

Guidance on Specialized Considerations for English Language Learners during Full and Individual Evaluation

1. Selection/composition of team members
 - At least one team member is knowledgeable of the student's language and culture. Bilingual personnel are to be equal, sharing member(s) of the team

2. Determine language of assessment
 - Language dominance and proficiency, as well as language of prior schooling

 - Examine and determine the need and use of bilingual psychologist/translator/interpreter. A trained interpreter is an individual who is knowledgeable of the student's culture, language, and testing procedures

 - Determine whether cognitive and academic assessment should be performed in both the native language and in English in order to provide an accurate picture of the student's abilities (Students who score Level 1 or 2 on the Woodcock Munoz or the WIDA should be assessed in the native language, if possible.)

3. Examine the socio-cultural factors that impact the student's current performance
 - Length of time in U.S. and exposure to public schooling

 - Type of culture: impact on disability, assessment, and schooling

 - Cultural support for education

 - Impact of disability on family, community and student's future

 - Observations of the student in both home and community to gauge out-of-school functioning as compared to school performance

 - Student's motivation for English language learning

 - Effect upon present level of academic functioning as the result of the student's experiential background

 - Student's cultural/linguistic interaction patterns at school, in the home and the community

- Family/community expectations for the student and their awareness/acceptance of the problem
 - Student's level of functioning as compared to siblings
4. Determine appropriate assessment instruments
- Provide opportunities for Multi-Tiered Systems of Support to provide intervention
 - Consider curriculum-based assessment or direct assessment of skills as a more accurate basis for performance testing
 - Cognitive ability is best inferred from a wide range of behaviors including social, cognitive and educational tasks as posed within a variety of environmental settings
 - Use good "clinical judgment" when interpreting the results of any instrument for assessment. Data interpretation requires knowledge of and sensitivity to the linguistic and cultural heritage of the student
 - Assure assessment of academic functioning in both English and in the native language, if appropriate, as determined by the language proficiency test results
5. MET report/recommendations
- A key factor in making appropriate educational decisions is to carefully observe the student's response in learning environments that are appropriate to the student's language status and current level of functioning
 - Findings and recommendations should be shared with the student's parent/guardian. Care must be taken to explain the information in a culturally/linguistically appropriate manner
 - Final recommendations are to be based upon the unique needs of the student within the cultural/linguistic picture of the environment. (Remember: The program must fit the student not the student fit the program.)
6. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is designed with goals and support services that reflect the language of instruction. Coordination of services with ESL/bilingual staff must be appropriately planned