Let’s Plug In!

Introduction to English Language Learners with Special Needs

Presented by
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Which of these students is an English Language Learner with special needs and how do you know?
We’re ELLs and need special education too!

... and so do I! You just can’t tell from looking at me that I do.

...but I don’t! I just need time to learn English.
The Big Idea

Today we will explore answers to the following questions about English Language Learners identified with disabilities or at risk for referral:

- Who are culturally and linguistically diverse students with disabilities?
- What federal and state regulations govern special education and bilingual education?
- What is the process of second language acquisition?
- How does culture influence student success?
- What factors need to be considered when determining a language difference from a disability?
During the 2013-14 school year, New York City ELLs spoke 159 languages other than English.
Who are our NYC ELL students?

NYC Enrollment is over 1 million students

- Students identified as English Language Learners (14%)
- Receive free or reduced lunch (85%) vs. non-ELLs (70%)
- Students with Disabilities (13%)
- English language learners with Disabilities (23%)
Did you know…

51% Born in the USA & in United States

49% Foreign Born

Foreign Born  Born in the U.S.A.
Top Five Languages in NYC?

- Spanish: 62%
- Chinese: 14%
- Bengali: 4%
- Arabic: 4%
- Haitian Creole: 2%

Followed by Russian, Urdu, French, Uzbek and Punjabi
Did you know…
Former ELLs (students who have become proficient in English) graduate at a higher rate than students who are a part of the general student population…
ELL Subpopulations: Special Challenges

- SIFE
- Long Term ELLs
- Special Education
### The Law...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Education</th>
<th>English Language Learners</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>US Federal</strong></td>
<td><strong>ADA &amp; IDEA NCLB</strong></td>
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<td><strong>NY State</strong></td>
<td><strong>Commissioners Regs. Part 200</strong></td>
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<td><strong>NY City</strong></td>
<td><strong>A Shared Path to Success SOPM</strong></td>
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What is Part 154?

How English Language Learners are identified:
- Home Language Identification Survey
- Identification of students with IEPs
- NYSITELL
- NYSESLAT

What kind of services all ELLs receive and from whom (qualifications of providers)

Identifies required units of study for Entering, Emerging, Transitioning, Expanding, Commanding

Programs:
- Transitional Bilingual Education
- Dual Language
- ENL Services

Explains how students “exit” ENL/Bilingual Services

Supports:
- Testing Accommodations
- Supports for Former ELLs
NYS Offers 3 Programs For English Language Learners:

- Early or Late Exit
- Two-Way Immersion

Percent of ELLs in Language Programs in NYC:

- English as a NEW Language
- ESL
- Transitional Bilingual
- Dual Language
What is Part 200?

How Students with Disabilities (SWDs) are identified:
- Referral Procedures
- Evaluation Procedures

Continuum of Services with the goal of providing services in the Least Restrictive Environment
- Goals and Objectives
- Testing
- Accommodations
- Modifications
- Assistive Technology
- Reevaluation and Program Review
- Declassification

Development of the IEP that identifies strengths, needs and services SWDs will receive and from whom (qualifications of providers)

Due Process, Roles and Responsibilities of Committee Members, Parents and Student

Attachment 2: Consideration of Special Factors for ELLs
§ 300.101 Free Appropriate Public Education

...must be available to all children residing in the State between the ages of 3 and 21, including children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school.

§ 300.114 Least Restrictive Environment

... to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities...are educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular education environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

How does an ELL with a disability receive special education services?
IDEIA Disability Categories
What do you Know / Want to Know…?

• Autism
• Learning Disability
• Speech-Language Impairment
• Emotional Disturbance
• Intellectual Disability
• Traumatic Brain Injury
• Orthopedic Impairment
• Hearing Impairment
• Deafness
• Visual Impairment
• Deaf-Blindness
• Multiple Disabilities
• Other Health Impairment
A tale of two regulations…

One is not more “important” or more “powerful” than the other. They work together to govern the education of bilingual students with IEPs. We have to provide services to the student that abide by both regulations.
Think-Pair-Share

What do services for English Language Learners with disabilities look like in your school?
Basic Theories of Second Language Acquisition

- A natural order of language acquisition is the same across cultures and ages.
- Language acquisition is developmental in nature.
- Both children and adults follow the same path of development but not the same pace.
- Learning a language is a universal process that reflects cognitive properties of the mind.
- Language acquisition requires comprehensible input.
Stages of Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

**Former Levels**
- Pre-Production
- Beginner
- Intermediate
- Advanced
- Proficient

**New Language Progressions**
- Entering
- Emerging
- Transitioning
- Expanding
- Commanding
The Iceberg Concept of Culture

Like an iceberg, the majority of culture is below the surface.

