Culturally Responsive Assessment for English Language Learners in an RTI Model:

Sylvia Linan-Thompson, Ph.D.

October 14, 2015

2015 RtI Webinar Series

NYS RtI TAC

Acknowledgments

Project ESTRE^{2}LLA, US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs Grant # H326M110010

- Sylvia Linan-Thompson
- Alba Ortiz
- Laura McFarland
- Dan Haiman
- Julie Martinez

Agenda

- Introduction
- Purposes of Assessment
- Universal Screening
- Progress Monitoring
- Other measures

What is your role?

- Classroom teacher
- ESL teacher
- Interventionist
- Special education teacher
- Administrator

What kind of bilingual program do you have?

- Transitional bilingual
- Dual language
- ESL
- Other

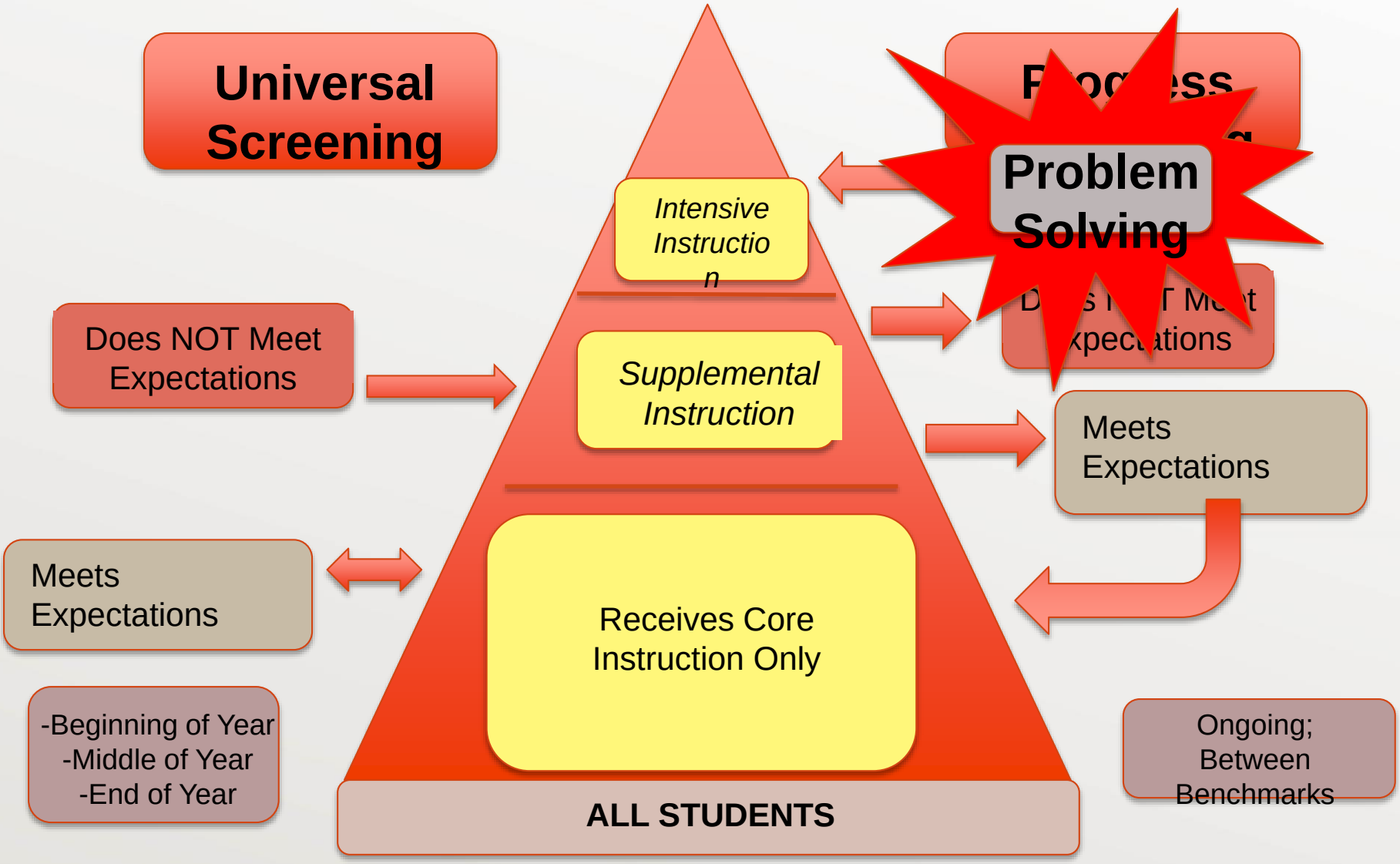
Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Response to Intervention

- **Ensures that no group of students is over- or under-represented** in supplemental or intensive interventions.
- **Takes into account the many factors that can impact student performance**, progress, and scores on screening and progress monitoring measures. Factors include:
  - Changes in English and native **language proficiency** and literacy skills over time
  - Quality, quantity, and features of **prior educational experience**
  - **Imprecise and/or biased assessment instruments**

