

# **Scientific Research-Based Interventions for English Language Learners: A Handbook to Accompany Connecticut's Framework for RTI**



## **CAPELL**

**Connecticut Administrators of Programs for English Language Learners**

### **Spring 2012**

## Table of Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| I. Overview.....  | 1  |
| Background.....   | 1  |
| RTI/SRBI Defined.....   | 1  |
| ELLs and Proficiency .....  | 2  |
| Instructional Considerations for ELLs.....  | 2  |
| Context.....  | 3  |
| Universal Screening and Assessment of ELLs .....  | 3  |
| II. A Scientific Research Based Intervention (SRBI) Model for ELLs in CT.....             | 4  |
| A Three Tiered Model for Implementing SRBI for ELLs.....                                  | 5  |
| Considerations .....  | 5  |
| SRBI Process for ELLs Regarding Reading and Writing .....                                 | 6  |
| Three Tiers in Detail: Essential Features for All Students and Implications for ELLs..... | 7  |
| Tier I .....  | 7  |
| Tier II.....  | 13 |
| Tier III.....   | 17 |
| Glossary .....  | 20 |
| References .....  | 25 |
| Appendix A: SRBI Implementation Survey .....  | 27 |
| Appendix B: Guiding Questions for SRBI Teams.....   | 28 |
| Appendix C: Committee Members .....   | 31 |

# Part 1: Overview

## Background

This document, *Scientific Research-Based Interventions for English Language Learners: A Handbook to Accompany Connecticut’s Framework for RTI*, was created as a product of the Bilingual Education sub-committee work under the guidance of Connecticut Administrators of Programs for English Language Learners (CAPELL).

The sub-committee chose to focus its efforts this year on SRBI as it relates to English Language Learners (ELLs). This topic is of particular importance given the specific needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) learners. The end result of the committee work is the following set of guidelines, which all school districts across Connecticut may use in the development and implementation of interventions for ELLs.

Vaughn & Ortiz’s study (as cited on [¡Colorín colorado!](#), 2010) states that “A considerable amount of evidence suggests that approaches involving early intervention, ongoing progress monitoring, and effective classroom instruction consistent with Response to Intervention (RTI) are associated with improved outcomes for the majority of students in early reading and math (e.g., Burns, Griffiths, Parson, Tilly, & VanDerHayden, 2007; Fletcher, Lyon, Fuchs & Barnes, 2007; Haager, Klinger & Vaughn, 2007; McCardle & Chhabra, 2004). Considerably less information exists, however, about the effectiveness of these approaches with a growing population of students, English language learners (ELLs) at risk for reading problems. We also have considerably less information about the types of interventions that are effective for students who do not adequately respond to the interventions that typically are effective (Vaughn et al., in press; Wanzek & Vaughn, 2007).”

It is important to note that ELLs have **both** academic and linguistic needs. As commonly stated, this subgroup of learners has to “chase the moving target.” This means that while monolingual peers learn and move academically forward with access to the daily curriculum, ELLs have the challenge of both learning the language and learning the curriculum in the same amount of academic time afforded a fluent English-speaking peer. The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) and the Department of Justice (Equal Opportunity Act) have consistently placed judgment against districts that have offered one service over the other, instead of both services. *Thus, ELLs may receive SRBI and ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) but not SRBI as ESOL. ELLs’ needs must be determined on a case-by-case basis so that a student receives appropriate interventions, which may include additional academic and/or linguistic support.*

This document was designed to supplement the publication *Connecticut’s Framework for RTI – Using Scientific Research-Based Interventions: Improving Education for all Students* (August 2008), and specifically focuses on this framework as it applies to ELLs.

## Response to Intervention (RTI) / Scientific Research-Based Intervention (SRBI) Defined

Response to Intervention (RTI) is the practice of providing scientific, research-based instruction and intervention matched to students’ needs, with important educational decisions based on students’ levels of performance and learning rates over time (*Response to Intervention: Policy Considerations and Implementation*, National Association of State Directors of Special Education, 2005). The focus is on intervening early through a multi-tiered approach where each tier provides interventions of increased

intensity. All students are screened early in their education to identify those who are not responding to classroom instruction and to provide support through the use of research-based interventions at each tier while monitoring progress frequently (Batsche, Elliott, Graden, Grimes, Kovalski, Prasse, et. al., 2005). In Connecticut, the RTI process is referenced as SRBI (Scientific Research-Based Interventions) because this language is contained in both NCLB [Section 9101(37) of ESEA] and IDEA Regulations [Section 300.307 (a)(2)]. SRBI emphasizes successful instruction for all students through high-quality core general education practices, as well as targeted interventions for students experiencing learning difficulties. The State of Connecticut SRBI framework lists differentiation of instruction for all learners, including ELLs, as a key element. For the full text version of Connecticut’s Framework for RTI (SRBI) visit: [http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/pressroom/SRBI\\_full.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/pressroom/SRBI_full.pdf).

## **ELLs and Proficiency**

ELLs vary in their level of English-language proficiency as determined by the Language Assessment Systems (LAS) Links. Proficiency results on the LAS Links range from Level 1 (Beginner) to 5 (Fluent). The individual linguistic level of a student is initially identified upon eligibility and updated annually. Once an ELL is identified, the student must meet both academic and linguistic goals to exit ELL status. These goals are referred to as the English Mastery Standard and can be found at <http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/ell/index.htm>.

*English language instruction is part of core instruction and is, therefore, part of Tier I for all ELLs.* ELLs at LAS Links beginning to intermediate levels (1-3), receive linguistic support as part of their core instructional program (Tier I). This linguistic support is more than simple differentiation; it is specific English language acquisition instruction. ELLs who have achieved proficiency on the LAS Links (Levels 4-5), continue to require instruction in acquiring academic language and are monitored by educators to ensure they are making expected academic progress.