**Surface Culture**
Above sea level
Emotional load: relatively low
- food
- dress
- music
- visual arts
- drama
- crafts
- dance
- literature
- language
- celebrations
- games

**Deep Culture**
Unspoken Rules
Partially below sea level
Emotional load: very high
- courtesy
- contextual conversational patterns
- concept of time
- personal space
- rules of conduct
- facial expressions
- nonverbal communication
- body language
- touching
- eye contact
- patterns of handling emotions
- notions of modesty
- concept of beauty
- courtship practices
- relationships to animals
- notions of leadership
- tempo of work
- concepts of food
- ideals of childrearing
- theory of disease
- social interaction rate
- nature of friendships
- tone of voice
- attitudes toward elders
- concept of cleanliness
- notions of adolescence
- patterns of group decision-making
- definition of insanity
- preference for competition or cooperation
- tolerance of physical pain
- concept of “self”
- concept of past and future
- definition of obscenity
- attitudes toward dependents
- problem-solving roles in relation to age, sex, class, occupation, kinship, and so forth

Unconscious Rules
Completely below sea level
Emotional load: intense
Iceberg Concept of Culture
Think, Write, Pair, Share…

What differences have you observed between “mainstream” American culture and other cultures?

Recalling your own professional or personal experiences, how have elements of deep culture produced challenges in the school setting?

How can we capitalize on the elements of deep culture to support our students?
Lunch!
The Problem of Disproportionality

English Language Learners are both over-represented and under-represented in special education

Four Challenges:
1. The Professional’s knowledge of second language development and understanding of disabilities
2. Instructional practices
3. Intervention strategies
4. Assessment tools
In New York State, more ELL’s are

- Referred for special education evaluation.
- Placed in special education compared to non-ELLs.
  - Placed in more restrictive placements.
- Classified under specific disabilities categories (LD, SI, ED).
In New York City, 23% of all ELL students receive Special Education services compared to 13% of the non-ELL population.
The more risk factors a student has, the lower the probability student will do well in school.

On average, ELLs exhibit three of the top five risk factors.
Top 5 Risk Factors

- Poverty
- Low-Birth Weight
- Immigration Status
- Poor Nutrition
- Health Problems
Six things a teacher should know…
1. Possible reasons why an ELL is struggling
2. Characteristics of second language acquisition
3. Cultural variables
4. Characteristics of disabilities
5. Educational background
6. Intervention Strategies
I have an ELL who is struggling academically…

Language Difference? or Disability?
The FIVE Steps
1

Consider and rule out possible reasons why your ELL may be struggling academically.
Know characteristics of second language development that can be mistaken for a disability.

- Oral and Written Language
- Literacy
- Behavior
Determine if your ELL has received a consistent and “quality” education
Choose and provide classroom interventions that can address the academic needs of an ELL who is struggling.
Compare and contrast characteristics of Language Differences vs. Disabilities
## Samples of language differences vs. a disability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Differences</th>
<th>Language Learning Disabilities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language performance is similar to other students who have had comparable cultural and linguistic experiences.</td>
<td>Language patterns are unique to the student and unlike others in the student’s cultural community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Limited vocabulary</strong> in the native language is due to lack of opportunity to use and hear the native language.</td>
<td>Student demonstrates <strong>limited vocabulary</strong> even when there are rich language opportunities in the native language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student shifts from <strong>one language to another</strong> within an utterance.</td>
<td>Word finding problems are evident and student <strong>substitutes with another language</strong>.</td>
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## Characteristics of L2 that can Mirror LD

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<th>L2</th>
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<td>Difficulty following directions</td>
<td>Difficulty following directions because the directions were not well understood; it can be harder to remember directions in a second language.</td>
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### Characteristics of L2 that can Mirror LD

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<td>Slow to learn sound-symbol correspondence</td>
<td>Confusion with sound-symbol correspondence when it is different than in one’s first language. Difficulty pronouncing sounds not in the first language.</td>
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<td>Difficulty retelling a story in sequence</td>
<td>Difficulty retelling a story in English without the expressive skills to do so; yet the student might understand more than s/he can convey (i.e., receptive skills in English might be stronger than expressive skills).</td>
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<td>May have poor auditory memory</td>
<td>May seem to have poor auditory memory if sounds or words are unfamiliar or not well understood.</td>
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Case Studies
Applying the 5 Steps Protocol to Case Studies

1. Consider and rule out possible reasons why your ELL may be struggling academically.
2. Know characteristics of second language development that can be confused with a disability.
3. Determine if your ELL has received a consistent and “quality” education.
4. Choose and provide interventions that can address the academic needs of an ELL who is struggling.
5. Compare and contrast characteristics of Language Differences vs. Disabilities
Marco

