximizes problem-solving opportunities by allowing team to be flexible.
- Professional expertise is valued and necessary.
Problem-Solving Model (NASDSE, 2005)

1. DEFINE THE PROBLEM
2. ANALYZE THE PROBLEM
3. DEVELOP A PLAN
4. EVALUATE THE PLAN
How appropriate is the problem-solving model with ELLs?

- The problem-solving model appears to be more appropriate for use with ELLs if the focus is on understanding external or environmental factors that affect the child’s opportunity to learn in addition to within child factors (Klingner, 2008).

- For this model to work, team members must have expertise in cultural and linguistic diversity and be knowledgeable about interventions that have been effective with ELLs with different needs.
“Some... have suggested that multi-tier systems might use either a problem-solving method ... or a standard treatment protocol approach. This is an artificial distinction. All RTI systems must consider implementing the best features of both approaches” (NASDSE, 2005).
Common Questions

How long should interventions be provided to an EL student before making a formal referral to special education?

◆ While the research does not provide much guidance, it is important not to refer an EL student who is demonstrating lack of response. The federal government has been clear that RTI should not delay a referral.

◆ “the use of RTI strategies cannot be used to delay or deny the provision of a full and individual evaluation,... to a child suspected of having a disability....” (Memorandum to State Directors of Special Education, 2011).
An Example from the Field

Joaquin

- English Language Learner
- 8 years, 5 months old
- Grade 3
- Born in the U.S.
- At same school since kindergarten.
- Initial evaluation
Grade 1, Letter Sounds:

Tier 2
Double Dose
Extra wrkshp

- Tier 2: 30 minutes of HM differentiated materials in a small group.
- Double Dose: 40 minutes of small group reading twice a week using Reading Mastery and ERI. 12/1/08 Changed to ERI for 30 minutes a day. EXITED 2/9/09
- Extra wrkshp: 45 minutes a day of small group reading intervention using ERI and Phonemic Awareness activities.
Grade 2, Word Reading Fluency: Julio Espinoza Silva

Tier 3
- 30 minutes of small group reading using Phonics for Readers. Focus is on phonics and phonemic awareness. See Julio's 1st grade booklet for progress monitoring data.

Tier 3
- 20 minutes a day of one-on-one reading instruction in room 24 using Read Naturally level 0.8. Switched to Reading Mastery 1 on 10/26/09. EXIT 1/20/10

Tier 3
- 20 minutes 4x week one-on-one fluency practice using Read Naturally 0.8
Grade 3: Passage Reading Fluency

Tier 3: 30 minutes of small group reading using Phonics for Readers. Focus is on phonics and phonemic awareness. See Julio’s 1st grade booklet for progress monitoring data.

Tier 3: 20 minutes a day of one on one reading instruction in room 24 using Read Naturally level 0.8. Switched to Reading Mastery 1 on 10/26/09. EXIT 1/20/10

Tier 3: 20 minutes 4x week one on one fluency practice using Read Naturally 0.8

Tier 2: 15 minutes a day of differentiated HM using leveled readers.

Tier 3: 25 minutes a day of targeted intervention using Phonics for Reading 2 and Read Naturally 1.3 in a group of 3.
Cautions

- Research suggests that not all reading indicators make the same contribution to reading in non-EL and EL students.

- For example, a recent study (Quirk & Beem, 2012) found that oral reading fluency (ORF) problems may overestimate the reading comprehension skills for many EL students.

- The results suggest that both fluency and comprehension assessments are crucial to most accurately identify EL students in need of supplemental instruction.
Cautions

- Baker, Stoolmiller, Good & Baker (2010) found that passage fluency seems to be a better predictor of reading comprehension for English Learners than word reading fluency measures.
- This is important because for ELs and other students, passage fluency can be reliably and easily measured, particularly when compared to the challenges of assessing reading comprehension or English language proficiency directly.
Progress Monitoring and Culturally Responsive Early Intervening Systems

- Determine whether students are benefitting from a culturally and linguistically responsive instructional program.
- Identify students not demonstrating adequate progress, and consider student data disaggregated by language, gender, race, and ethnicity.
- Build culturally responsive instruction/interventions for students not benefitting from current practices.
- Compare efficacy of different forms of instruction/intervention and program design.
- Determine expectations (outcomes) for the quality and rate of student progress that consider language and other relevant student factors.