## **Instructional considerations for ELLs**

The George Washington University–Center for Equity and Excellence in Education identified six guiding principles for promoting excellence in the education of ELLs (1996; revised in 2008).

The principles are as follows:

1. English Language Learners are held to the same high expectations of learning established for all students.
2. English Language Learners develop full receptive and productive proficiencies in English in the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, consistent with expectations for all students.
3. English Language Learners are taught academic content that enables them to meet challenging performance standards in all content areas, consistent with those for all students.
4. English Language Learners receive instruction that builds on their prior knowledge and cognitive abilities and is responsive to their language proficiency and cultural backgrounds.
5. English Language Learners are evaluated with appropriate and valid assessments that are aligned to state and local standards and that take into account the language development stages and cultural backgrounds of the students.
6. The academic success of English Language Learners is a responsibility shared by educators, families, and communities.

## Context

ELLs differ in both their level of language proficiency and the amount of formal education they have received in their native language. A large body of research has formulated appropriate considerations in the instruction of ELLs. Recommendations include systematic and structured supports for ELLs through a process of considering each individual ELL's needs, instead of representing all ELLs as requiring or benefiting from the same type of instruction or intervention.

SRBI for ELLs includes a variety of interrelated tasks including differentiation, accommodation, collaboration and progress monitoring. Instruction is culturally responsive in that it includes culturally competent teaching. Hoover, Klinger, Baca & Patton (2008), recommend that instruction take into account the following factors:

- language (level of proficiency)
- acculturation (stressors from adapting to a new environment)
- background experiences (consideration of whether or not the student had a formal education background that was not interrupted)
- cultural values and norms (compatibility of selected interventions)
- higher order thinking abilities
- student learning styles

Classroom factors are also considered, including language of instruction and access to a high-quality curriculum. Classroom instruction results in increased linguistic competence when it is connected to a student's current and prior experiences, is consistent with the learner's language level, and emphasizes his/her functional language usage.

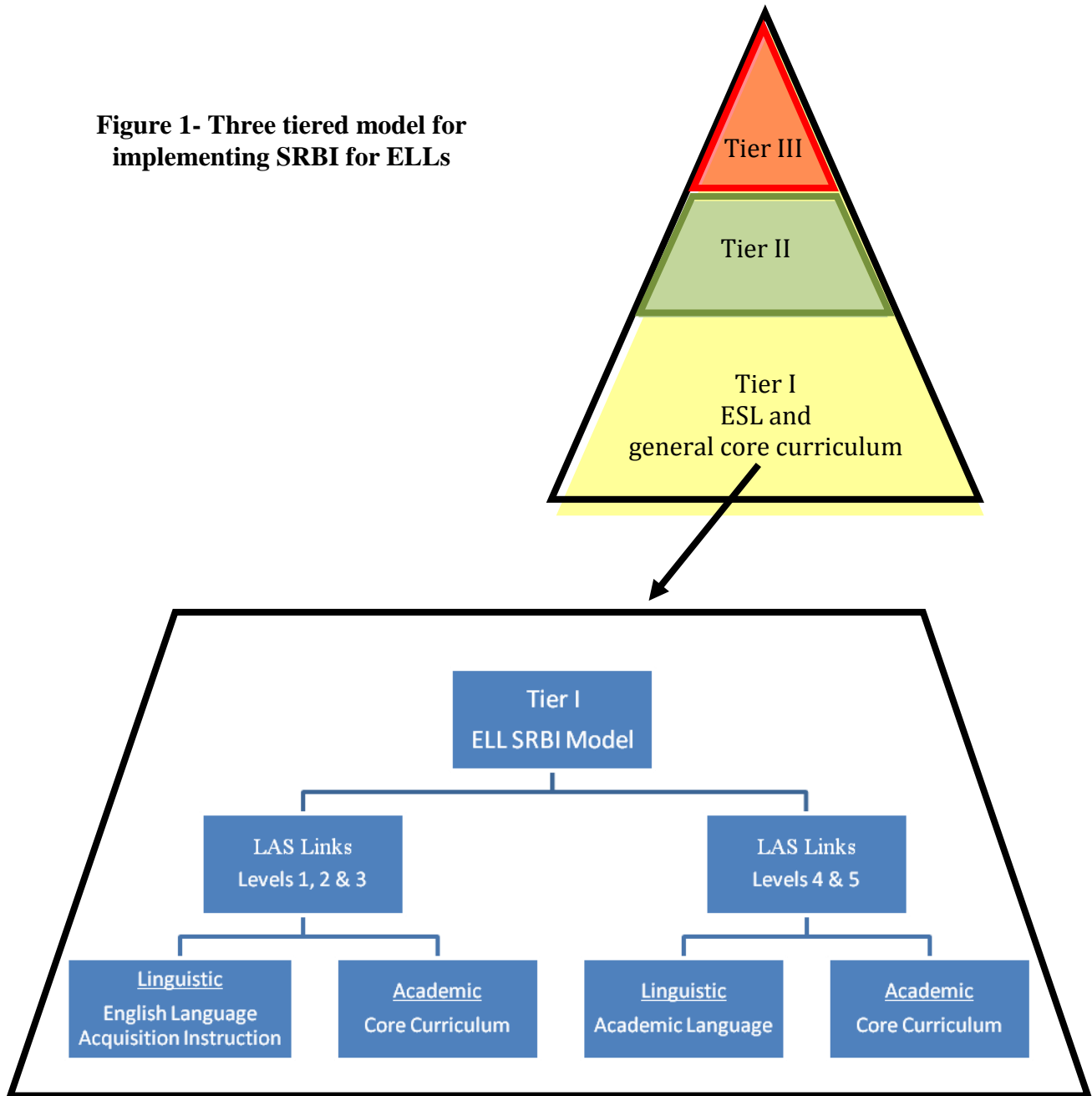
## Universal Screening and Assessment for ELLs

Regrettably, most of the assessments that are widely used for universal screening and diagnostic testing are unsuitable for use with ELLs, since they are normed on native, English-speaking students.

