# Best Practices When Assessing English Learners I

October 6, 2021

Courtney Seidel, MS, CCC-SLP
Clinical Professor
University of Wisconsin-Madison

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF
**Public Instruction**
Jill K. Underly, PhD, State Superintendent

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## New Rule Effective August 1, 2021

Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams must use the new criteria to identify a speech or language impairment for referrals for special education dated on or after August 01, 2021.

- **Summary of Changes for SLI Rule**
- **Revisions to SLI Identification**
- **Videos of SLI Criteria Overview**
- **SLI Criteria: Digging Deeper Webinar Videos**
- **WI DPI Speech or Language Impairment Assessment Tools page**

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## Why are there so many different terms for students who are currently learning English?

**English Learner** federal term

**Dual Language Learner**

**Bilingual Learner**

**Student who is bilingual or multilingual**

**Multilingual Learners** current preferred term by WIDA

## Dual Language Learners (DLLs) in Schools

- Hispanic students make up 77.6% of overall DLL student enrollment in 2018.
- Spanish was reported to be the home language of nearly 3.8 million DLL students, representing 75.2% of all DLL students.

*National Center for Education Statistics 2021*

## Over Identification of DLL in Special Education

- The rate of identification of DLLs for specific learning disability (50%) is well above the rate for the general population of students identified as having specific learning disability (39%).
- Between 2015-2018, Wisconsin had identified an average of 35 districts with disproportionality in special education.

*WIDA 2017 & WI FACETS 2018*

## Collaborating on Behalf of DLLs

"It is the responsibility of a district to correctly identify both an English Learner's disability and their language skills in both languages, and provide appropriate support in both areas. This requires clear communication and cooperation between staff on both the Special Education and ESL teams."

*DPI EL Policy Handbook, Ch. 11*

## Collaborating on Behalf of DLLs

"It is essential that the IEP team include educators who have knowledge of the student's language needs and expertise in second language acquisition."

"For ELs, IEP teams must include a qualified language educator, such as an ESL teacher or speech and language pathologist, who has foundational knowledge about language development and acquisition."

*DPI EL Policy Handbook, Ch. 11*

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## Comprehensive Assessment Model

| 4 Part Model for Comprehensive Assessment | |
|---|---|
| **Academic Activities:**<br>• Artifact analysis<br>• Curriculum-based assessment<br>• Observations in school (natural) settings<br>• Educational records | **Speech-Language Probes:**<br>• Case history<br>• Interviews<br>• Language/Narrative samples<br>• Stimulability<br>• Dynamic assessment<br>• Play-based assessment |
| **Contextualized Tests:**<br>• Norm-referenced measures of academic achievement<br>• Curriculum benchmarks | **Decontextualized Tests:**<br>• Norm-referenced speech-language tests (parsed skills: articulation, semantics, syntax, morphology, fluency, etc.) |

Ireland, Marie. "The Real Requirements Behind Eligibility Decision Making in Schools". Lecture. ASHA Connect, Chicago, IL. July 19, 2019.

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## Session 1 Objectives

Participants will:
1. Review red flags for language disorders in the DLL population.
2. Receive the first item in a "toolkit" to support assessment of a DLL student.
   a. Stages of Language Acquisition
   b. ACCESS Scores
3. Complete a guided reflection based on a DLL student from your school/district.

## Access Your Worksheet

**Application Activity:**
**Identifying a Language Difference versus Disorder in DLL Students**
Presenter: Courtney Seidel, M.S., CCC-SLP
cseidel3@wisc.edu

**Directions:** Identify a "case study" student and progress through the red flags. Do not proceed to the further considerations until day 2.

**INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

1) Which **red flags**, if any, apply to your case study student?