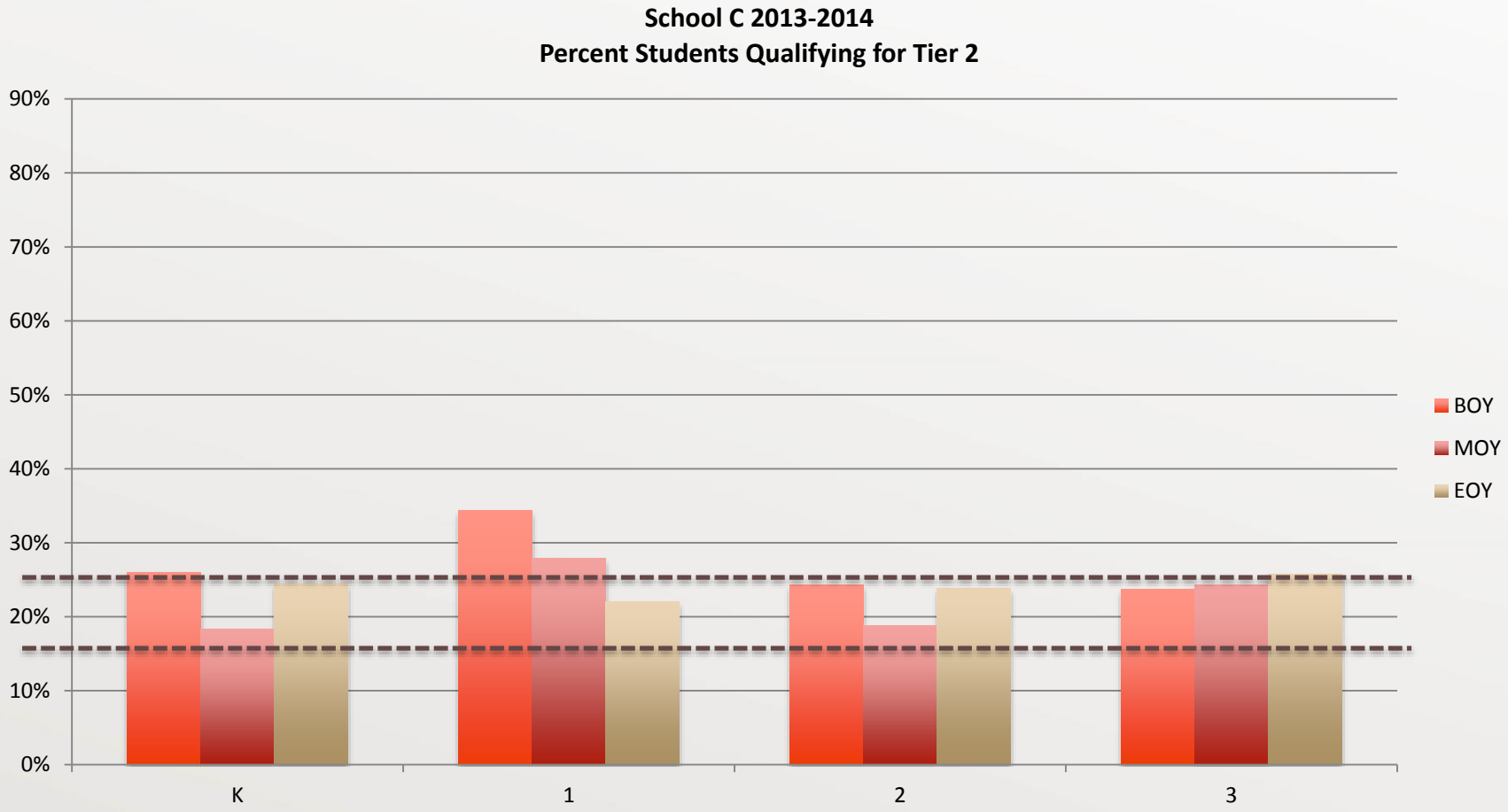
Common Issues

1. According to universal screening data, more that 20% of ELs in a given grade qualify for tier 2.
2. According to progress-monitoring data, more than half of the ELs in a given grade are not reaching benchmarks.
3. Screening and progress monitoring assessment batteries do not provide a comprehensive view of literacy skills or identify ELs who are at-risk for later reading difficulties.

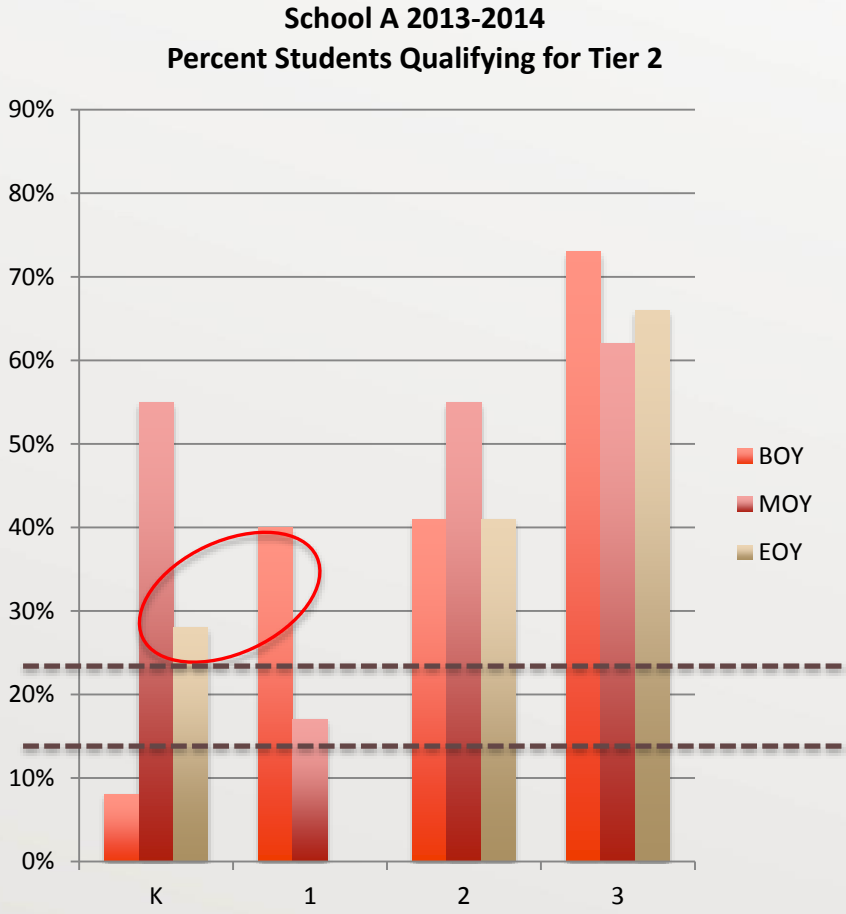
How Assessment Informs Instruction within a RTI Framework



