

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS WHO DO NOT QUALIFY FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICE, BUT HAVE SIGNIFICANT LANGUAGE AND EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The following recommendations were written for English language learners who have language and academic difficulties that are not due to a learning disability or language delay requiring special education services, but can primarily be attributed to linguistic, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic factors. This document provides a general statement of the “probable basis” for the student’s difficulty. These “probable basis” statements describe different situations that can be reasonably attributed to be the primary cause for the student’s difficulties. Additionally, instructional strategies/teaching recommendations and professional resources are included. This document was developed by special education evaluation specialists for special education evaluation specialists to help in writing the Full and Individual Evaluation report. **JUDGEMENT AND VIGILANCE ARE URGED IN USING THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS. FULL AND INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION REPORTS SHOULD BE INDIVIDUALIZED TO THE STUDENT’S NEEDS REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE STUDENT QUALIFIES OR DOES NOT QUALIFY FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES.**

This document is prepared by the following groups from around the state of Texas that compose the Bilingual Special Education Evaluation Co-op (BSE Evaluation Co-op):

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This student appears to be experiencing language difficulties, NOT DUE TO A DISABILITY, BUT TO THE NATURAL PROCESS OF SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION.

- Statement Outlining General Observation of Primary Cause of Student’s Difficulty

Based on the data collected, the student’s language difficulties appear to be primarily a result of language difference and second language acquisition factors and not to a learning or language disability. The student is a second language learner of English and is still in the process of “catching up” to native English speakers his/her age. The majority of research in the area of second language learning suggests that non-impaired students require 5 to 7, and even 10 years, to fully acquire a second language. In addition, a myriad of factors, such as personality, motivation, general ability, auditory memory and discrimination skills, etc, influences the rate of second language learning. This student has not yet fully acquired his/her second language (English), however is in a situation where he/she must function and compete in an English academic setting. The academic difficulties appear to be the result of the situation and not the consequence of a disability.

- Instructional Strategies and Teaching Recommendations

- (100) The student appears to need more time to fully develop the English language. As previously stated, second language learning is a lengthy process that is influenced by many affective, environmental, and cognitive factors. Moreover, many professionals confuse a conversational level of English as an indication of the student's readiness to handle cognitively challenging academic tasks when in reality the student is still in the second language acquisition process.
- (101) Active and explicit individualized teaching of language with dynamic monitoring of student progress is essential for efficient English language learning.
- (102) Instructions should be clear, predictable, and understandable. The teacher needs to use clear communication skills. Meaning should be reinforced by gestures, concrete materials, and actual learning experiences. Verbal clarification of instructions should be given often. The teacher needs to anticipate and explain difficult vocabulary and concepts. The teacher is encouraged to make frequent comprehension checks.
- (103) Sensitive and sensible correction of errors encourage effort and do not interfere with communication. The student's errors need to be accepted as a natural and developmental part of the second language acquisition process.
- (104) English instruction needs to be cognitively challenging. The objectives of tasks should challenge the student's thinking, but the linguistic demands should be adapted to his/her stage of second language acquisition.
- (105 a) The maintenance and development of the student's native language should be supported. A well-developed first language positively stimulates second language learning.
- (105 b) Time should be scheduled daily for content area teaching in the first language.
- (105 c) Sufficient textual and support materials should be available in the first language for accomplishment of first language instruction.
- (106) If first language instruction cannot be provided, the teacher can implement creative alternatives for providing cognitive development.
- (107) The school library is encouraged to have a substantial section of children's literature at different literacy levels in the native language(s)
- (108) Opportunities to predict linguistic and conceptual meaning should be made available to the student. Listening experiences should be provided in both languages. Teacher is encouraged to read literature to the students often.
- (109) The student should be held responsible for careful listening. If the student has difficulty, specific strategies for careful listening should be taught to the student.
- (110) Allowing the student to express his/her own thoughts, feelings, and opinions in any language can be beneficial for various affective and linguistic reasons.
- (111) LEP students' home culture and language should be evident in significant ways in the classroom, such as bulletin boards, reading materials and school projects. This can help the student understand the importance of his/her background.
- (112) Success in learning should be a fundamental underpinning of the instructional program. The educational environment can be planned and implemented to achieve student success, which can then be translated to excellence. Success in learning content subject matter can be just as important as learning English language skills.
- (113) Preteach vocabulary and difficult concepts prior to instruction. Use visual supports such as pictures, objects, and graphic organizers.
- (114) Provide opportunities to learn language in context. Contextual language learning can be more efficient, natural, and meaningful.
- (115) The student should have access to fluent language models.