Kozelski, Sullivan, & King (2009)
Tier I Characteristics

- The general education setting.
- A research-based reading program is used.
- The goal is for all students to meet grade level standards.
- The goal for EL students means that both language and content instruction must be adapted to their linguistic levels and scaffolded to consider their cultural and experiential backgrounds.
- For students who are just below grade level, Tier 1 intervention could mean extra teaching of core reading materials.
- There may be 15 – 20% of students who need more intensive instruction and may be referred to a higher tier.
Tier 2 Characteristics

- Tier 2 consists of general education instruction plus the following intervention (a “double dose”):
  - Small-group instruction (4-6 students)
  - 3-4 intervention sessions per week (30-60 minutes per session)
  - Conducted by trained and supervised personnel (usually not the classroom teacher)
  - Conducted in or out of the general education classroom
  - 9-12 weeks in duration (longer and repeated, as needed)
Characteristics of Effective Tier 2 Reading Programs

- Research-based instructional strategies that explicitly teach strategies and skills;
- Systematic, sequential, and uses a direct instruction model (often a scripted program) that moves children from simple to more complex skills and strategies;
- Ample practice opportunities that allow children to practice skills and strategies in reading and writing text and language;
- Assessment tools for diagnosing children's needs and monitoring progress.
Confusion About Tier 2

- Some people think that ELD services are a Tier 2 (sometimes a Tier 3 or 4) intervention – This is a MYTH!
- ELD services are a core subject, like reading and math, for EL students that qualify.
- For EL students who are found eligible for special education services, ELD services must continue.
- This does not mean that they have two pull-outs. Collaborative models are most appropriate.
“Unfortunately, many teachers are unsure of how to adapt curriculum to meet the individual needs of ELs and therefore look to special education for assistance” (p. 172).

Tier 3

- The most intensive instruction is at Tier 3.
- Students needing Tier 3 support are generally performing below grade level in the academic focus of concern.
- If the student continues to struggle at Tier 3 OR they need this intensity of instruction to learn, the child should be referred for a psychoeducational evaluation to determine if they are eligible for special education.
Implications

- ELs need instruction in decoding skills, word meanings (vocabulary) and comprehension in an integrated fashion (Baker, et al., 2011).

- Schools must begin to teach EL students both listening comprehension and reading comprehension as soon as they enter school because they need these skills to benefit from explicit reading comprehension instruction.
Define the Problem: Unique Considerations for Screening ELs  
(Brown & Sanford, 2011)

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.
Gather and Analyze Data

- **Screening**
  - Universal screening is conducted on a regular basis (2 – 3 times per year) for all students.
  - Screening assessments are brief, individual, and will identify which students are struggling with core concepts.

- **Progress Monitoring**
  - Occurs more frequently than screening assessments.
  - Tools must be valid and reliable.

- Screening and progress monitoring tools may be the same instrument.
Evaluate Growth

- Monitor student progress in all languages of instruction.
- Set rigorous goals that support students towards meeting grade level standards.
- Evaluate growth frequently, increasing intensity of instruction when growth is less than expected.
- Evaluate growth as compared to that of “true peers” (Brown & Doolittle, 2008).
Evaluate Growth

- Progress monitoring must consider ELs’ and to remember that once a child reaches fluent English proficiency does NOT mean they are comparable to a native English speaker.

- Research demonstrates the dramatic effect that differences in early language experience can have on later academic achievement.
Unique Considerations for Screening and Progress Monitoring 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.

- There is evidence for the validity of using CBMs with ELs (Deno, 2005; Wiley & Deno, 2005).
Progress Monitoring Measures Are...

- **Robust** (powerful indicators of academic health-link to meaningful outcomes)
- **Brief** and **easy** to administer - efficient
- Can be administered frequently
- Must have **multiple, equivalent** forms
  - (If the metric isn’t the same, the data is meaningless)
- Must be **sensitive** - **Dynamic**
  - Sanford & Putnam, 2008
Commonly Used Assessments for ELs: Screening and Progress Monitoring

◆ DIBELS/IDEL
  ◆ General outcome measure
  ◆ Benchmark and progress monitoring system based on student continuous assessment
  ◆ Designed to determine if a student is learning and making progress toward the long term reading goal
  ◆ Between 2 – 5 minutes to administer per indicator
  ◆ IDEL is the Spanish version

◆ Aimsweb/MIDE
  ◆ General outcome measure
  ◆ Benchmark and progress monitoring system based on student continuous assessment
  ◆ Designed to determine if a student is learning and making progress toward the long term reading goal
  ◆ Between 2 – 5 minutes to administer per indicator
  ◆ MIDE is the Spanish version
Commonly Used Assessments for ELs: Diagnostic Assessment

- DRA/EDL are diagnostic assessments to measure student progress and are usually administered at beginning and end of year. They may take 20 – 40 minutes to administer to an individual child.

- The DRA2/EDL2 now a progress monitoring component.
Progress Monitor Language Development?

- It is difficult to determine short-term growth in language since it is a complex, developmental process.
- Some districts are using the Express language screening by Susana Dutro (although she did not develop it for this purpose).
- Other ideas for formative language assessments??
Referral to Special Education

- When an EL student is referred to special education, the team must include an ESL/bilingual specialist.

- Standardized cognitive and communication assessments should be conducted in both the native language and English.

- Standardized academic assessments should be administered in the language(s) the student has received instruction in.
Isn’t Data From RTI Progress Monitoring Enough to Place a Student into Special Education?