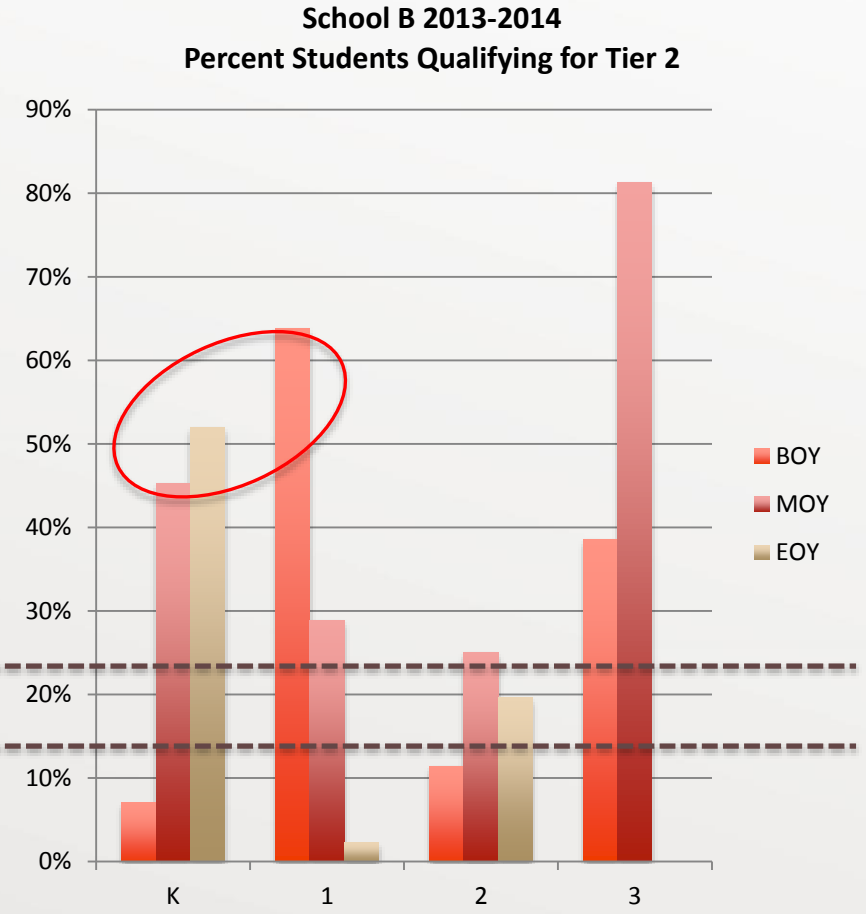
School C 2013-2014



Schools A and B 2013-2014



Note: No first graders qualified at EOY.
K-2 = Tejas Lee and EDL; 3=aimsweb MAZE.



Note: No EOY benchmark data collected for 3rd grade.
K-2 = Tejas Lee and EDL; 3=Flynt Cooter at BOY and schoolnet at MOY (predicts performance on state accountability measure).

