Second Language Acquisition or Specific Learning Disability?

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Purpose

- Discuss how Response to Intervention is used to determine Special Education eligibility
  - Share research
  - Opportunities for discussion
  - Case Studies
  - Distribution of resources/tools

Language Dominance

- By 2030, an estimated 40% of the school age population will speak English as their second language.
- Today, the majority (77%) of ELLs are Spanish speaking.

(Koerner, Artiles, & Barletta, 2006)
Current Profile in Our Schools

- Over the past decade, there has been a 60% increase of ELL in U.S. schools.
- The amount of ELLs identified with disabilities has doubled.
  - Reading disability, SLD, and Speech/Language are the primary identifications for these students.

What does a child experience when they come to a new country?

- Acculturate
- Assimilate

Examples of Cultural Conflicts in Schools

- Cultures vary in expectations surrounding participation during classroom lessons.
  - For example, in some countries, when a teacher lectures the students do not speak until the lecture is completed.
  - In the Japanese culture, the norm would be for a student to say “Yes, I understand” in response to instructions given rather than admit to a lack of understanding.

- The importance of time is viewed differently in many countries. Being prompt for appointments is not a priority in many countries. Quality of interpersonal relationships can take priority over punctuality.
  - Chamberlain, Maddox, Landsman, 1977

- Eye contact with the teacher is seen as disrespectful in many countries and the converse can be true in other countries.
Cultural Differences
Continued

- Latin countries typically are collectivist in nature.

- A child raised in a collectivist society is taught *NOT* to stand out. Relationships with friends and family are most important. Loyalty is a critical component.

*If students are to attain a high level of proficiency that enables them to understand and express complex ideas in sophisticated ways, they need a focused approach that addresses the linguistic, cognitive, and SOCIOCULTURAL dimensions of language through explicit instruction and authentic practice.*

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RtI for ELLs p. 12-13

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From your experiences here as well as in Argentina, what are some of the different value systems kids bring to school?
How do these differences impact students in the educational setting?

Cultural factors are part of the exclusionary criteria for special education eligibility. In what ways do you support culture so that it is embraced and positively impacts a child in the school setting?

What tips could you provide to special education administrators in diverse school settings?
Stages of Language Acquisition

- There are five stages of acquiring a second language:
  - It can take a student four to ten years to fully acquire competence in their second language.
  - Certain strategies are highly supportive in each of the five stages of acquisition. Please reference our supplemental materials.

Introduction to L2

- While Spanish is syllabic in nature and follows a predictable pattern, English is not phonologically consistent.
  - 25% of the words in English are phonologically irregular and do not conform to a sound-symbol rule
    - For example, port and mint, was and rat.
  - Increased complexity of a language system is related to higher incidences of learning difficulties in the area of reading.
    - For example:
      Italy: 1.3-5% US: 5-10% India: 20%  
      (Feifer, Della Toffola, 2007)

The IQ-Achievement Special Education Identification Model

- Students had to be found eligible before receiving intensive special education interventions.
- Many biases and problems are present in the IQ-Achievement evaluation process.

"Intelligence tests are not tests of intelligence, in some abstract culture free way. They are measures of the ability to function intellectually by virtue of knowledge and skills in the culture of which they are a sample," Scarr, 1978

"Probably no test can be created that will entirely eliminate the influence of learning and cultural experiences. The test content and materials, the language the questions are phrased, the test directions, the categories for classifying responses, the scoring criteria, and the validity criteria are all culture bound." Jerome Sattler, 1992.
**Response to Intervention**

1) **Problem Identification**
   - Prioritize concerns
     - Can any concerns be explained by cultural factors?
   - Collect Data
     - Preferably ELL norms from your own District
     - Compare performance in English and Spanish
     - State discrepancy from ELL peers as well as general education peers
RtI Process Continued…

2) Problem Analysis

Why is the problem occurring?

- Collect and review data
  - File review (language of instruction, program history, results of testing, attendance)
  - Observations of student across academic and social settings, behavior and academic
  - Teacher interview about behavior
  - Testing: Lex Links, ACCESS, ISAT, etc...

- Review Previous Interventions
  - Explain how these interventions support language and academic growth

RtI Process continued…

3) Plan Development and Implementation

- Step 1: Generate a plausible/alterable hypothesis

- Step 2: Design an intervention
  - Ensure fidelity through teacher accountability
  - Seamless logistics
  - Measurable goals
  - Expected growth calculated based on ELL norms when possible

RtI Process Continued…

4) Plan Evaluation

Is our plan working?

- Did the student make progress against ELL norms?
- Is the gap closing?
- Did we maintain integrity of interventions?
- Do we have regularly occurring progress monitoring data of substance?
- Next steps?
Before determining eligibility, ensure that all of the following have been justified:

- Integrity of the interventions
- Intensity level
- Was the intervention research-based and did the research include diverse learners?
- Did students receive adequate ESL support?
- Did the educational team thoroughly document intervention history and progress monitoring data

- Rule Out
  - Lack of appropriate instruction, limited English proficiency, cultural factors, environmental or economic disadvantages

How are the exclusionary criteria justified...