ELLs may go through the same process for universal screens as their non-ELL peers; however, their *results* should be interpreted and evaluated in consultation with one or more Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages TESOL-qualified staff members, rather than solely by appointed faculty who interpret and evaluate results of native English-speaking students. When considering an ELL for Tier II services (i.e., strategic supplemental interventions), diagnostic assessments should be chosen that have been researched with ELLs and CLD students. Again, results from universal screens should be interpreted with caution and with the assistance of an ESOL practitioner, as these screens were not expressly developed for use with ELLs.

## Part II: A Scientific Research Based Intervention (SRBI) Model for ELLs in Connecticut

Figure 1- Three tiered model for implementing SRBI for ELLs



## A Three Tiered Model for Implementing SRBI for ELLs

This section describes what SRBI for ELLs looks like when implemented as a three-tiered model. It is aligned to Connecticut's Framework for RTI.

In figure 1, the largest part, the base, represents Tier I; the middle part of the figure represents Tier II; and the top part of the triangular figure represents Tier III.

Tier I represents the curriculum and instruction that all identified ELLs should receive as part of their core program (including differentiation of instruction). Note that ESOL is considered core instruction for an ELL and therefore is part of Tier I for an ELL along with the general core curriculum. Tier II involves short-term interventions for ELLs experiencing difficulty in making typical progress as compared to **true peers** (see below) and who have not responded adequately to Tier I core instruction. Tier III involves more intensive, individualized short-term interventions for ELLs who fail to respond to Tier II interventions. It must be emphasized that all three tiers are part of a comprehensive educational system involving scientific research-based core general education practices which includes English language instruction for ELLs.

### Considerations

Difficulty ensues when districts try to determine at which point ESOL is not enough for the needs of developing ELLs, and the student, thus, requires the intensive intervention services offered in Tier II. Various bodies of research have been consulted; none describe a quantifiable moment in which it is definitively known that an ELL is not making linguistic progress. This is best determined by comparing ELLs to **true peers**. This term, from a study and report published by Portland State University and the United States Department of Education, refers to students who have similar proficiency levels, as well as similar amounts of time in the U.S. and similar educational and cultural backgrounds.

As previously described, ELLs have a need for access to culturally and linguistically appropriate instruction. **When an ELL, given access to core instruction, does not meet expected growth as compared to true peers, then the student should be considered for a Tier II intervention.**

Please note the following:

- Both NCLB and IDEA govern the use of RTI (known as SRBI in the state of Connecticut). However, research in the use of RTI with ELLs is limited as this is an emerging field of study.
- SRBI evidence-based practices have yet to be validated with culturally and linguistically diverse students, particularly with ELLs in Grades 6-12.
- To be effective, RTI (SRBI / Tier I) must be embedded in culturally and linguistically responsive practice.

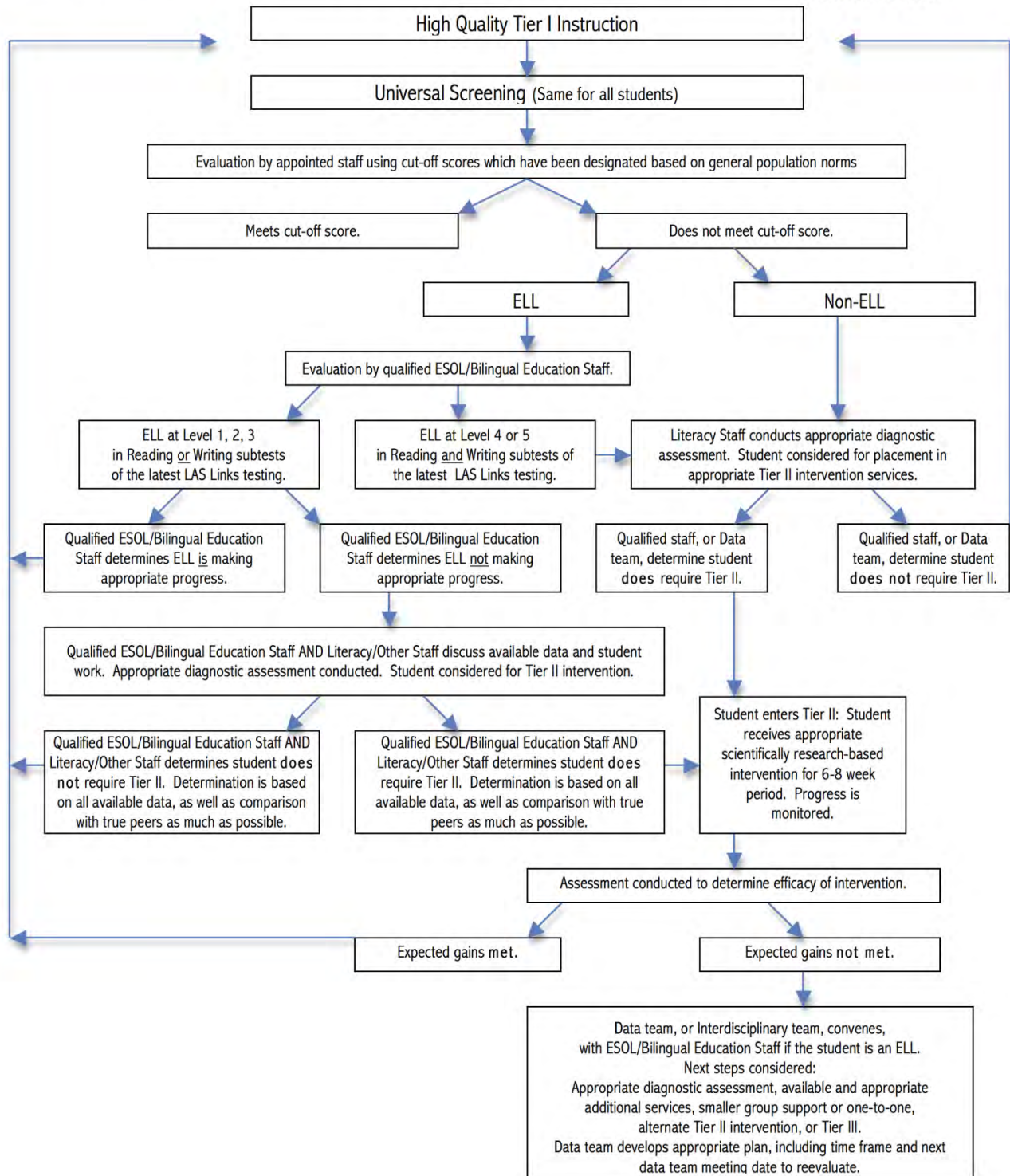
A school's RTI/SRBI team must focus on the academic, linguistic, and cultural needs of ELLs. The team should use the information provided in this document as part of an SRBI framework that uses student screening, progress monitoring, and culturally and linguistically appropriate interventions to meet the needs of ELLs ([www.rti4success.org](http://www.rti4success.org)).

