Response to Instruction and Limited English Proficient Students

FAQs

I. What is WIDA?

A. Consortium of states founded in 2002, in response to NCLB legislation, to develop research-based English language proficiency tests and instructional standards for English Language Learners [ELLs]; sometimes simply called English Learners [ELs].

B. Current consortium members include 31 US states and territories (NC joined in 2008-2009)

II. Formal Assessment—What assessments are administered? How frequently are they administered?

A. W-APT
   1. Placement test for qualifying students with no previous WIDA test scores
   2. Possible score interpretations of “Never Identified” or “Limited English Proficient”
   3. Administered between 90 days before and 30 days after the first day of each school year for students enrolled at the start of the school year
   4. Administered for later enrolling students (for the balance of the school year) within 14 days of enrollment
   5. Reclassification testing (for students previously “Never Identified” or “Exited” is permitted before December 31, if students meet qualifications for retesting
   6. Instructional Update testing for students who previously tested as “LEP,” but have no current (within this or the previous school year) WIDA test scores; students cannot exit with W-APT scores

B. ACCESS
   1. Administered to all students with current “LEP” designation (cannot be used for initial LEP designation)
   2. Annual testing window always begins February 1; this year the window closes on March 15, 2013
   3. Possible score interpretations of “Limited English Proficient” or “Exited”

III. Data Analysis

I. What information does the W-APT or ACCESS score provide? Scores across 4 domains
   A. Speaking
   B. Listening
   C. Reading (controls permissibility of EOG/EOC testing accommodations)
   D. Writing

II. Can the ESL teacher interpret the score spread for the multidisciplinary team?
   Yes. ESL teachers know what score patterns can indicate about students; score spreads can suggest whether a student is developing English proficiency within expected ranges, or whether unusual score patterns suggest that issues other than second language acquisition may merit investigation.
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IV. Service Time

A. What Tier are ESL services considered? In Responsiveness to Instruction, ESL services, like all basic education, is considered Core/Tier 1. ESL is core instruction for students with limited English proficiency. (This is in contrast to the old Problem Solving Model [PSM], in which tier 1 was considered the first level of intervention.)

B. How is service time determined for ELs? The BASIC (Core) Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP) Services document, provides a rubric to determine ESL service delivery, in conjunction with the ESL teacher’s holistic professional assessment of student needs.

C. What happens when an ESL teacher is assigned to more than one school?

1. Teacher assignments are made with consideration of the number of students requiring service, the levels of service they need, and the levels of the school assignments.
2. Teachers assigned to more than one school have somewhat reduced student loads, in consideration of time lost in transit.
3. If a student qualifying for intensive ESL services lives in the district of a school with few LEP students and insufficient ESL teacher assignment to meet intensive services needs, a request is made to parents to permit reassignment (including transportation) to a school with better ESL services. If parents do not agree, they sign a form stating that they understand the child will receive less intensive services at the district school.

D. Is ESL service time sufficient, or should ESL strategies be carried over to the general education classroom and implemented by the general education teacher? The number of hours spent in ESL instruction each week is not sufficient for students to be instructed in all core content areas. General education teachers need to implement ESL strategies to make core instruction accessible to students with limited English. Luckily, the same instructional modifications that make instruction accessible to ELs are also beneficial for many other struggling students.

V. Accommodations & Modifications

A. How are student modifications/accommodations communicated to general education teachers? Classroom teachers sign a grade-tier specific LEP plan for each EL in their classes, found at this link: http://www.nhcs.net/esl/FormsFiles.New.htm

B. What is the general education teacher’s role in developing and implementing accommodations and modifications?

1. Use LEP Plan to select accommodations/modifications that are appropriate for the classroom and with which teacher feels efficacious.
2. Discuss student’s classroom performance with ESL teacher and ask for suggestions.
VI. Curriculum and Instruction—What curriculum is used in ESL instruction? Is it scientifically research-based for use with ELs?