- Professional Resources

--Manolo vs. Alief ISD (Special Education Hearing Officer Decision, Texas Education Agency)

--Cummins, Jim. (1985) Empowering Minority Students.

This student appears to be experiencing language difficulties NOT DUE TO A DISABILITY, BUT TO SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS THAT APPEAR TO BE AFFECTING THE QUALITY AND PROGRESS OF THE STUDENT'S LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT.

- Statement Outlining General Observation of Primary Cause of Student's Difficulty

The student's language difficulties appear to be a direct result of socioeconomic factors. Based on the data collected, the student appears to have had limited language enriched experiences in early childhood. Please refer to the section of this report entitled "Sociological Information" for more detailed information of the student's early background.

- Instructional Strategies and Teaching Recommendations

(200) The student may demonstrate difficulty personally relating to different topics or subject matter outside of his/her experience. The teacher may want to first provide direct and/or vicarious experiences (role playing, hands-on projects, films, books, field trips, guest speakers, etc.) for the student in the topic area or subject matter so that the student can better relate to it during instruction.

(201) The student may have a different personal frame of reference for relating to various topics, subject matter, or even school in general. It is important for the teacher to know the student's background and have genuine interactions with the student and family.

(202) The student may have a different personal frame of reference for relating to reading material and written expression tasks. It is important for the teacher to know the student's background and have genuine interactions with the student and family.

(203) The student may exhibit reticence in classroom discussions. It is important for the teacher to know the student's background and have genuine personal interactions with the student and family, in order to know when and how to include the student in classroom discussions.

(204) The student may have difficulty with on-demand recall of declarative knowledge.

(205) The quality of oral and written expression may suffer due to limited experiences.

(206) Due to non-traditional experiences, the quality of oral and written expression may appear atypical to teachers and/or others.

(207) Read to the student in English (and his/her native language). The teacher and parent are encouraged to read literature often to the student. The student can also listen to taped books.

- Professional Resources

This student appears to be experiencing language difficulties NOT DUE TO A DISABILITY, BUT TO CULTURAL FACTORS.

- Statement Outlining General Observation of Primary Cause of Student's Difficulty

The student's language difficulties appear to be a direct result of cultural factors. Based on the data collected, the student appears to have limited exposure to dominant cultural experiences.

- Instructional Strategies and Teaching Recommendations

(300) Provide classroom activities related to cultural diversity.

(301) Encourage parent involvement in community and school-based activities to facilitate acculturation.

(302) Due to the student's experiences from a different culture, performance in oral and written expression may appear different from other students to teachers and/or others.

(303) The student may exhibit reticence in classroom discussions. It is important for the teacher to know the student's background and have genuine personal interactions with the student and family, in order to know when and how to include the student in classroom discussions.

(304) The student may have a different personal frame of reference for relating to various topics, subject matter, or even school in general. It is important for the teacher to know the student's background and have genuine interactions with the student and family.

(305) The student may demonstrate difficulty personally relating to different topics or subject matter outside of his/her experience. The teacher may want to first provide direct and/or vicarious experiences (role playing, hands-on projects, films, books, field trips, guest speakers, etc.) for the student in the topic area or subject matter so that the student can better relate to it during instruction.

- Professional Resources

This student appears to be experiencing language difficulties NOT DUE TO A DISABILITY, BUT TO LIFESTYLE FACTORS.

- Statement Outlining General Observation of Primary Cause of Student's Difficulty

The student's language difficulties appear to be a direct result of lifestyle factors. Based on the data collected, the student appears to have limited exposure to "traditional" experiences.

- Instructional Strategies and Teaching Recommendations

(400) Provide classroom activities related to cultural diversity.

(401) Due to the student's unique experiences, performance in oral and written expression may appear different from other students to teachers and/or others.

(402) The student may exhibit reticence in classroom discussions. It is important for the teacher to know the student's background and have genuine personal interactions with the student and family, in order to know when and how to include the student in classroom discussions.

(403) The student may have a different personal frame of reference for relating to various topics, subject matter, or even school in general. It is important for the teacher to know the student's background and have genuine interactions with the student and family.

(404) The student may demonstrate difficulty personally relating to different topics or subject matter outside of his/her experience. The teacher may want to first provide direct and/or vicarious experiences (role playing, hands-on projects, films, books, field trips, guest speakers, etc.) for the student in the topic area or subject matter so that the student can better relate to it during instruction.

- Professional Resources

This student appears to be experiencing language difficulties NOT DUE TO A DISABILITY, BUT TO DISCONTINUITY OF INSTRUCTION ESPECIALLY AS IT PERTAINS TO LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION AND SPECIAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS.