Figure 2 is a flowchart, entitled *SRBI process for ELLs regarding Reading & Writing*, (found on page 6). This flowchart exemplifies the decision-making alternatives to consider for ELLs during the SRBI process.



# SRBI process for ELLs regarding Reading & Writing

*Can and should be applied to social/emotional, numeracy, and other content areas.*



NOTE: A referral to special education can be made by a parent at anytime. A Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting must be held upon a parent's request for a special education evaluation.

**Figure 2- SRBI process for ELLs regarding Reading & Writing**



# Three Tiers in Detail: Essential Features for All Students and Implications for ELLs

In the following section of this document, the definition and essential features of each tier for all students are provided as well as the implications for English Language Learners (ELLs).

Within each chart, specific information is provided from Connecticut Frameworks for RTI (August 2008) as to the focus, setting, curriculum & instruction, interventions, interventionists, assessments & progress monitoring, and data analysis and decision making that are considered. The specific guidelines for English Language Learners that are cited are based on the most recent research. Additional information is also listed as reference. It is our hope that this format will assist RTI/SRBI teams as they strive to make the best decisions for ELLs' success in the school environment.

## Tier I: Essential Features for All Students and Implications for English Language Learners (ELLs)

Tier I in SRBI is a universal tier because it is intended to address the learning needs of **all students** within the general education classroom. In 2010, Connecticut adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in Mathematics and English/Language Arts (see <http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards>). These rigorous standards frame the academic program for **all** students, and ELL experts have been actively involved in the transition and implementation process to ensure that the specific needs of these students are addressed. For ELLs, **Tier I general education may include Bilingual Education and/or ESOL pull-out or push-in models, which assist students in accessing grade-level content.**

For English Language Learners, Tier I within SRBI includes the following principles from Echevarria & Vogt, 2011:

- occurs in the general education setting;
- includes research-based literacy and math curriculum taught by high-quality teachers who understand the strengths and needs of all students, including ELLs;
- resources and methods extend beyond the adopted reading and math programs provided by the district;
- includes differentiation to meet the needs of all learners;
- instruction targets both age-appropriate content concepts and English language development; and
- individual student progress is monitored with reliable, ongoing, and authentic assessments with multiple indicators that are linked explicitly to instruction.

| <b>TIER I</b>                       | <b>Tier I: All Students<br/>(directly from CT Framework for RTI, August 2008)</b>  | <b>Tier I: Additional Considerations for English Language Learners<br/>(adapted from Brown &amp; Doolittle, 2008, unless otherwise noted)</b>   |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Focus</b>                        | General education core practices   | Achievement is defined as an increase in English language acquisition and improvement in classroom academic performance.  |
| <b>Setting</b>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ General education classrooms</li> <li>▪ Positive and safe school climate</li> </ul>   | <p>May include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ general education classrooms</li> <li>▪ bilingual education classrooms</li> <li>▪ dual language classrooms</li> <li>▪ ESOL pull-out or push-in models</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Curriculum &amp; Instruction</b> | <p>Curriculum and instruction is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ research-based</li> <li>▪ aligned with the Common Core State Standards and student outcomes</li> <li>▪ differentiated</li> <li>▪ culturally responsive</li> <li>▪ inclusive of a comprehensive system of social/emotional learning and behavioral supports</li> </ul> | <p>Curriculum and instruction includes best ESOL instructional practices (Klingner, 2005):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ alignment with ELL standards</li> <li>▪ culturally responsive curriculum and instruction (not an add-on)</li> <li>▪ explicit and linguistically appropriate instruction; attention to language forms and functions</li> <li>▪ instruction in the native language, as appropriate</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Interventions</b>                | <p>Differentiation of instruction within the general education classroom includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ flexible small groups</li> <li>▪ appropriate instructional materials matched to students' needs and abilities</li> </ul>   | <p>Interventions should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ build background knowledge</li> <li>▪ use strategies appropriate for instructing ELLs; e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Total Physical Response (TPR)</li> <li>○ visuals</li> <li>○ realia (real objects)</li> <li>○ modeling</li> <li>○ repetitive language</li> <li>○ gestures</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ include language activities and explicit instruction in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ phonological awareness</li> <li>○ the alphabet code</li> <li>○ vocabulary development</li> <li>○ comprehension strategies</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ utilize strategies of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model (Echevarria, Vogt, Short, 2007)</li> </ul> |