**Download or make a copy of this!**

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## Structured Approach:
## Difference Versus Disorder

Today's Focus →

**Initial Consideration:** RED FLAGS

**Global Considerations:**
Stage of Language Acquisition,
ACCESS Scores, Bilinguistics Book,
Peer Comparison

**Individual Considerations:**
Venn Diagram, Can Do
Descriptors, ISOB, CREW

**Referral Determination**

*Seidel, Difference Versus Disorder Schematic*

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## Objective 1: Red Flags

1. Slow L2 learning + Rapid L1 loss
2. Parent concern
3. Positive family history for communication disorder
4. Informed teacher (e.g., ESL) concern
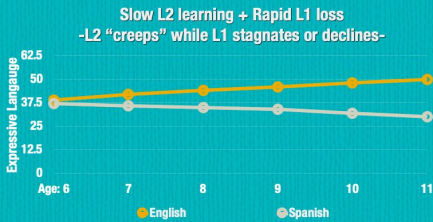
*Kohnert 2014*

## Typical Bilingual Language Development

**Expressive Vocabulary**

Vietnamese — English

Age: 6 7 8 9 10 11

**Receptive Vocabulary**

Vietnamese — English

Age: 6 7 8 9 10 11

## Red Flag 1

**Slow L2 learning + Rapid L1 loss**
**-L2 "creeps" while L1 stagnates or declines-**

Expressive Language

62.5
50
37.5
25
12.5
0

Age: 6 7 8 9 10 11

English — Spanish

## Red Flag 2

**Parent Concern:**
- "Knows the child best"
- Holistic view of child's development
- Likely understands L1 or bilingual language development
- Often has opportunities to compare child's development to other children in the family

> "When a parent expresses a concern about their child who is a DLL...the "wait and see" option is no longer appropriate because it is not evidence-based."
>
> -Coulis and Kosta 2011

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## Red Flag 3

**Family History Positive for Communication Disorder**

- 50% to 70% of children with SLI have at least one other family member with the disorder.

*-National Institute on Deafness & Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) 2019*

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## Red Flag 4

**Informed Teacher Concern:**
- In the schools, ESL teachers have the most extensive training in the area of bilingual development.
- Innately aware of the cultural impacts/differences that may be perceived as disordered
- Able to identify aberrant language development (students who do not seem to follow the typical pattern of DLLs)

## Objective 3: Guided Reflection

1) Identify a "case study" student in your district.

2) Determine how many of the red flags apply to your case study student.

*Is there more you need to know?*

## Objective 2: Toolkit

- Stages of Language Acquisition (Day 1)
- ACCESS Scores (Day 1)
- Can Do Descriptors
- Dynamic Assessment
    - Rapid Automatic Naming
    - Nonword Repetition

## BICS VS CALP

**Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS)**
- Required for social communication
- Type of communication acquired first
- Rich in context of the situation
- Social situation
- Usually acquired within 2 years

**Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)**
- Required for academic learning
- New and unfamiliar
- Less information derived from context
- Learned exclusively from the language, not situational cues
- May take 5-7 years or longer to achieve

## Stages of Second Language Acquisition

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Stage I<br>Pre-functional | No speech<br>Minimal comprehension<br>BICS | 2 weeks to 2 months |
| Stage II<br>Beginning | 1-2 word responses<br>Mispronounces words<br>BICS | 2-4 months |
| Stage III<br>Intermediate | Simple sentences<br>Grammar errors<br>BICS | 1-3 years |
| Stage IV<br>Advanced | Complex sentences<br>Discourse<br>BICS/CALP | 3-10 years to approach<br>peer-appropriate proficiency |
| Stage V<br>Full English Proficiency | Native-like vocabulary<br>Complex narration<br>BICS/CALP | 3-10 years to approach<br>peer-appropriate proficiency |

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## Objective 3: Guided Reflection

1. Inquire if a standard form is already being used by your ESL staff to describe the stages of language acquisition.
2. Predict which stage of language acquisition your case study child *may* align with based on the knowledge you have now.

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## ACCESS Scores

- **English** language proficiency test.
- Taken annually by DLLs in grades K-12.
- Assesses speaking, reading, writing, and listening.
- 2.1 million children across 36 states take the ACCESS test annually.

*-WIDA Assessment (2021)*

## Interpreting ACCESS Scores

- GOLD MINE of information!
- Information that already exists (you don't have to spend time testing, observing, interviewing)!
- Compares bilingual students to other bilingual students (versus monolingual expectations)!
- Consider pre-referral!

## Comparing DLL to Monolingual Peers



## Interpreting ACCESS Scores

What areas does ACCESS assess?

- Speaking
- Writing
- Reading
- Listening

*-WIDA Assessment (2021)*

**This is our jam as SLPs! These areas are PERFECT to consider prior to a speech or language evaluation!**

## Interpreting ACCESS Scores

What do the numbers mean?