- Statement Outlining General Observation of Root Cause of Student's Difficulty

Discontinuity of instruction appears to have impacted this student's language development. Please refer to the section of this report entitled "Educational History" for information on the history of this student's educational and instructional programming.

- Instructional Strategies and Teaching Recommendations

(500) The student needs consistent curriculum and programming. School success will be more difficult without consistency. The school and parents will want to work closely together to provide the constancy and cohesiveness that is vital in learning.

(501) Knowledge gaps must be assessed and remediated to improve student performance and facilitate smoother transitions into new topics and subject matter.

(502) Low skill areas must be identified and developed to improve student performance and facilitate smoother transitions into new topics and subject matter.

(503) The school may want to assign a case manager to provide support and ensure cohesiveness in the student's instructional programming.

- Professional Resources

--Performance Power, a curriculum-based assessment software by American Guidance Service, can be used to identify gaps in learning. The software program is available in English and Spanish and in the core content areas.

--Monolo vs. Alief ISD, a special education hearing officer decision, dealt with the issue of discontinuity of instruction, especially language of instruction.

This student appears to be experiencing language difficulties NOT DUE TO A DISABILITY, BUT TO A LACK OF PROGRESS IN HIS/HER CURRENT INSTRUCTIONAL PLACEMENT/PROGRAM.

- Statement Outlining General Observation of Primary Cause of Student's Difficulty

The student's lack of expected language development in his/her current instructional placement/program may require a review of other instructional placements and programming options. The slower development appears to be primarily related to the:

--excessive changes in school programs. Refer to the section in this report entitled "Educational Background" for detailed information.

--bilingual education denial. The student's language development appears to have been impacted. The native language no longer actively supports the development of the second language and content learning.

--current school program. It does not appear to be the appropriate medium to provide for the student's needs at this time.

- Instructional Strategies and Teaching Recommendations

(600) A parent/school conference is needed to discuss instructional placements/programs (other than special education) which may include: reconsideration of ESL/bilingual education placement, 504 referral for accommodations, tutorials, peer tutoring/paired working arrangement, use of computer lab to enhance language skills, and/or use of multi-modality teaching strategies

(601) Identify student's preferred learning style and match with a teaching style that will promote academic progress.

(602) The student has experienced inconsistent instructional programming

- Professional Resources

--Language Styles Inventory

This student appears to be experiencing language difficulties NOT DUE TO A DISABILITY, BUT TO INCONSISTENT SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND/OR SIGNIFICANT GAPS IN THE STUDENT'S SCHOOLING.

- Statement Outlining General Observation of Primary Cause of Student's Difficulty

The student's oral language difficulties appear to be primarily attributable to inconsistent school attendance and/or significant gaps in the student's schooling resulting in a lack of educational opportunity. The language difficulties the student is experiencing, thus, can not be deemed the consequence of a disability.

- Instructional Strategies and Teaching Recommendations

(700) Tutorials may be beneficial for the student with inconsistent school attendance and/or significant gaps in schooling. Inconsistent school attendance and gaps in schooling creates low skills areas and knowledge gaps. Tutorials can provide the much-needed review and practice in low skill areas and the critical remediation of knowledge gaps.

(701) A parent/student/school conference is needed to discuss and determine the cause(s) of the poor school attendance.

(702) Curriculum based assessment may be necessary to assess gaps in knowledge and low skill areas. Identify and remediate knowledge gaps and low skill areas.

(703) The development of an intervention plan to increase school attendance appears to be needed.

(704) The school may want to assign a case manager to provide support and ensure cohesiveness in the student's instructional programming.

- Professional Resources

--Performance Power, a curriculum-based assessment software by American Guidance Service, can be used to identify gaps in learning. The software program is available in English and Spanish and in the core content areas.

This student appears to be experiencing language difficulties NOT DUE TO A DISABILITY, BUT TO OVERALL LOW COGNITIVE FUNCTIONING.

- Statement Outlining General Observation of Primary Cause of Student's Difficulty

Test results indicate overall low intellectual functioning, thus resulting in slower language acquisition. Language skills appear to be commensurate with assessed intellectual functioning.

- Instructional Strategies and Teaching Recommendations

(800) Provide intense oral language development programs in the primary language (i.e. Santillana Program) to help develop/improve vocabulary.

(801) Provide activities & opportunities such as field trips, movies, plays, and books to enrich the student's language. Encourage oral discussions before and after such activities and enrichment opportunities.

(802) Monitor language development. Tape record language samples.

(803) Have a consistent plan of reteaching and reinforcing vocabulary and concepts.

(804) Provide concrete examples, visuals, and active learning experiences.

(805) Build on associative learning. Take what the student's know and build on it.

- Professional Resources

--Dr. Woodcock's expected on academic development for three different cognitive levels of functioning.