| <b>TIER I</b>                                | <b>Tier I: All Students<br/>(directly from <i>CT Framework for RTI, August 2008</i>)</b>   | <b>Tier I: Additional Considerations for<br/>English Language Learners<br/>(adapted from Brown &amp; Doolittle, 2008,<br/>unless otherwise noted)</b>   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Interventionists</b>                      | General education teachers with collaboration from school specialists  | Staff may also include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ certified ESOL teachers</li> <li>▪ staff specifically trained to provide developmentally, culturally, linguistically and experientially appropriate instruction and assessment to all students</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Assessments &amp; Progress Monitoring</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Universal common assessments of all students at least three times per year (benchmark data) to monitor progress and identify students in need of intervention early</li> <li>▪ Common assessments to guide and differentiate instruction</li> <li>▪ Data to evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of the behavioral system (e.g., attendance rates, discipline referrals), overall quality of school climate, and social-emotional learning (e.g., school attachment, 40 Developmental Assets, graduation rates)</li> <li>▪ Additional assessments of certain individual students (e.g., checklists, observations, diagnostic assessments) as warranted</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Progress monitoring tools or curriculum-based measurements (CBM) for ELLs should be normed on populations that include ELLs (Echevarria &amp; Vogt 2011).</li> <li>▪ Compare universal screening and progress monitoring information of ELLs to other “true peer” ELLs since their rate of progress cannot be compared to that of the English-only group (Echevarria &amp; Vogt 2011).</li> <li>▪ Consider student accents and pronunciations when scoring assessments given in English and appropriate interpretations should be provided when words are mispronounced. Do not penalize students for dialect features (Vaughn &amp; Ortiz, 2010).</li> <li>▪ Consider that students may be acquiring word meaning while acquiring word reading and, thus, early oral reading fluency may proceed at an expected rate (while students are focusing on word reading) and then later proceed at a lower than expected rate when students are focusing more on word meaning (Vaughn &amp; Ortiz, 2010).</li> <li>▪ Consider assessments that are available in multiple languages to determine L1 (native language) literacy (Vaughn &amp; Ortiz, 2010).</li> <li>▪ Establish a progress monitoring schedule aligned with instructional intensity.</li> <li>▪ Interpret data using multiple indicators to gain a full understanding of student growth and progress.</li> </ul> |

| <b>TIER I</b>                            | <b>Tier I: All Students<br/>(directly from <i>CT Framework for RTI, August 2008</i>)</b>   | <b>Tier I: Additional Considerations for<br/>English Language Learners<br/>(adapted from Brown &amp; Doolittle, 2008,<br/>unless otherwise noted)</b>   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Data Analysis and Decision Making</b> | District, school and grade/content area data teams: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ district data team analyzes data across schools within a district</li> <li>▪ school data team analyzes benchmark data within a school to establish the overall efficacy of curriculums, instruction, school climate and system of social-emotional learning and behavioral supports for all students, and monitors fidelity of implementation</li> <li>▪ grade-level/content area data teams analyze common assessments to improve and differentiate instruction within a grade or course, and identify individual students in need of Tier II academic or behavioral intervention</li> </ul> | District, school and grade/content area data teams: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ include qualified ESOL staff</li> <li>▪ consider ELL needs by answering the following when analyzing student data:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Is scientifically-based instruction in place for the target student and consideration given to his/her cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic and experiential background?</li> <li>○ Is instruction targeted to the student’s level of English proficiency?</li> <li>○ Is the concern examined within the context (i.e., language of instruction, acculturation)?</li> <li>○ Is language proficiency monitored regularly? If a student is in a bilingual education program, L1 proficiency should also be monitored.</li> <li>○ Has the <i>ecology</i> of the classroom and school been assessed (i.e., immigration patterns, culture, socio-economic status, educational history)?</li> <li>○ Have specific Tier 1 SRBI interventions that are culturally, linguistically and experientially appropriate been developed?</li> <li>○ Are assessments technically sound, valid, and used appropriately for ELLs?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

**IMPORTANT:**

**Universal screening** provides a snapshot in time, and as such, is appropriate for use with all students including ELLs with rare exception. It is, however, the decision-making that takes place after universal screening that is significant for ELLs. **Interpretation, use and application of the results of the universal screen must depend on ELL factors presented throughout this document.**

**Do not wait** for English oral language to meet grade-level expectations before providing reading instruction. Provide instruction in early reading while also providing support for English oral language development (Vaughn, Ortiz, 2010).

**If, after providing instructional modifications in the general education classroom or instruction in the student’s native language as described above, the student does not make targeted gains, as determined by the SRBI/Data Team, it may be recommended that the student receive Tier II support.**

**How is universal screening effectively implemented with ELLs?** (as cited on [RTI Action Network](#))

- ELLs can be screened on the same early reading indicators as native English language speakers, including phonological awareness, letter knowledge, and word and text reading (Gersten et al., 2007).
- Universal screenings should be conducted using native language and/or English measures that have demonstrated high validity and reliability. See *Research Institute on Progress Monitoring*, [www.progressmonitoring.org](http://www.progressmonitoring.org).
- Consider proficiency in the target areas in the first language (L1) of ELLs. Students highly proficient in early reading skills in L1 and low in that proficiency in the target language (L2) can be considered instructionally different from students low in proficiency in L1 and L2 (Vaughn & Ortiz, 2010).
- Provide instructional support to ELLs with low performance in reading areas even when oral language skills in English are low. Interventions should simultaneously address development of language and literacy skills in English (Vaughn & Ortiz, 2010).