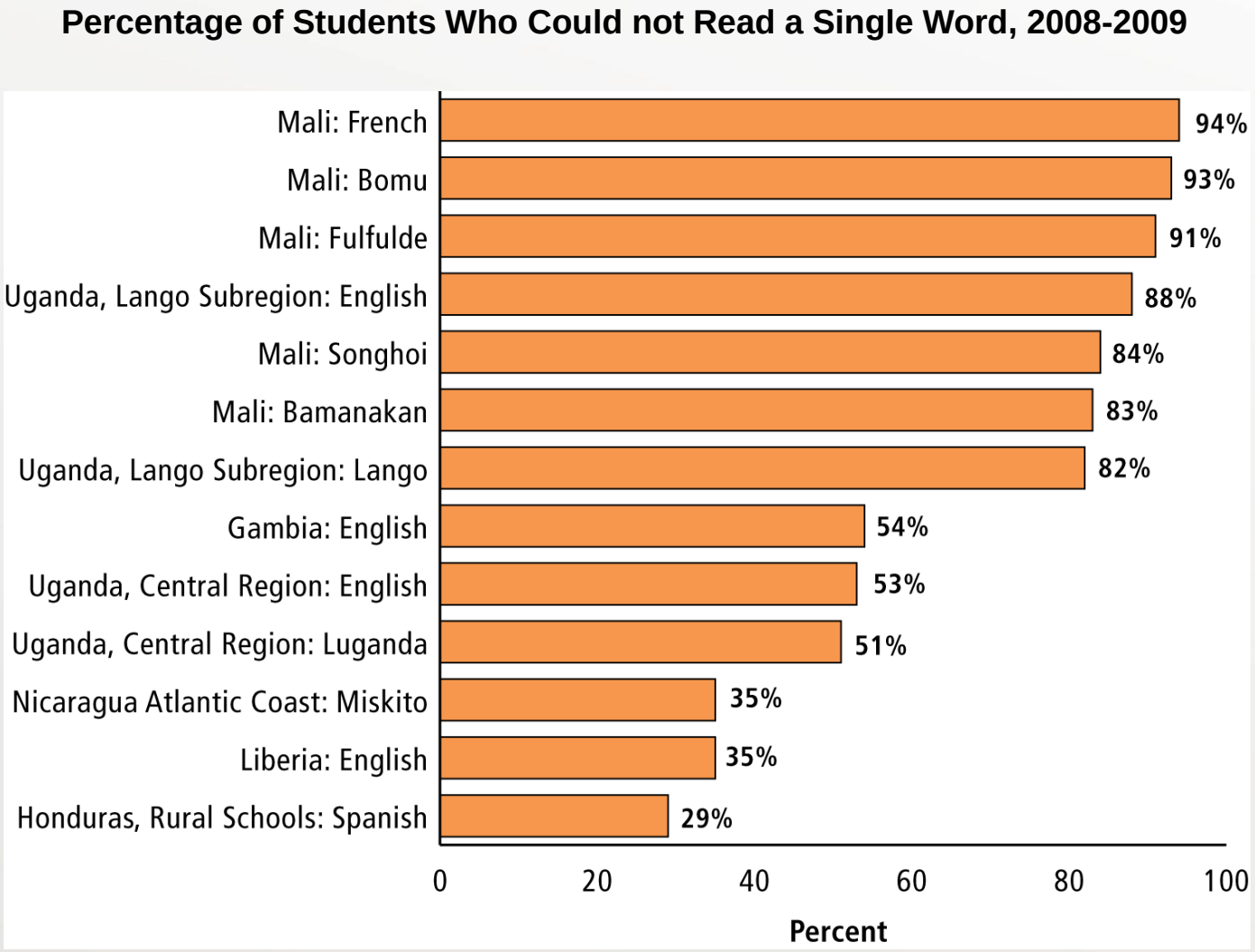
Possible Individual Patterns

- Never in tier 2
- Early entry into tier 2; early exit
- Early entry into tier 2; late exit
- Late entry into tier 2
- In and out every year
- Always in tier 2

Factors that may affect tier 2 placement

- Language proficiency
- Opportunity to learn
  - Quality of previous instruction
  - Language of previous instruction
- Learning difficulty
- Learning disability

International reading achievement



Source: End of Grade 2 Early Reading Assessments. Complete reports available at www.eddataglobal.org

In what language do you assess?

- English only
- English and another language for some language groups
- English and another language for all language groups

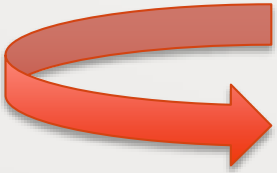
Culturally responsive assessment

PURPOSES OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment

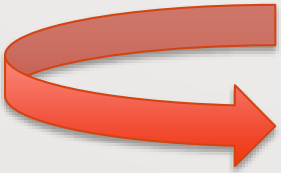
Universal Screening (BOY, MOY, EOY)

Identify students in need of support beyond core instruction



Progress Monitoring

Identify (in)adequate responders to instruction



Data-Based Decision Making

- *Return to core instruction only*
- *Continue with current instruction*
- *Change instruction*
- *Increase intensity of instruction*
- *Refer to Child Study Team*

Assessment Purposes

- In the classroom:
  - Identify children who need extra instructional support
  - Monitor student progress
  - Determine instructional priorities
- For the school:
  - Determine priorities for support and intervention
  - Focus professional development
  - Raise achievement

Choosing Linguistically Appropriate Measures

One- or Two-Way Bilingual

- Use grade-appropriate measures that match the language of literacy instruction.
- Assess in both L1 and L2 once students begin literacy instruction in English.

Transitional Bilingual Program

- Initially, assess in the language of literacy instruction (L1).
- Assess in both L1 and L2 during the transition process.
- Assess in L2 upon exit.

English Immersion and English as a Second Language

- Use grade-appropriate measures in English to document language and literacy development.

Assessment

- All data can be useful. However, interpretation may vary when assessing ELs.
  - First or second language
  - Language of instruction
  - Length of time in U.S.
  - Changes in curriculum

  Do you have a systematic process for addressing these factors?