1. Entering
2. Emerging
3. Developing
4. Expanding
5. Bridging
6. Reaching

| Level 1 Entering | Level 2 Emerging | Level 3 Developing | Level 4 Expanding | Level 5 Bridging | Level 6 Reaching |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

*-WIDA Assessment (2021)*

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## Interpreting ACCESS Scores

Proficiency Level Descriptors Provided per Area

*-WIDA Assessment (2021)*

**SPEAKING**

| Level | Students at this level generally can... |
|---|---|
| 6 | ...communicate connected ideas in a variety of situations using language appropriately and taking risks in using language in new and creative ways |
| 5 | ...communicate details about ideas or stories or elaborate on topics using language specific to the topic or situation |
| 4 | ...communicate ideas using a series of sentences related to the topic |
| 3 | ...communicate ideas using short sentences related to routines and familiar situations |
| 2 | ...communicate ideas using words and phrases related to everyday routines or situations |
| 1 | ...communicate using familiar words, gestures, or body language |

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## Interpreting ACCESS Scores

How can we analyze the data?

- Individual Student Report
  - Detailed report for a student, shows progress.
  - Relative growth, in comparison to one's self.
- Student Roster Report
  - Overview for a group of students (by school, grade, tier).
  - Comparison to similar bilingual peers.

*-WIDA Assessment (2021)*

## Interpreting ACCESS Scores

- Collaborate with ESL staff to understand, discuss, and present scores to stakeholders.

- Utilize the Interpretive Guide for Score Reports.
  Available in the Google Participant Folder.

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## Incorporating ACCESS Scores to the Comprehensive Evaluation

| Reflection on ACCESS scores: | These ACCESS scores support the student areas of concern. |
|---|---|
| Composite: 2.3 | She has stronger listening comprehension skills than expressive language skills (this was seen in both languages). |
| Listening: 5 | |
| Speaking: 1 | |
| Reading 3.4 | Speaking is reliably and consistently higher than writing and reading in typically developing DLL students (not seen here). |
| Writing 2.5 | |

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## Appropriate Comparisons for DLL

- ACCESS scores provide us with a zone of proximal development for DLLs.
- If educated in English, this is the expected performance range for these students in the classroom.
- *Why would we expect a child to perform ABOVE their English language proficiency level?*
- This requires us to reframe our expectations in a way that results in appropriate expectations of DLL (e.g., grade or age level expectations meant for English speakers).

## Objective 3: Guided Reflection

1. Look up the ACCESS scores for your case study student.

*Be sure to obtain scores in each area, rather than only the composite score.*

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## This Work Requires..

"Failure is an opportunity to grow"
**GROWTH MINDSET**
"I can learn to do anything I want"
"Challenges help me to grow"
"My effort and attitude determine my abilities"
"Feedback is constructive"
"I am inspired by the success of others"
"I like to try new things"

"Failure is the limit of my abilities"
**FIXED MINDSET**
"I'm either good at it or I'm not"
"My abilities are unchanging"
"I don't like to be challenged"    "I can either do it, or I can't"
"My potential is predetermined"
"When I'm frustrated, I give up"
"Feedback and criticism are personal"
"I stick to what I know"

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Do the best you can until you know better.
Then when you know better, do better.

-Maya Angelou
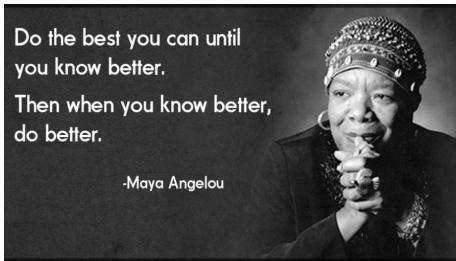
## Courtney's Upcoming CESA Trainings

**Identifying a Language Difference Versus Disorder in English Learner Students**

**3 Part Series**

*with Courtney Seidl*

A disproportionate amount of English Learners are referred for Speech and Language or other areas of Special Education because of a lack of English proficiency (difference) versus a true disability. This workshop will increase your confidence in knowing when and who to refer.

These presentations are chronological in order (pre-referral to evaluation) and build off of each other.