**What should effective literacy instruction for English language learners (ELLs) at the elementary level include?** (from IES Practice Guide, U.S. Dept of Education, Dec. 2007)

According to research, there are five recommendations with strong evidence to support effective ELL literacy instruction:

- Conduct formative assessments with ELLs using English language measures of phonological processing, letter knowledge and word and text reading. Use these data to identify ELLs who require additional instructional support and to monitor their reading progress over time.
- Provide focused, intensive, small group interventions for ELLs determined to be at risk for reading problems. Although the amount of time in small group instruction and the intensity of this instruction should reflect the degree of risk, determined by reading assessment data and other indicators, the interventions should include the five core reading elements (phonological awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension). Explicit, direct instruction should be the primary means of instructional delivery.
- Provide high quality vocabulary instruction throughout the day. Teach essential content words in depth. In addition, use instructional time to address the meanings of common words, phrases, and expressions not yet learned.
- Ensure that the development of formal or academic English is a key instructional goal for ELLs, beginning in the primary grades. Provide curricula and supplemental curricula to accompany core reading and mathematics series to support this goal. Accompany with relevant training and professional development.
- Ensure that teachers of ELLs devote approximately 90 minutes a week to instructional activities in which pairs of students at different ability levels or different English language proficiencies work together on academic tasks in a structured fashion. These activities should practice and extend material already taught.

## **What should effective literacy instruction for ELLs at the secondary level include?**

Although “studies looking into the best ways of implementing the SRBI/RTI process for secondary students are scant,” Echevarría and Vogt (2011) recommended the following eight principles for effective literacy instruction for adolescents:

- Adolescents need an assessment-based literacy program of comprehension instruction embedded in rich content that values peer-mediation for comprehension, discussion, collaboration, and social learning.
- Adolescents need explicit instruction in domain-specific literacy practices, and critical literacy provided in their content area classrooms to prepare them for college and employment.
- Adolescents need to consume and produce a wide variety of rich text materials across genres and literacies.
- Adolescents need a curriculum that honors students’ sociocultural contexts and language foundations, capitalizes on individuals’ diverse funds of knowledge, and provides literacy support for successful learning.
- Adolescents need rich, engaging, motivating instruction. They need opportunities for self-directed learning and the ability to set achievable goals that promote efficacy.
- Adolescents need vocabulary instruction that is explicit, contextualized, and that targets strategies that promote independent vocabulary acquisition.
- Adolescents need instruction in technologies that facilitate their ability to use new forms of in-school and out-of-school literacy practices.
- Adolescents benefit from differentiated instruction and intensity of support based on individual needs that are linked to assessment, and are implemented in grouping configurations that range from partners to whole class.

## **How does the SRBI team determine if there has been appropriate instruction/intervention at all levels for an ELL?** (from the New York State Department of Education RtI Guidance Document, October, 2010)

When determining appropriate instruction/intervention **at all levels** for ELLs, it is important to:

- Ensure that the bilingual and/or ESOL staff serve on the instructional decision-making team.
- Consider the amount and type of ESOL instruction the student received in the past and is currently receiving.
- Consider the amount and type of native language instruction the student received in the past and is currently receiving.
- Consider the impact of language and culture on instruction and learning.
- Contact the family to receive feedback and guidance regarding the student’s strengths, interests and needs.
- Compare the student’s performance to “true peers” (students with the same native language and culture and similar educational histories). See page 5 for more on **true peers**.

## Tier II: Essential Features for All Students and Implications for English Language Learners

Tier II is supplemental instruction. Tier II services are intended to be short-term. With this additional instruction, the desired outcome is for students to learn the skills they have been struggling with, so that they can then benefit from Tier I instruction alone (Echevarria & Hasbrouck, 2009).

**Tier II in SRBI is often described as “strategic supplemental intervention.”**

For English Language Learners, Tier II within SRBI includes the following principles (Echevarría & Vogt, 2010):

- 30 minutes of daily support in addition to Tier I instruction;
- a double-dose of instruction that never occurs during the designated time for core reading (or math) lessons;
- an *extension*, rather than a replacement of Tier I instruction; Tier I instruction may need to be adjusted to ensure high-quality instruction in both settings;
- a temporary support system that provides more time, accelerated instruction and more intensity.
- a combination of efforts of Tier I and Tier II teachers that results in a shared responsibility for the students needing intervention; and
- small group instruction with students of similar needs, ideally three to five students. “The number of students in a Tier II group is irrelevant if the quality of instruction is low” (Howard, 2009 in Echevarría & Vogt, 2010).

| <b>TIER II</b> | <b>Tier II: All Students<br/>(directly from CT Framework for<br/>RTI, August 2008)</b>  | <b>Tier II: Additional Considerations for<br/>English Language Learners<br/>(adapted from Brown &amp; Doolittle, 2008,<br/>unless otherwise noted)</b>  |
|----------------|---|---|
| <b>Focus</b>   | Students failing to meet important academic benchmarks or social/behavioral expectations, who have not responded to Tier I core practices | Achievement is at a lower level and substantially lower rate when compared to “true peers” (same levels of language proficiency, acculturation, and educational background)   |
| <b>Setting</b> | General education classrooms or other general education locations within a school (e.g., library, reading lab, math lab, writing center)  | Small group setting to improve student progress.<br>May include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ general education classrooms or other general education locations within a school</li> <li>▪ bilingual education classrooms</li> <li>▪ dual language classrooms</li> <li>▪ ESOL pull-out or push-in programs</li> </ul> |