Marco is 11-years old, and is in the 5th grade. He arrived from the Dominican Republic in late January of last year and was enrolled in grade 5, but was held over. He speaks only Spanish at home and is reluctant to engage in English conversation at school. Marco attended school only sporadically in his country and his mother reports that he did not attain age-expected mastery or reading or writing skills in Spanish. At this time, he can identify letters but his writing in English exhibits poor spelling, punctuation, organization or depth of content.
Damaris is 8 years old and in the 3rd Grade. She was born in New York City and is a simultaneous language learner (English and Spanish). Her teacher was concerned that Damaris was not advancing academically at the same rate as other students in her classroom with concerns about her expressive language skills and reading comprehension and writing. Damaris came from a bilingual home, but she spoke primarily English while her parents spoke both English and Spanish and her grandmother, who cares for her after school, spoke only Spanish.
Ko Than Nu is 10 years old and was born in Vietnam and speaks Karen. He is a refugee and has been living with his mother and two younger sisters in refugee housing in Rochester, NY, for two years. He had no formal schooling before coming to the U.S., nor had he learned to read or write in his language. Currently, he is very social and speaks conversational English with good fluency. However, he does not identify multi-syllable words consistently and skips many words when he tries to write simple sentences…
Tasfiah is 12 years old and was born in Bangladesh and speaks Bengali. She arrived in the U.S. in the middle of last year with a strong educational background which included English instruction every year in Bangladesh. However, her English instruction gave her little opportunity to speak English at school, and she had little exposure to American English prior to her arrival. She is very reluctant to speak in English at school, although she can read and write with good comprehension, and she prefers to spend her free time with other students from Bangladesh.
Helen is a 16-year old girl who was born in Korea. She came with her parents and her 4 brothers to New York City 5 years ago. The family speaks Korean but Helen reportedly struggles to perform well in reading and writing at her Korean Saturday school program. Helen can speak conversational English very well and can even explain difficult concepts to her classmates, but she is not able to read grade level text in English and her writing skills lack structure and conventions of writing.
Do Now

1. Form into groups of 3 to 4 individuals.
2. Read the assigned Case Study.
3. Review as a group *The FIVE Steps to Determine a Disability from a Language Difference* and the *Comparison of Language Differences vs. Disabilities* (handouts)
4. Determine as a group if the student in Case Study should be referred for an evaluation to the Committee on Special Education (CSE) and discuss the reasons why or why not.
Debrief the 5 Steps Protocol to Case Studies

1. Consider and rule out possible reasons why your ELL may be struggling academically.
2. Know characteristics of second language development that can be confused with a disability.
3. Determine if your ELL has received a consistent and “quality” education.
4. Choose and provide interventions that can address the academic needs of an ELL who is struggling.
5. Compare and contrast characteristics of Language Differences vs. Disabilities
Many ELLs have a gap between their English word reading and their word knowledge and comprehension (Mancilla-Martinez & Lesaux, 2011).

Assessments should include phonological awareness, letter naming, encoding, decoding as well as other skills, such as oral language, vocabulary, and comprehension, among others.

Different assessments tap into different skills and knowledge.
Let’s Remember!

- Multiple assessment methods are needed to provide a comprehensive view of learning.

- There are important differences between learning to read in one’s L1 and L2 (August & Shanahan, 2006; Goldenberg, 2008).

J. Klingner
When a child shows signs of struggling, ask...

- Does the classroom environment seem conducive to learning?
- Is instruction targeted to and appropriate for the student’s level of English proficiency and learning needs?
- Is the teacher implementing appropriate research-based practices with fidelity?
  - If the teacher is modifying practices, for what reasons?
When a child shows signs of struggling, ask…

- Does the student differ from true peers in rate and level of learning?
- Have authentic assessments been used in addition to progress monitoring?
- What tasks can the student perform and in what contexts?
- Have the child’s parents been asked for their input?
Questions…

Thank you for your participation!

Please give us your feedback.
Resources on the Web…

• ENGAGE NY  [www.engageny.org](http://www.engageny.org)
• BUENO Center-  [http://buenocenter.org](http://buenocenter.org)
• Colorin’ Colorado-  [http://www.colorincolorado.org/](http://www.colorincolorado.org/)
• Council of Exceptional Children (CEC)-  [http://www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org)
• National Center for Learning Disabilities-  [http://www.ncld.org/](http://www.ncld.org/)
• LD Online-  [http://www.ldonline.org/](http://www.ldonline.org/)