**Part 1:** Identifying a Language Difference Versus Disorder in EL Students
**Part 2:** Bilingual Evaluation for Monolingual Evaluators
**Part 3:** Culturally Responsive Evaluations - Putting It in Action

**Friday, October 15, 2021**

**Friday, October 29, 2021**

**Friday, November 12, 2021**

9:00am-3:00pm

**Registration Fee:**
$150 for CESA 5 Title VI Members or CESA 5 School Improvement Services Members

**Click Logo to Register**

Registration Questions? Contact Julie Beckwith 508-745-5471 or beckwith@cesa5.org

**CESA 5: In Person Trainings (Portage, WI)**
- October 15, 2021
  9:00am-3:00pm
- October 29, 2021
  9:00am-3:00pm
- November 12, 2021
  9:00am-3:00pm

Register:
http://www.cesa5.org/events

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## Courtney's Upcoming CESA Trainings

**Identifying a Language Difference vs. Disorder in EL Students**

This two-day workshop will provide guidance on how to assess and analyze the learning environment for English Learners who may be struggling in school.

**Participants will:**
- Identify red flags for language disorders in the EL population
- Complete a guided reflection based on an EL student from your school district
- Receive a "toolkit" to support documenting concerns prior to referral
- Increase collaboration between special education staff and EL staff during the evaluation process

**Audience:** Recommended for teams of at least one ESL teacher and one Special Education teacher per school district.

**Date & Time**
November 10, 2021 - 9:00am-12:00pm
November 17, 2021 - 12:00pm-3:00pm

**Cost:**
NO COST to CESA #1 Title VI Consortium Members
All other registrants - $60/person

**Location:** Online Virtual

REGISTRATION: https://bit.ly/3wblYE2

**CESA 1: Virtual Trainings**

- November 10, 2021 -
  9:00am-12:00pm
- November 17, 2021 -
  12:00pm-3:00pm

Register:
https://bit.ly/3wblYE2

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## References

1. Costa, J. & Koulis, J. (2011). Evidence-Based Special Education Referral Guidelines for English Language Learners: Knowledge to Practice. *American Speech Language & Hearing Association Convention.*
2. *English Language Learners in Public Schools.* COE - English Language Learners in Public Schools. (n.d.). https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cgf.
3. Genesee, F., Paradis, J., & Crago, M. B. (2021). Understanding Bilingual and Second Language Development. In *Dual language development and disorders: A handbook on bilingualism and second language learning* (3rd ed., pp. 152–154). essay, Paul H. Brookes Publ.
4. Hill, J., & Björk Cynthia L. (2008). Chapter 2: The Stages of Second Language Acquisition. In *Classroom instruction that works with English language learners: Participant's workbook.* essay, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Chapter available for free download: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TOgDbPwLJ9CL2lxM5hn8f4U-N5UUidoF/view?usp=sharing
5. Kohnert, K. (2014). *Language Assessment of Bilingual Children: Evidence and Implications.* American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).

## References

6. WIDA. 2017. "Focus Bulletin: Identifying ELLs with Specific Learning Disabilities: Facts, Advice, and Resources for School Teams." Accessed September 28, 2021 https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/FocusOn-Identifying-ELLs-with-Specific-Learning-Disabilities.pdf.
7. *WIDA Assessment*. WIDA. (n.d.). Retrieved October 4, 2021, from https://wida.wisc.edu/assess.
8. WIDA Consortium. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://wida.wisc.edu/memberships/consortium
9. Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. 2020. *Wisconsin English Learner Policy Handbook: Identifying, Supporting, and Reclassifying English Learners.* Accessed September 28, 2021 at https://dpi.wi.gov/english-learners/el-identification-and-placement.
10. WI FACETS. 2018. "Disparities in Special Education: Overidentification of Students of Color." Accessed on September 28, 2021 at https://wifacets.org/sites/default/files/wifacets_disparities_in_special_ed_identification-min.pdf

## DPI Resources

**Assessment Tools for Speech or Language Impairment website**

- Evaluation of Speech: New Considerations
- WI DPI Technical Assistance Guide (2003)
- Dynamic Assessment
- Comprehensive Special Education

## Resources to Come

**Wednesday, November 3, 2021 – 3:30-5:00pm**
  **Best Practices When Assessing English Learners II** *with Courtney Seidel*
**Wednesday, December 1, 2021- 3:30-5:00 pm**
  **Dynamic Assessment Part 2**
**Wednesday, February 2, 2022 – 3:30-5:00pm**
  **Language Assessment**
**Wednesday, March 2, 2022 – 3:30-5:00pm**
  **Assessment of Voice**