- No. Differentiating between students’ who are experiencing academic challenges resulting from learning a second language and learning in a second language from those with true, intrinsic disorders is a complicated process.
- Examining a student’s processing profiles can indicate strengths and weaknesses causing low academic skills.
- Also, in order to address the federal definition of a learning disability, the team must assess the “basic psychological processes” that can only be measured through standardized assessments.
RTI and Dual Language Programs

- Although research demonstrates the positive impact dual language instruction has on achievement, there will be students who struggle to learn in any language no matter their first language.
- Thus, these are critical questions to pose in a dual language setting:
  - How is literacy instruction provided in L1? L2?
  - Are there some children who will require more native language literacy support than others?
  - Would some children be best served by providing interventions only in their native language? Their stronger language?
  - What about children who speak three languages (one is an indigenous language)?
  - How should growth be measured across the two languages?
Regardless of the approach, English core instruction and native language core instruction must:

- follow a scope and sequence
- have outcomes articulated across languages and grade levels
- be aligned with achievement standards
- be developmentally appropriate
- Use appropriate strategies for students’ language proficiency levels in the instructional language
RTI and Dual Language Programs

- Since academic progress in dual language programs is coupled with their progress in language development, monitoring language progress is as important as monitoring skill development.

- Gottlieb (2010) reminds us that academic language proficiency and students’ performance, progress in both their language proficiency and content learning is crucial.
RTI and Dual Language Programs

Linan-Thompson and Vaughn (2007) found that ELs benefit most when interventions include an oracy component that matches the language of intervention.
"You don't really fit in around here, Peggy!"
How do we ensure RTI is culturally and linguistically appropriate so it meets the needs of ALL learners?
“In each tier of the RTI process, instruction and intervention must be tailored to meet the unique needs of English learners.”

Echevarria & Vogt
2010
PLUSS Rationale

- **Problem:** There are limited intervention programs that include English Learners (Els) in their research base.

- **Solution:** We reviewed the literature to identify evidence-based practices for ELs and organized our findings into the acronym PLUSS.
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<tr>
<th>PLUSS Framework</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-teach Critical Vocabulary</strong></td>
<td>Identify and explicitly teach vocabulary that is unknown and critical to understanding a passage or unit of instruction</td>
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<td><strong>Language modeling and opportunities for practicing</strong></td>
<td>Teacher models appropriate use of academic language, then provides structured opportunities for students to practice using the language in meaningful contexts</td>
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<td><strong>Use visuals and graphic organizers</strong></td>
<td>Strategically use pictures, graphic organizers, gestures, realia and other visual prompts to help make critical language, concepts, and strategies more comprehensible to learners</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Systematic and explicit instruction</strong></td>
<td>Explain, model, provided guided practice with feedback, and opportunities for independent practice in content, strategies, and concepts</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic use of native language &amp; teaching for</strong></td>
<td>Identify concepts and content students already know in their native language and culture to explicitly explain, define, and</td>
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<td>Language Objective:</td>
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<th>Strategies:</th>
<th>L – Language modeling &amp; opportunities for practice</th>
<th>U – Use visuals and graphic organizers</th>
<th>S – Strategic use of Native language and teaching for transfer</th>
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<td>Pre-teach</td>
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Common Questions

What are some of the risk-factors associated with over-representation of ELs in special education?
See next slides...
Adapted by jebrown from:
Talbott, Fleming, Karabatsos & Dobria (2011)
Child’s Context

◆ How does the child’s ecology, or environment, impact his/her likelihood to be placed into special education?

◆ Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model of human development is one lens with which to examine factors within the child’s environment that put them “at risk” of a referral to special education.
Child’s Context: Microsystem

The Microsystem is the environment in which an individual lives.

- This system includes family members, peers, religious communities, neighborhoods and others whom the individual has regular interaction and direct contact with.
- The Microsystem is where an individual has the most social interactions. The individual is not simply observing or having things happen to them, but helping to create and construct the experiences they have.
Child’s Context: Mesosystem

The Mesosystem is described as the interactions between the microsystems.

- The Mesosystem could include experiences at home related to school, church, or other community structures.
- Much like the Microsystem, here the individual is not simply observing but is playing an active role in helping create the experiences they have.
Child’s Context: Exosystem

The Exosystem is a system in which the individual has no role in the construction of experiences, yet these experiences directly impact the family’s Microsystem.

- An example of an Exosystem could include a father who was laid off and this lack of employment has a direct impact on the family's financial state.
- This financial position likely affects a family’s day-to-day lifestyle and stress level in the home.
Child’s Context: Macrosystem

The Macrosystem is influenced greatly by the culture and society in which a person lives. The belief systems and ideology of the individual's culture influence the person directly, however, the individual does not necessarily have as much freedom in determining his or her surroundings. Some examples of these influences could include political or religious norms of the culture.
Adapted by jebrown from:
Talbott, Fleming, Karabatsos & Dobria (2011)
Feature Issue on Educating K-12 English Language Learners with Disabilities

http://ici.umn.edu/products/impact/261/
Questions???
References


References


References


References


References

- Wikson, K.K., & Lipson, M.Y. (2012). Between the CCSS and RTI in literacy and language. The Reading Teacher, 65(6), 387-391.
Last Words...

“An appropriate educational system for English Learners adapts all instruction and interventions to each student’s language proficiency level in the instructional language(s) and their cultural and experiential backgrounds.

Julie Esparza Brown, 2013
Thank you!

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