| <b>TIER II</b>          | <b>Tier II: All Students<br/>(directly from CT Framework for<br/>RTI, August 2008)</b>   | <b>Tier II: Additional Considerations for<br/>English Language Learners<br/>(adapted from Brown &amp; Doolittle, 2008,<br/>unless otherwise noted)</b>  |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Interventions</b>    | <p>Interventions should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ short-term (e.g., eight to 20 weeks)</li> <li>▪ well matched to students’ specific academic, social-emotional, and/or behavioral needs</li> <li>▪ delivered to homogeneous groups (i.e., students with similar needs)</li> <li>▪ with a teacher: student ratio up to 1:4 or 1:6</li> <li>▪ implemented with fidelity</li> <li>▪ supplemental to core program, and based on the Common Core State Standards</li> </ul> | <p>Interventions for ELLs may include (Echevarria &amp; Vogt, 2011):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the option of different curriculum from Tier I (time and intensity): “Materials that did not meet a student’s needs in regular classroom instruction or in a Tier I intervention will not magically meet his or her needs in Tier II”</li> <li>▪ systematic and explicit instruction with modeling, multiple examples and feedback</li> <li>▪ academic language and vocabulary instruction with multiple opportunities to practice</li> <li>▪ frequent structured opportunities to develop oral language</li> <li>▪ specific reading and math skills as determined by assessment data</li> <li>▪ reading, writing, listening, and speaking in authentic contexts (e.g., reading books, writing for authentic purposes, and role-play to develop oral language)</li> <li>▪ reinforcement, repetition, practice and redundancy of vocabulary, skills, and strategies taught in core reading and math lessons</li> </ul> |
| <b>Interventionists</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ General education teachers</li> <li>▪ Specialists or other interventionists trained for Tier II intervention</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teachers who have been trained and who understand the relationship between assessment and intervention</li> <li>▪ Staff who can ensure that culturally and linguistically appropriate classroom instruction is provided</li> </ul>   |

| <b>TIER II</b>                                       | <b>Tier II: All Students<br/>(directly from CT Framework for<br/>RTI, August 2008)</b>  | <b>Tier II: Additional Considerations for<br/>English Language Learners<br/>(adapted from Brown &amp; Doolittle, 2008,<br/>unless otherwise noted)</b>   |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Assessments &amp;<br/>Progress<br/>Monitoring</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Frequent progress monitoring (e.g., weekly or biweekly) using assessment tools that accurately target students’ focus area for improvement</li> <li>▪ Progress monitoring tools must be feasible and technically adequate to administer multiple times to assess student growth</li> <li>▪ Additional assessments of certain individual students (e.g. observations, diagnostic assessments)</li> </ul>  | <p>Districts should make a concerted effort to (Brown, et.al., 2010):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ assess students’ language skills in L1 and L2 to provide an appropriate context regarding evaluation of current levels of performance</li> <li>▪ use reliable and valid tools to identify and monitor students’ needs for instructional support in reading in both L1 and L2</li> <li>▪ plan instructions based on what you know about the student’s performance and literacy experiences in L1 and L2 and teach for transfer if needed</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Data Analysis<br/>and Decision<br/>Making</b>     | <p>Teacher support/intervention teams that may overlap with Tier I data teams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ should include core team members (e.g., school principal, general educators, reading/language arts consultant, school psychologist and a special educator) as well as additional members depending on individual student’s needs (e.g., ESL teacher, math specialist, school social worker)</li> <li>▪ match appropriate Tier II interventions to students’ needs</li> <li>▪ select appropriate progress monitoring tools</li> <li>▪ analyze progress monitoring data</li> <li>▪ modify or substitute new interventions as needed</li> <li>▪ identify students not responding to Tier II efforts</li> <li>▪ conduct extensive analysis and application of data from Tier II interventions to document effectiveness of interventions</li> <li>▪ help monitor fidelity of implementation of Tier II interventions</li> </ul> | <p>Key questions to consider for ELLs (Echevarria &amp; Vogt, 2010):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Does the child’s learning rate appear to be lower than that of an average learning “true peer”? (<i>see page 5 for more on true peers</i>)</li> <li>▪ If the student is enrolled in a bilingual education program, which language(s) will be used to provide Tier II intervention?</li> <li>▪ Who will be the Tier II interventionist?</li> <li>▪ How will the classroom teacher or interventionist &amp; ESL teacher collaborate?</li> <li>▪ What assessments can we use to measure both language and academic progress?</li> <li>▪ Despite possible language barriers, how can we best communicate to parents about their children’s progress in Tier II?</li> <li>▪ If additional assessments are used, are the instruments technically sound, valid, and used appropriately for the ELL?</li> <li>▪ Is scientifically-based instruction in place for the target student and consideration given to his/her cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic and experiential background? (Brown &amp; Doolittle, 2008)</li> </ul> |

## **How do we know that Tier II interventions are necessary?** (adapted from Echevarria & Vogt, 2011)

There are five key elements of Tier II interventions:

- Use data to identify students:
  - Take caution when using curriculum-based measurements with ELLs, as established benchmarks and cutoffs may not be appropriate for this population. The use of tests in native language is recommended; and
  - Review results of student's level of English proficiency. Level of English proficiency should not be the deciding factor about whether a student needs Tier II intervention, because English learners can benefit from intervention even if they are not proficient in English (Gersten, et al, 2007).
- Instruct students in small groups for intervention.
- Conduct intervention:
  - Interventions must be something different than Tier I, since the student did not demonstrate sufficient progress.
- Monitor student progress:
  - Five days of intervention each week, for 30 minutes each day, for at least 8-10 weeks.
- Reflect on data and make decisions:
  - After initial intervention, team will analyze data to determine: (1) if student made adequate progress, return to Tier I, (2) if student made some progress, consider regrouping for an additional Tier II round of 8-10 weeks, or (3) if student made very little to no progress in the Tier II intervention, consider the need for more intensive intervention in Tier III.

## Tier III: Essential Features for All Students and Implications for English Language Learners

Tier III in SRBI is described as “intensive, individual intervention”.