RTI Component	Typical Practices	Special Considerations for ELs
Data-based Decision Making	*Data are used to make decisions about students' movement within and across tiered instruction.* *Data are used to determine the effectiveness of core instruction and interventions.*	**Language Proficiency** • Monitor language proficiency and development in addition to assessing literacy skills • Assure that students understand and use academic language • Lack of adequate vocabulary and unfamiliarity with English syntax may interfere with ELs ability to comprehend text, even if they are able decoders and fluent readers **Data inform when and how to introduce literacy instruction in English, including:** • Necessary scaffolds for literacy instruction in English • Whether additional instructional time is better used to enrich or to remediate **Criteria and Decision Rules** • Obtain as complete a picture as possible of each child's language and literacy skills in both languages during the period in which they are becoming bilingual • Consider the child's educational history when interpreting screening scores • Decision rules should clearly articulate how students will be supported to ensure language and literacy success

RTI Component	Typical Practices	Special Considerations for ELs
Data-based Decision Making	*Data are used to make decisions about students' movement within and across tiered instruction.* *Data are used to determine the effectiveness of core instruction and interventions.*	**Routines and procedures for decision-making** must be documented to ensure consistency and to identify additional factors that are considered when making decisions about student placement and intervention. *- Have established and clearly articulated procedures for decision making at the school- and grade-level, individual student and group level.* **Data reviews should be conducted by grade-levels** to identify and analyze the needs of individual and groups of ELs to determine if students' problems might be attributed to lack of fidelity in the implementation of the curriculum or delivery of instruction. **School-level data reviews** should be conducted at least annually to set targets, identify issues in the vertical alignment of curricula, and to determine if sub-groups of students are benefitting equally.

Culturally responsive assessment

UNIVERSAL SCREENING

RTI Component	Typical Practices	Special Considerations for ELs
Universal Screening	*Screening is used to determine students' acquisition of key reading skills:* • Phonological awareness • Phonics • Vocabulary • Comprehension • Fluency	**Consider quality and quantity of language and literacy instruction** students have received when interpreting current level of performance in English and Spanish. **Measures:** • Valid and reliable for ELs • Demonstrate diagnostic accuracy for predicting learning problems • Multiple points in time (3 benchmarks per year) • Variety of sources • Across languages • Determine current performance, ability to learn, rate of learning • Distribution of skills across languages and over time

Review of Benchmark Data

- Considerations:
  - Do screeners identify the appropriate percentage of students as needing supplemental support at the beginning, middle, and ends of years?*
  - Do screeners identify the appropriate students as they progress within and across grade levels?
  - Does inappropriate (over- or under-) identification reflect inadequacies of students, instruction, or assessments?

**An appropriate percentage of students falls between 15-25%.*

Culturally responsive assessment

PROGRESS MONITORING

RTI Component	Typical Practices	Special Considerations for ELs
Progress Monitoring	*Documents changes in student learning Establishes learning trajectories.* *Helps to distinguish between students with learning difficulties and those who have not had the opportunity to learn.*	**Assess progress in the language(s) of literacy instruction** -May alternate languages at each PM occasion **Employ consistent measures and criteria** over grades to track student progress **Assess in English and L1 when student is transitioning** to English or exiting program **For ELs in English-only programs,** use grade appropriate measures in English to document the development of English language and literacy skills **Consider the language in which measures are available** and/or the types of adaptations and accommodations that may be required in conducting assessments with ELs

Review of Progress Monitoring Data

- Considerations
  - Do trajectories based on PM data make sense? Is there sufficient continuity?
  - Do they provide enough information to discern performance patterns?
  - Are measures predictive of performance on high-stakes reading assessment (end of 3rd grade)?

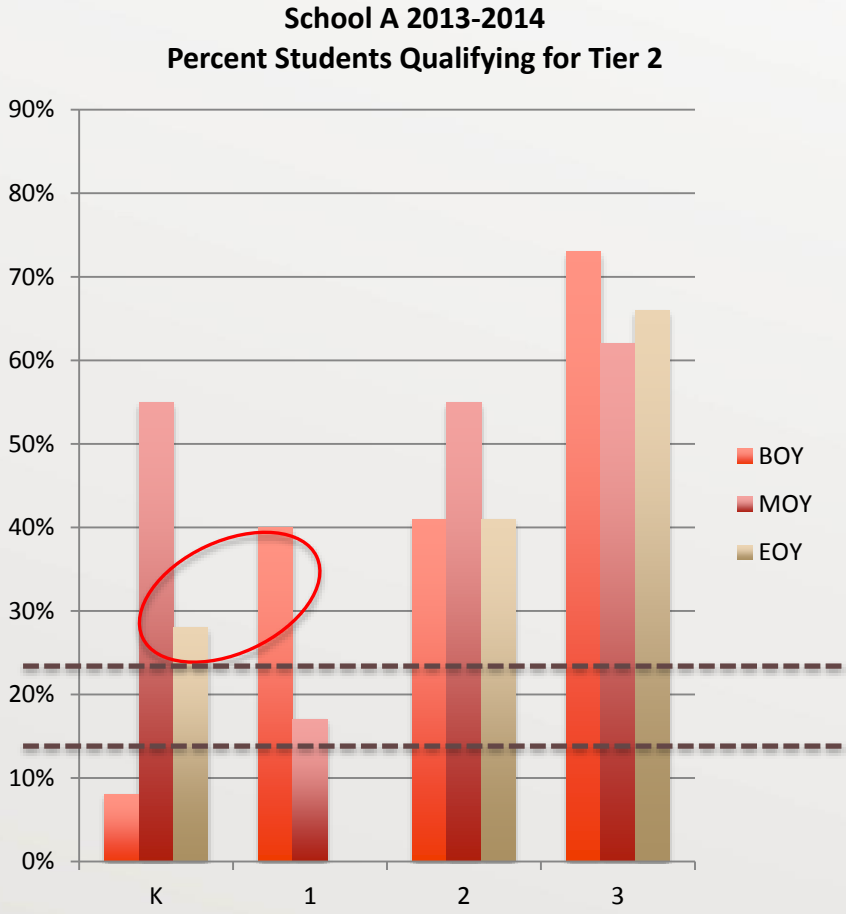
Review of Movement Between Tiers

Considerations:

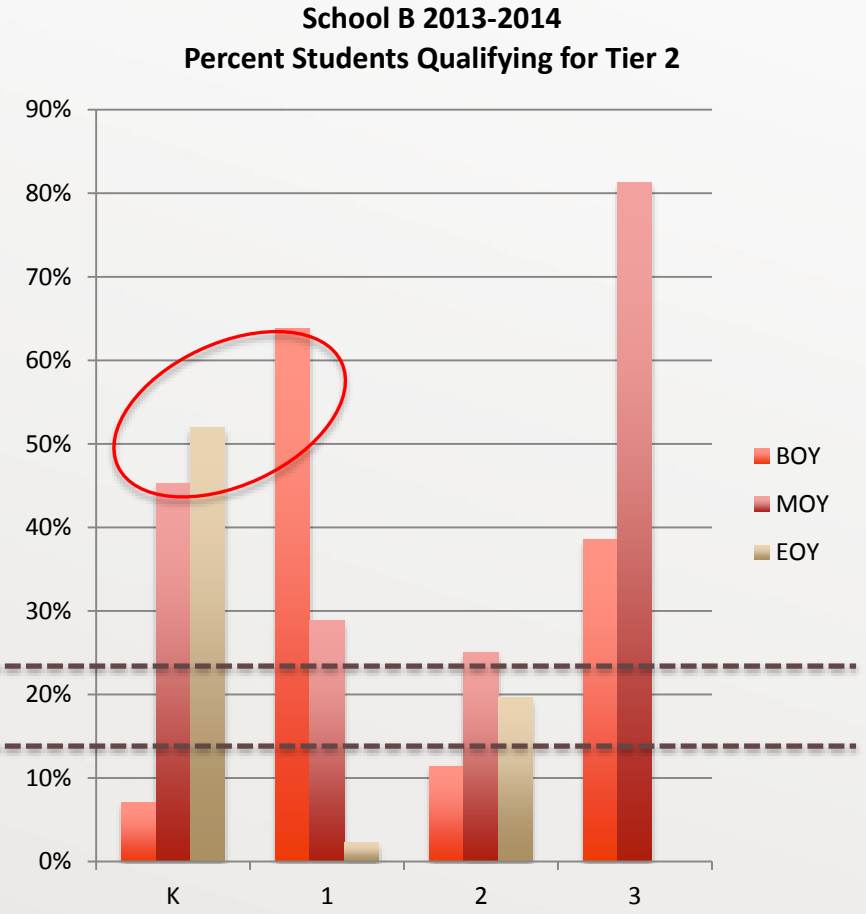
- Does supplemental instruction result in an appropriate percentage of students meeting expectations by the middle or the end of the year and thus exiting Tier 2 and returning to core instruction only?*
- Are inappropriate patterns reflective of instruction or of measurement issues?

**An appropriate percentage expected to exit Tier 2 falls between 61-71%.*

Schools A and B 2013-2014



Note: No first graders qualified at EOY.
K-2 = Tejas Lee and EDL; 3=aimsweb MAZE.



Note: No EOY benchmark data collected for 3rd grade.
K-2 = Tejas Lee and EDL; 3=Flynt Cooter at BOY and schoolnet at MOY (predicts performance on state accountability measure).

