

Resource List: Academic Assessment, Instruction, and Intervention for English Learners

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*National Center on Intensive Intervention, in collaboration with
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Introduction

Although instructional and intervention practices that work for monolingual students often benefit English learners (ELs), there are additional considerations when assessing, instructing, or providing intervention to ELs that account for the nature of English acquisition. In response to state-level technical assistance needs, staff from the National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII) and the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI) have compiled freely-available resources to support educators and educational organizations serving ELs, particularly those who require individualized instruction (e.g., intensive intervention, special education). Resources were drawn primarily from federally-funded national technical assistance centers or research projects, representing a mix of evidence-based and promising practices.¹

This resource list is organized by the topical sections listed below. We begin with resources related to **general instructional practices**, with strategies that also can inform intervention and special education services. Next, we share resources related to supporting ELs within a **multitiered system of supports (MTSS)**, including assessment to inform instruction and intervention. The section covering **special education** lists resources to support students who are or may be dually identified as both ELs and students with disabilities. The **implementation** section includes considerations for staffing, professional development, and teaming. We end with resources to support **family involvement**.

- [General Instructional Practices](#)
- [Multitiered System of Supports](#)
- [Special Education](#)
- [Implementation Supports](#)
- [Partnering with Families](#)

Each resource is included under the most relevant topic, although many resources cut across topics. Larger sections are organized by resource type (e.g., practice briefs/guides, professional learning resources) and alphabetically within these subsections. Resources should be applicable across grades unless otherwise specified. Each resource is available online by clicking on its title (links accurate as of September 2019); recommended citations are included in the description when provided within the resource.

¹ This list reflects a sample of resources that NCII and NCSI staff considered to be among the most current and useful for practitioners and educational leaders. It is not an exhaustive list of relevant, available resources.

General Instructional Practices

These resources address evidence-based and promising instructional practices for ELs that can be used to enhance academic intervention and special education.

Practice Briefs/Guides

[10 Key Policies and Practices for Teaching English Language Learners](#)

The 2018 brief by the Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk presents 10 practical, research-based recommendations for states, districts, and schools to improve instruction for ELs. It includes tips, activities, and instructional strategies that all teachers can use to adapt their regular teaching routines to provide ELs with high-quality instruction.

[Adaptions of Peer-Assisted Learning for ELLs: Application to Middle School Social Studies Classes](#)

This Center for Research on the Educational Achievement and Teaching of English Language Learners (CREATE) article summarizes three experimental studies of middle school social studies instruction enhanced with specific EL strategies and materials, including purposeful student pairing. It includes links to a plan and resources for a Grade 7 unit on the Texas Revolution.

[Enhancing Vocabulary and Comprehension for English Learners Through an Interactive Read-Aloud System](#)

This site provides Project ELITE² (English Learner Institute for Teaching and Excellence²) resources to support whole-class, read-aloud routines for preschool and K–3 teachers. The first two resources are flipbooks for implementing the routines in each setting. Other resources include videos and lesson plans in English and Spanish. The site also offers supporting professional development materials for each grade band, including presentations, a self-observation form, and a planning template.

[Practical Guidelines for the Education of English Language Learners: Research-Based Recommendations for Instruction and Academic Interventions](#)

This 2006 guide from the Center on Instruction presents evidence-based recommendations for providing ELs with instruction and intervention in reading and mathematics, with considerations for implementation. The six reading recommendations (pp. 13–31) address instruction in phonological awareness and phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension, with guidance on structuring academic talk and independent reading for ELs. The three mathematics recommendations (pp. 33–41) focus on the important role of academic language and the need for explicit, intensive instruction in basic concepts and skills.

[Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English: Promising Futures](#)

This 2017 report by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine summarizes evidence and makes practice, policy, and research recommendations for serving dual language learners and ELs from birth through high school. This site allows you to read the report online or log in (as a guest or through an account) to download a complete PDF. Sections particularly relevant to instructional best practices and other topics in this resource list include the following:

- Chapter 8: Promising and Effective Practices for English Learners in Grades Pre-K to 12

- Includes subsections on teaching ELs in preschool and elementary, middle, and high school settings.
- Practice 6 on pp. 298–299 addresses screening.
- Chapter 10: Dual Language Learners and English Learners with Disabilities
 - Includes considerations for identification, assessment, and instruction/intervention.
 - Table 10-1 on pp. 354–357 summarizes EL considerations for five disability categories.
 - Table 10-2 on page 370 describes similarities in behaviors associated with second language acquisition and learning disabilities, which may complicate identification.
 - Box 10-6 on page 372 addresses the importance of family involvement in evaluation.
 - Response to intervention (RTI) as an approach to serving ELs with disabilities is described on pp. 374–380.
- Chapter 11: Promising and Effective Practices in Assessment of Dual Language Learners’ and English Learners’ Educational Progress
- Chapter 12: Building the Workforce to Educate English Learners

What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guides

These What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) practice guides provide evidence-based recommendations for school practitioners with guidance, including professional development considerations, for implementing each recommendation. The guides can be viewed by section online or downloaded as a PDF.

[Effective Literacy and English Language Instruction for English Learners in the Elementary Grades](#)

This 2007 practice guide provides school practitioners with recommendations on effective literacy instruction for elementary ELs. It includes five recommended practices:

1. Screen for reading problems and monitor progress (pp. 9–14 in PDF).
2. Provide intensive small-group reading interventions (pp. 15–18).
3. Provide extensive and varied vocabulary instruction (pp. 19–22).
4. Develop academic English (pp. 23–27).
5. Schedule regular peer-assisted learning opportunities (pp. 28–30).

[Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School](#)

This 2014 practice guide builds on the 2007 practice guide and provides recommendations for reading and content area instruction for elementary and middle school ELs:

1. Teach a set of academic vocabulary words intensively across several days using a variety of instructional activities (pp. 13–30).
2. Integrate oral and written English language instruction into content-area teaching (pp. 31–46).
3. Provide regular, structured opportunities to develop written language skills (pp. 47–58).
4. Provide small-group instructional intervention to students struggling in areas of literacy and English language development (pp. 59–68).

Professional Learning Resources

[Professional Learning Communities Facilitator’s Guide for the What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide: Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School](#)

This 2015 guide from Regional Education Laboratory (REL) Southwest is designed to assist teams of educators in applying the evidence-based strategies presented in the 2014 WWC practice guide. The site includes the guide, an infographic, handouts, and supporting videos.

IRIS (Innovative Resources for Instructional Success) Center Learning Modules

[Cultural and Linguistic Differences: What Teachers Should Know](#)

This 1-hour module examines how culture influences classroom interactions and provides practice in making instruction more culturally responsive.

[Teaching English Language Learners: Effective Instructional Practices](#)

This 2-hour module presents information on second language acquisition and instructional practices for ELs.

Multitiered System of Supports

This section includes resources related to supporting ELs within an MTSS or RTI framework.

Practice Briefs/Guides

[How the EBIS/RTI Process Works in Secondary Schools](#)

This 2009 document, developed by the Tigard-Tualatin School District in Oregon, describes how an integrated academic and behavioral MTSS process (Effective Behavior and Instructional Support) can be used in middle and high schools to evaluate core programs; identify students needing additional support; and plan, implement, and adapt interventions. The resource includes guidelines and an instructional history document specific to ELs.

[RTI for English Language Learners: Appropriately Using Screening and Progress Monitoring Tools to Improve Instructional Outcomes](#)

This 2011 National Center on Response to Intervention (NCRTI) brief provides a framework for using RTI with ELs from Hispanic backgrounds. It presents an overview of second language growth and the role of students’ background experiences before focusing on how to implement screening and progress monitoring with ELs. It includes a case study with recommendations.