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lack of Instruction</th>
<th>Limited English Proficient</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Use of research-based interventions and core instruction that is proven effective for students with similar language backgrounds.</td>
<td>- Consistent ESL Support</td>
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<td>- Appropriate Materials</td>
<td>- Monitoring of language acquisition (Assess, Las Links)</td>
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<td>- Consistent student attendance at school</td>
<td>- Growth comparison is made to other English language learners</td>
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<td>- Consistent interventionist attendance</td>
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<td>- Compliance with recommended duration of intervention</td>
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<td>- Student had strong levels of engagement in lessons</td>
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<td>- Teachers received adequate training to implement the intervention</td>
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Justifications continued...

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<th>Cultural Factors</th>
<th>Environmental/Economic Disadvantages</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Review a thorough home language survey</td>
<td>- Provide resources otherwise not accessible</td>
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<td>- Update social history</td>
<td>- Offer after-school activities</td>
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<td>- Interventionist is culturally sensitive</td>
<td>- Provide fresh fruit and vegetables/snacks</td>
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<td>- Provide a safe and welcoming environment for diverse learners</td>
<td>- Meet students' needs through wrap-around services/community outreach</td>
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<td>- Ensure students feel a sense of belonging at school</td>
<td>- Offer parent education and encourage empowerment</td>
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Dynamic Assessments: Consider Multiple Sources

- MIDE measures
- CBM
- ACCESS tests
- Las Links to measure Spanish and English acquisition
- Aprenda
- In Spanish dominant students, suggested measures for Reading progress monitoring are:
  - Phonological awareness tasks, word recognition, rapid letter naming
  - Formative assessments: standardized curriculum tests and benchmarks from the Core curriculum: Villa Cuentos
  - Observations of language use and level in multiple settings

Case studies
Lindsey and Diana

Lindsey’s Support (2010-2011 School Year)

- Speech and Language services since Kindergarten: delivered in Spanish (ESL identified)
- Fall of 3rd grade: VillaCuentos Strategic Kit 90 minutes a week (Spanish)
- Spring 3rd grade: Storytown Strategic Kit 90 minutes a week (English)
- Trofeos (Spanish fluency/comprehension): 4x a week 30 minutes
- English Phonics, Heggerty 5x a week 30 minutes

- Villa Cuentos Spanish Literacy
- Storytown English Literacy
- Avenues ESL support 4x a week

- HSP Intervention Kit: Extension of core 90 minutes a week delivered by special education teacher

- Accommodations:
  - Shortened tasks, small group testing, extended time, preferential seating

Lindsey Data

- Progress monitoring data:
  - Spanish fluency: average range with 81 wrc (25th percentile 59 wrc)
  - English: Baseline 61 wrc with 9 errors
  - 6 weeks of intervention she was reading 80 wrc with 6 errors. 25th percentile in the winter of 3rd grade - 84 wrc.

- Jerry Johns Reading Inventory (Spanish): Lindsey demonstrated grade appropriate skills in word reading and fluency.
- Her comprehension score was equivalent to a score at the 2nd grade end of the year.
- ACTFL scale of Spanish Proficiency / Scale of 1-5. Score of 4 considered proficient.
  - Fall of 3rd grade: 4
  - Spring of 3rd grade: 4
  - MAP Tests:
    - Lindsey grew 18 points in Language Usage (fall to spring) (2nd-8th percentile)
    - Lindsey grew 15 points in Math (fall to spring) (8th-50th percentile)
    - Lindsey grew 18 points in Reading (fall to spring) (3rd-50th percentile)
Case Studies continued…

- Diana’s Support (2010-2011 School Year)
  - Leveled Literacy Intervention (4 x a week 30 minutes)
  - HSP Math Strategic Intervention (4 x a week 30 minutes)
  - Additional Spelling Practice Before School
  - Tracked math group (lowest tier)
  - Modified Spelling
  - Great Leaps/ Words Their Way Phonics
  - Villacuentos (Spanish Reading)
  - Storytown (English Reading)
  - HSP Math
  - Extended time on tasks, Small group testing
  - Social Work for organization (locker clean out, desk clean outs)
  - Exposure to content areas through leveled readers (3 x a week 20 minutes)
  - Leveled Literacy Intervention (4 x a week 30 minutes)
  - HSP Math Strategic Intervention (4 x a week 30 minutes)
  - Additional Spelling Practice Before School

Diana’s Data

- Progress Monitoring Data:
  - Spanish Fluency Baseline - 61 wrc, 4 errors. After 6 weeks of intervention 69 wrc, 4 errors. 25th percentile for the spring of 4th grade - 76 wrc.
  - English Fluency Baseline - 48 wrc, 13 errors. After 6 weeks of intervention 57 wrc, 9 errors. 25th percentile for spring of 4th grade - 112 wrc.
  - Math Concepts Baseline 5 points. After intervention - 8 points. (spring of 4th grade 25th percentile - 13 points)

- Additional Relevant Data for the Evaluation
  - Access Tier “A” Overall - 4.6
  - Jerry Johns Reading Inventory
    - English - 2nd grade level
    - Spanish - 3rd grade level
  - MAP Tests:
    - Diana grew 14 points in Reading (fall to spring) (2nd-6th percentile)
    - Diana grew 13 points in Math (fall to spring) (2nd-17th percentile)
    - Diana grew 11 points in Language Usage (fall to spring) (1st-2nd percentile)

Diana Data Continued

- Conner’s Rating Scale
  - Significant Scores in:
    - Inattention, Hyperactivity,
    - Defiance, Peer Relations
Supplemental Information/Resources

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References