A. ESL curriculum is the WIDA English Language Development Standards, which NC DPI has adopted as part of the revised standard course of study, combined with Common Core and/or Essential Standards content.
   1. Content-based language instruction, the foundation of the WIDA standards, is supported by a heavy body of educational research.
   2. The WIDA ELDS has five standards: Social and Instructional Language, the Language of English Language Arts, the Language of Math, the Language of Science, and the Language of Social Studies.
   3. Implementation of the standards: The English Language Development Standards are unlike other state standards. They describe different levels of language proficiency, then detail HOW, not WHAT to instruct ELs. Model Performance Indicators suggest HOW to combine (1) a content topic with (2) a language goal, and (3) appropriate language support to allow ELs at different levels of language development to access and to demonstrate proficiency of other Common Core and Essential Standards areas. Language cannot be taught without content, so ESL teachers collaborate with content teachers to ascertain content topics that will be taught in the near future, then pre-teach vocabulary and basic concepts, using research-based ESL methods appropriate to students’ proficiency levels.

B. What instructional materials and strategies do ESL teachers use for content-based instruction?
   1. Instructional materials
      a. Most often, ESL teachers create or adapt their own materials, in order to most effectively pre-teach planned content topics.
      b. NHCS ESL teachers have access to Hampton-Brown’s Avenues series at the elementary level and Pearson-Longman’s Shining Star series at the secondary level. These texts were chosen for their heavy content base. ESL teachers may choose lessons from these texts, when the lessons align with planned classroom content instruction.
   2. Instructional strategies
      a. Pre-teaching, front-loading vocabulary, visuals, realia, experiential instruction, scaffolding, and re-teaching classroom content.
      b. SIOP model
VII. Language Acquisition Data—What data can provide insight into instruction and student response to instruction?

[Note that hard, numerical data is very limited in English language acquisition, which cannot be measured in discrete, one-minute probes. Experienced interpretation of ACCESS test scores can provide some insights, but this test is administered only once each year, and it cannot be the only measure used to differentiate language acquisition from other possible causes of academic difficulty.]

A. WIDA scores, including score histories and score spreads, can be interpreted by ESL teachers who know how to analyze these indicators of second language development for common or unusual score relationships
   1. Between productive and receptive language
   2. Between oral/aural and written/read language
   3. Between successive years scores
B. Comparison of LEP students’ comprehension of English text that is read to them versus text that they read themselves can provide information about whether poor comprehension is more a factor of language (especially vocabulary) or reading skills
C. Comparison of first language and English language skills to see if difficulty exists in both (this is useful primarily with more recent immigrants who are literate in their first languages, and is currently possible with Spanish, Arabic, and a very few other languages)
D. ESL teachers analyze similarities and differences between write anecdotal notes about how students are progressing on which intervention compared to their peers.

VIII. Collaboration

A. What are effective avenues of collaboration between ESL teachers and general education teachers?
   1. LEP Plans
   2. Informing ESL teachers of up-coming content goals and areas of student difficulty

B. How can instructional strategies used during ESL services be carried over into the general education environment?
   1. Provide multi-sensual context for language through use of visuals, realia, demonstrations, etc., as listed above
   2. ELs need instruction in ALL Big 5 areas of reading, but some adaptations are beneficial in reading instruction of ELs.
      a. Vocabulary instruction is always the first area taught.
      b. Avoid reading that involves nonsense words; differentiating between nonsense and unknown real words is counterproductive for ELs.
      c. The ESL teacher and general education teacher must ensure that all 5 areas are being addressed between the 2 settings.
IX. Student/Family History

A. What social and developmental information is collected?
   1. Title III law requires collection only of name, birth date, country of birth, and first date of attendance in US schools (kindergarten or later).
   2. An EL’s RtI participation indicates a need to collect additional personal information, just as it does for native English speakers.

B. At what Tier is social and developmental information collected? Such information would be helpful at the beginning of Tier 2 (as soon as consideration is being given to providing targeted RtI interventions).

X. ESL Consultation and Meeting Attendance — At what Tier should ESL teachers be consulted about ESL students receiving RtI interventions, and at what Tier should they attend meetings?

A. At Tier 1: Teacher as client model—ESL teacher meeting attendance is not mandatory, but s/he should be consulted to interpret student performance from an ESL viewpoint and provide anecdotal evidence, if s/he has worked with the student.

B. At Tiers 2 and 3, ESL teacher input becomes essential.

C. At any Tier, changes to ESL service delivery can only be made with ESL teacher participation and agreement.