Model Demonstration Project Briefs

The following five briefs, released in 2015, describe the work of three Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) model demonstration projects: Project ELITE (English Learner Institute for Teaching and Excellence), Project ESTRE²LLA (Establishing Successful Tiered Responsive Education for English Language Learners’ Achievement), and Project REME (RTI Effectiveness Model for ELs).

[Effective Practices for English Learners: Brief 1, Meeting the Needs of English Learners Through a Multitiered Instructional Framework](#)

This brief describes the work of the three projects and introduces key considerations when implementing MTSS with linguistically diverse students.

[Effective Practices for English Learners: Brief 2, Assessment and Data-Based Decision-Making](#)

In this brief, the three projects share their frameworks for assessment and data-based decision-making to improve literacy instruction for ELs.

[Effective Practices for English Learners: Brief 3, Core and Supplemental English as a Second Language Literacy Instruction for English Learners](#)

This brief describes effective practices for delivering culturally and linguistically responsive literacy instruction and intervention for K–3 ELs receiving English-only literacy instruction.

[Effective Practices for English Learners: Brief 4, Core and Supplemental Biliteracy Instruction for English Learners](#)

This brief provides an overview of, framework for, and examples of biliteracy instruction and intervention for grades K–3.

[Effective Practices for English Learners: Brief 5, Professional Development to Support a Multitiered Instructional Framework](#)

This brief shares the three projects' frameworks for evidence-based, quality professional development to help educators understand and meet the needs of K–3 ELs within MTSS.

Webinars and Presentations

[Instruction and Assessment Considerations in RDA for Students Acquiring English](#)

This 2016 presentation from NCSI and the American Institutes for Research offers guidance for addressing the needs of ELs within State Systemic Improvement Plans, including assessment and instructional considerations for ELs with learning disabilities. It begins with an overview of Results-Driven Accountability (RDA) and MTSS, and then describes considerations and strategies for supporting ELs in core instruction and intervention.

[RTI for English Language Learners: Appropriate Screening, Progress Monitoring, and Instructional Planning](#)

This NCRTI webinar focuses on improving ELs' elementary reading outcomes through culturally and linguistically responsive implementation of a multitiered system of support, with emphasis on selecting and using appropriate screening and progress monitoring tools to inform instruction.

Professional Learning Resources

[Implementing Effective Literacy Practices for Instructing English Language Learners Within the Response to Intervention \(RTI\) Framework](#)

This NCRTI training module provides facilitators with materials for a half-day workshop for teachers, administrators, and/or MTSS teams. The module addresses effective literacy instruction practices for ELs. The site includes presentation slides, speaker notes, and handouts.

[Implementing Structured Data Meetings for English Learners](#)

This site provides Project ELITE² (English Learner Institute for Teaching and Excellence²) professional development materials and accompanying tools for implementing structured data meetings for ELs in elementary schools.

[Innovation Configuration: Evidence-based Practices for English Learners](#)

This 2016 innovation configuration from the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform (CEEDAR) Center evaluates the extent to which evidence-based practices for ELs within MTSS are embedded within professional development and teacher preparation programs.

Special Education

This section includes resources to support appropriate identification, assessment, and instruction of ELs who have or may have a disability.

Practice and Policy Guides

[California Practitioners' Guide for Educating English Learners with Disabilities](#)

This 2019 guide from the California Department of Education provides information on identifying, assessing, supporting, and reclassifying students who may be classified as both English learners and students with disabilities. It includes the following sections:

1. Identification of English Learners, Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), and Pre-Referral Interventions (pp. 15–100)
2. Pre-Referral and Referral, Assessment, and IEP Processes (pp. 103–181)
3. Educational Programs and Instructional Strategies (pp. 183–348)
4. Proposing Exit from Special Education Services (pp. 351–369)
5. Reclassification from English Learner Status (pp. 371–393)

[CCSSO English Learners with Disabilities Guide](#)

This 2017 guide from the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) offers recommendations for state policy and procedures related to identifying (Recommendations 1–7) and developing IEPs (Recommendations 8–11) for ELs with disabilities. The appendix includes resources and tools to support each recommendation, and other related resources.