Culturally responsive assessment

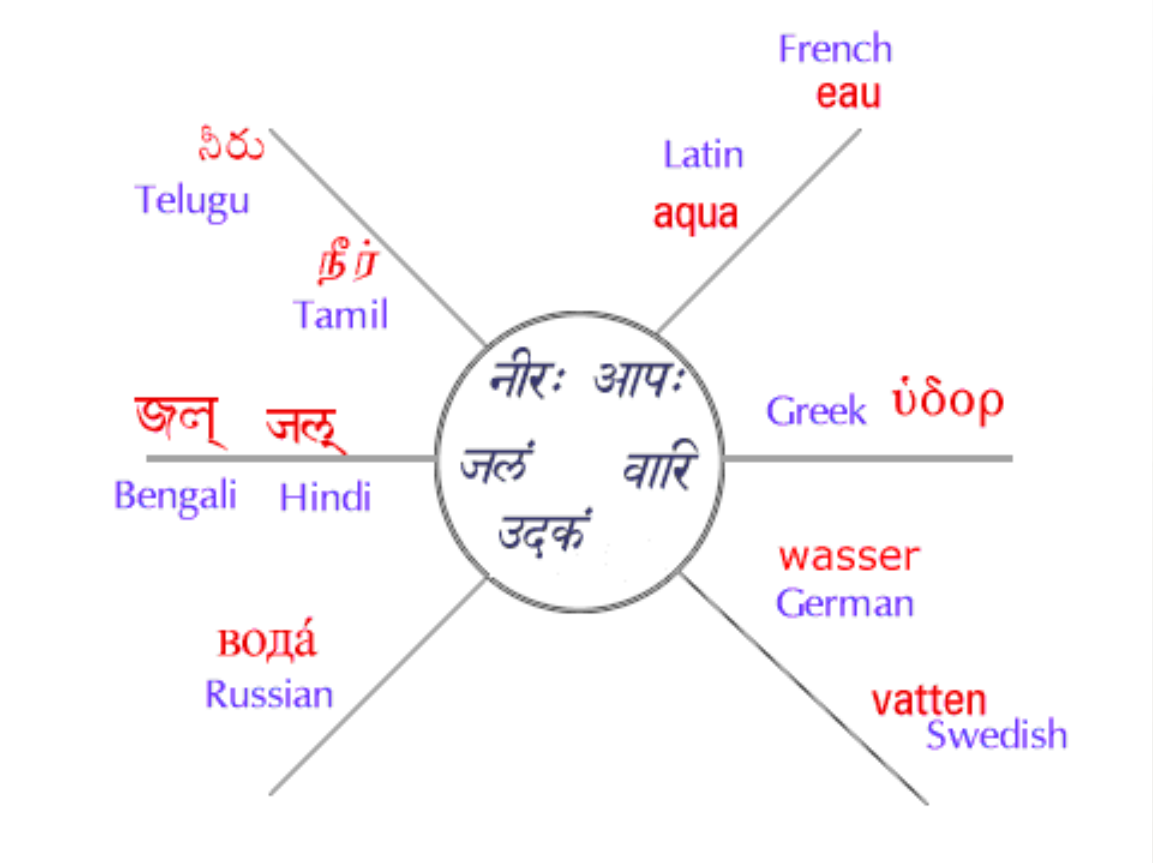
OTHER MEASURES

Why use other measures?

- We know there is a relationship between language and literacy.
- The relationship between language proficiency and literacy achievement is not well understood.
- Many benchmarks are not normed for ELs.
- There are factors outside of school that impact opportunity to learn.

Other Data

- Students' educational history:
  - Extent of educational opportunity in L1 and L2
  - Language and literacy trajectories



Differences in languages

- Phonological unit
- Writing system
- Vocabulary

Other data

- School and district comparisons (past performance)
- Class means:
  - Grade expectations
  - Similar peers

Remember

- **Routines and procedures for decision-making** must be documented to ensure consistency when making decisions about student placement and intervention.

- Have established and clearly articulated procedures for decision making at the school- and grade-level, individual student and group level.

QUESTIONS

The other expressive skill

WRITING

Writing a window to language development

- Is writing taught explicitly?
- Is writing a daily activity in the early grades?
- What types of information can be extracted from writing samples?

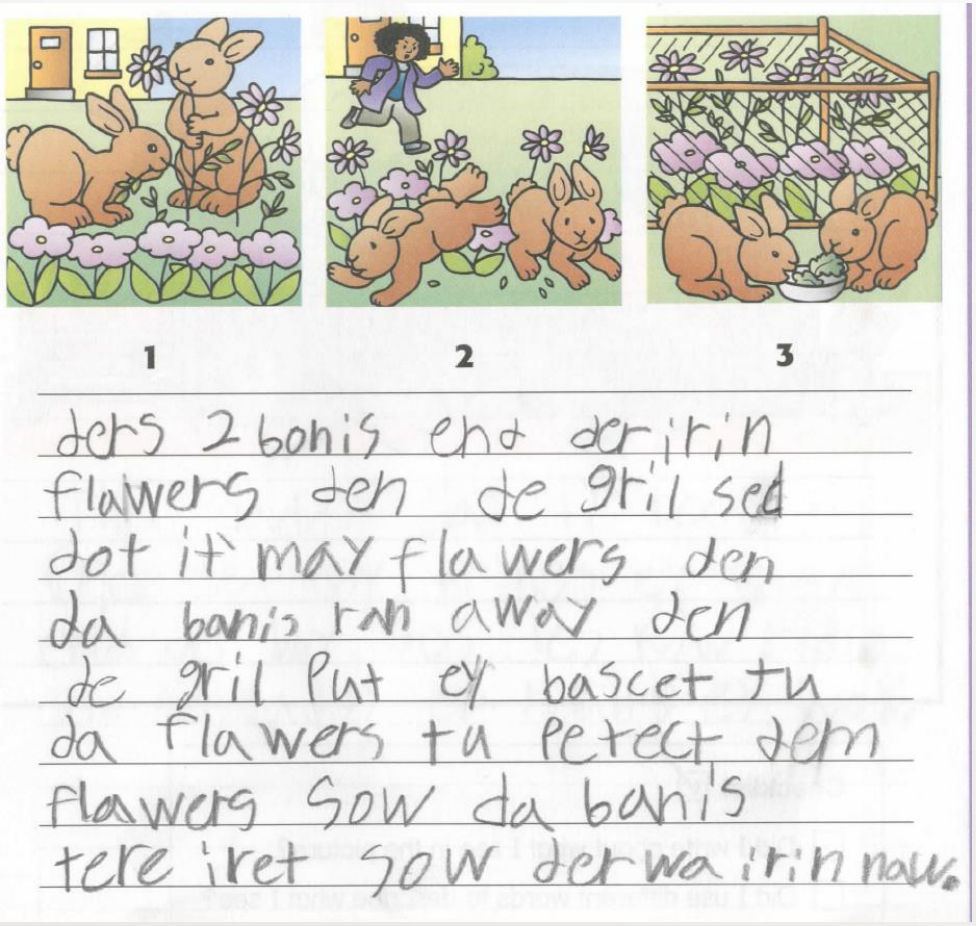
Writing a window to language development

Student Group	Fall Word count	Spring Word Count
Dyslexia	33.5	38.2
Low writing scores	27.2	59.4
Average writing scores	52.0	48.3

SELP Low: 2/1 or 2/2 Average: 4/4

1 2 3

de Vanis wanete de
flawer den av gero dey
raned de Vanis dend
Vanis ite same libes
end dewer gapie.