[CCSSO Framework on Supporting Educators to Prepare and Successfully Exit English Learners with Disabilities from EL Status](#)

State education agencies can use this 2019 framework as they create and monitor statewide, standardized procedures to exit ELs with disabilities from EL status. The guide includes two main parts: (1) Considerations for Exiting ELs with Disabilities from EL Status and (2) Considerations for Providing Technical Assistance to Districts Serving ELs with Disabilities Who Are Not Yet Able to Exit EL Status. It includes six vignettes of ELs with various disabilities.

[Identifying and Supporting English Learner Students with Learning Disabilities: Key Issues in the Literature and State Practice](#)

This 2015 research and policy review from REL West describes key questions, data sources, and processes for identifying the source of an EL’s academic concerns. It also summarizes state procedures for assessing and supporting ELs with learning disabilities.

[RTI-Based SLD Identification Toolkit: Considerations for English Language Learners](#)

This RTI Action Network site provides guidance on instructing and making valid special education eligibility decisions for culturally and linguistically diverse students, with information in five areas:

1. Expertise/knowledge of team and informed parent participation
2. Effectiveness of Tier 1 core instruction
3. Effectiveness of Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions
4. Effectiveness of academic assessments and interpretation
5. Comparisons to populations and normative samples

[Tools and Resources for Addressing English Learners with Disabilities](#)

This 2016 resource, the sixth chapter of the English Learner Tool Kit from the Office of English Language Acquisition, includes guidance and resources to support state and local education agencies in identifying and assessing ELs who may have a disability. It also provides guidance and resources for delivering special education services to ELs and including the family in the process.

Webinars and Presentations

[Considerations for English Language Learners in Results-Driven Accountability](#)

This NCSI presentation from the 2015 OSEP Leadership Conference includes three sections on (1) ensuring ELs have equal access to high-quality education, with an overview of relevant federal policy, guidance, and resources; (2) assessment considerations; and (3) using MTSS to support ELs in State Systemic Improvement Plans.

[What Research Says About Identification and Assessment of English Learners with Disabilities](#)

This 2016 webinar from NCSI, the Michigan Department of Education, and the American Institutes for Research provides guidance for assessing students with limited English proficiency and considering their special education eligibility. It also shares resources and practices for supporting these ELs.

Implementation Supports

These resources address staffing, professional development, and teaming to support ELs.

[Tools and Resources for Staffing and Supporting an EL Program](#)

This 2015 resource, the third chapter of the English Learner Tool Kit from the Office of English Language Acquisition, addresses the resources and professional development that EL teachers, general education teachers, and administrators need to serve ELs.

[Using School Leadership Teams to Meet the Needs of English Language Learners](#)

This 2010 NCRTI brief offers guidelines for creating and using a school leadership team to address the needs of ELs. It covers why a team is needed, who should be on the team, how parents contribute, and tips for a successful and culturally and linguistically responsive team.

Partnering with Families

These resources support meaningful involvement of families in their EL children's education.

[Harnessing the Potential of Multiple Languages & Family Partnerships in Early Childhood Intervention & Special Education](#)

This 2017 NCSI webinar describes dual-language development and considerations for supporting ELs and their families in early childhood and preschool settings.

[Read-Aloud Routine Bookmark for Parents \(English and Spanish\)](#)

This 2013 Project ELITE bookmark, provided in English and Spanish, presents a read-aloud routine for parents to use with their children to enhance students' vocabulary and comprehension.

[Tools and Resources for Ensuring Meaningful Communication with Limited English Proficient Parents](#)

This 2016 resource, the 10th chapter of the English Learner Tool Kit from the Office of English Language Acquisition, supports state and local education agencies in identifying and communicating with limited English proficient parents.