1
2
3
ders 2 banis end derirn
flawers den de gril sed
dot it may flawers den
da banis ran away den
de gril put ey bascet tu
da flawers tu petect dem
flawers sow da banis
tere iret sow derwa irin naw.

DIRECTIONS Look at the three pictures. Write a story about what you see in the pictures. Tell what happened first, what happened next, and what happened last.

2

1 2 3

Once upon a time there were two little bunnies that were eating flowers and then a girl came and scared thoes little bunnies but then thee came back and eated some leaves and the girl did not scarde them away

Checklist ☑

- ☑ Did I write about what I see in the pictures?
- ☑ Did I use different words to describe what I see?
- ☑ Did I try to write in complete sentences?

English: Journal Samples

Student	WW	WSC	CWS	UW
Identified	42.6	16.8	7.6	24.41
Low writing	73.1	27.8	9.18	31.11
Average writing	53.7	49.6	42.5	30.97

Journal Data

	Total # of words	Unique words	% of errors	% of unique errors Spanish phonology	% of unique errors English approximations	% other unique errors	Spanish word
a	30	20	100%	85	15		
b	49	20	75.5	69.2	30.7		
c	28	25	67.8	72.7	27.2		
d	64	40	75	84	16		
Mean/ range	42.75 28-64	26.25 20-40					

Journal Data

	Total # of words	Unique words	% of errors	% of unique errors Spanish phonology	% of unique errors English approximations	% other unique errors	Spanish word
a	40	25	90%	53.8%	13.34%	26.97%	3.8%
b	37	29	62%	66.6%	13.32%	20%	
d	44	26	56.8%	50%	42.8%	7.14%	
Mean/ range	40.3/ 37 - 44	26.6/ 25- 29					

Journal Data

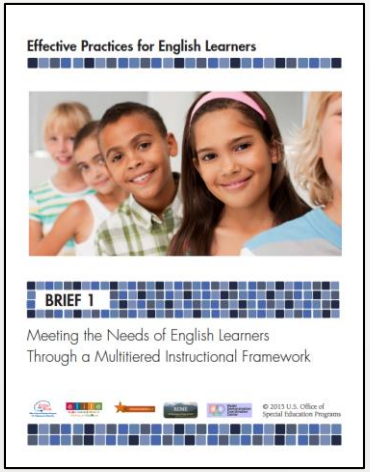
	Total # of words	Unique words	% of errors	% of unique errors Spanish phonology	% of unique errors English approximations	% other unique errors	Spanish word
b	56	38	10.7		100		
c	46	35	6.5	50	50		
d	54	32	9.2	60	40		
e	57	34	3.5		100		
Mean/ range	53.25 46 - 57						

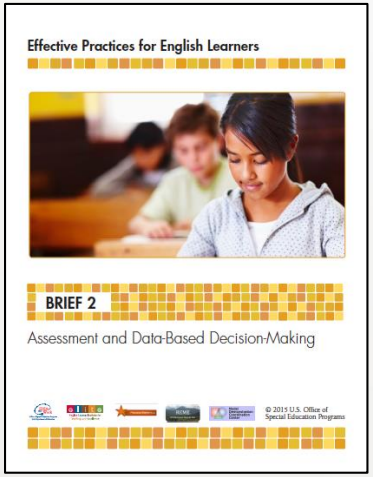
Possible Implications

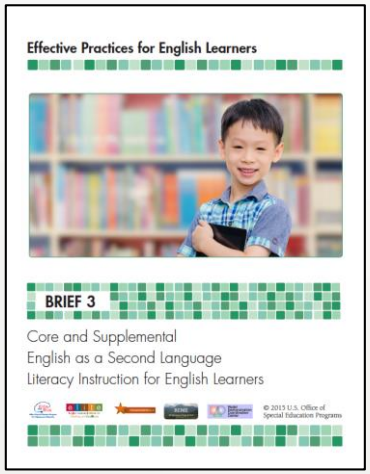
1. Identify normal trajectories for bilingual students
2. Discriminate between students with learning and language disabilities and students with low language proficiency
3. Better understand the intersection between second language acquisition and learning disabilities.

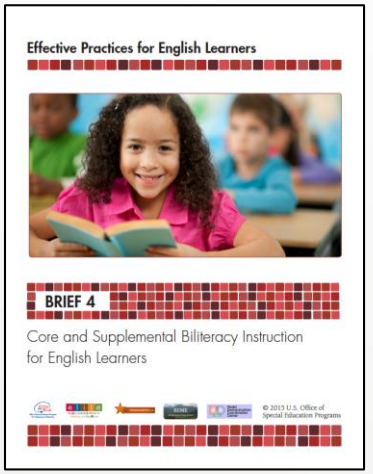
QUESTIONS

Practice Briefs









Practice Briefs can be found on the Model Demonstration Coordination Center website: http://mdcc.sri.com/cohort5.html

Thank you

Sylvia Linan-Thompson
sylvialt@austin.utexas.edu