If Tier II interventions are not successful, then Tier III should incorporate the following (Echevarria & Vogt, 2011):

- intensive and research-based small group instruction;
- different materials and methods;
- additional time each day – during, before or after school;
- progress monitoring every week, with instruction adjusted based on findings;
- if needed, a specific behavior plan developed and implemented in collaboration with parents and teachers;
- all personnel working together to assist the child (SLP, OT, reading specialist, etc.);
- parents involved and provided with data about their child’s performance;
- assistance may be in the classroom and in pull-out programs;
- students re-evaluated often and may be considered for special education (applicable in Tiers I, II and III, however, when a referral is made; see federal guidance, <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/osep11-07rtimemo.pdf>); and
- for special education referrals, parent consent for special education eligibility testing is necessary to proceed; parents are involved in determining the program designed for the student, if identified as requiring special education and related services.

REMEMBER: If specific materials/methods were used in the regular classroom, Tier I and/or Tier II, and *did not meet* a student’s needs, then utilizing these same materials/methods will not meet the student’s needs in Tier III.

| <b>TIER III</b> | <b>Tier III: All Students<br/>(directly from CT Framework for<br/>RTI, August 2008)</b>   | <b>Tier III: Additional Considerations for<br/>English Language Learners<br/>(adapted from Brown &amp; Doolittle, 2008,<br/>unless otherwise noted)</b>                                       |
|-----------------|---|---|
| <b>Focus</b>    | Students failing to meet important academic benchmarks or social/behavioral expectations who have not responded to Tier I or Tier II efforts. | Student achievement continues <i>both</i> at a lower level than true-peers and occurs at a substantially slower rate. The student requires more individualized instruction in order to learn. |
| <b>Setting</b>  | General education classrooms or other general education locations within a school (e.g., library, reading lab, math lab, writing center)      | (Same as for all students)  |

| <b>TIER III</b>         | <b>Tier III: All Students<br/>(directly from CT Framework for<br/>RTI, August 2008)</b>   | <b>Tier III: Additional Considerations for<br/>English Language Learners<br/>(adapted from Brown &amp; Doolittle, 2008,<br/>unless otherwise noted)</b>   |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Interventions</b>    | <p>Appropriate short-term (8 to 20 weeks) interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ well-matched to students’ specific academic, social/behavioral needs</li> <li>▪ more intensive or individualized than Tier II interventions</li> <li>▪ delivered to homogeneous groups (i.e., students with similar needs)</li> <li>▪ teacher: student ratio up to 1:3</li> <li>▪ implemented with fidelity</li> <li>▪ supplemental to core program and based on the Common Core State Standards</li> </ul> | <p>Interventions can include the option of receiving <b>modified curriculum</b> from Tiers I and II:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ curriculum and instruction address the specific learning needs</li> <li>▪ progress is carefully and frequently monitored</li> <li>▪ may include new and different resources</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Interventionists</b> | <p>Specialists or other interventionists trained for Tier III intervention (including general educators with appropriate training)</p>  | <p>Staff should have adequate training working with ELLs and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ special education teacher or related service provider</li> <li>▪ general education teacher responsible for integrating all tiers of instruction into the classroom</li> </ul> <p><b>All service providers must collaborate with the ELL specialist</b></p> |
| <b>Assessments</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Very frequent progress monitoring (e.g., twice per week) using assessment tools that accurately target students’ focus areas for improvement</li> <li>▪ Progress monitoring tools must be feasible and technically adequate to administer multiple times to assess student growth</li> <li>▪ Additional assessments of certain individual students as warranted (e.g., diagnostic assessments, comprehensive evaluation)</li> </ul>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Standardized cognitive and academic assessment should be conducted to identify processing profile</li> <li>▪ Should include a native language assessment</li> <li>▪ Interpret standardized test data within the context of student’s language proficiency and acculturation</li> </ul>   |

| <b>TIER III</b>                                  | <b>Tier III: All Students<br/>(directly from CT Framework for<br/>RTI, August 2008)</b>   | <b>Tier III: Additional Considerations for<br/>English Language Learners<br/>(adapted from Brown &amp; Doolittle, 2008,<br/>unless otherwise noted)</b>   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Data Analysis<br/>and Decision<br/>Making</b> | <p>Teacher support/intervention teams (as in Tier II):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ decide how to choose, individualize and intensify interventions for students receiving Tier III interventions</li> <li>▪ select appropriate progress monitoring tools</li> <li>▪ analyze progress monitoring data; modify or substitute new interventions as needed</li> <li>▪ identify students not responding to Tier III efforts</li> <li>▪ conduct extensive analysis and application of data from Tier III interventions to document effectiveness of interventions; and</li> <li>▪ help monitor fidelity of implementation of Tier III interventions</li> </ul> | <p>Guiding Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Does the student differ from “true peers” in the following ways: – Level of performance? – Learning slope?</li> <li>▪ What are the child’s functional, developmental, academic, linguistic, and cultural needs?</li> <li>▪ If additional assessments are used, are the instruments technically sound, valid, and used appropriately for the ELL?</li> <li>▪ Are test results interpreted in a manner that considers a student’s language proficiency in L1 and L2 and his/her level of acculturation?</li> <li>▪ Do assessments include information in the student’s home language and English?</li> <li>▪ Has the student received continuous instruction (i.e., absences do not make up a good portion of the student’s profile)?</li> </ul> |

**When is a special education referral appropriate?**

- If an ELL does not make progress typical of “true peers” and has been through a minimum of two rounds of Tier III intervention with fidelity, then it is advisable to have the student assessed for the existence of any exceptionality. It is important to note, however, that federal and state guidance has reiterated that RTI (e.g., SRBI) may not be used to delay or deny timely initial evaluations for students suspected of having a disability. A referral received at any time regardless of the tier of intervention a child may be receiving, must be reviewed by a planning and placement team (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/osep11-07rtimemo.pdf>).
- Refer to *English Language Learners and Special Education: A Resource Handbook*, (CAPELL, 2011) for more information. ([http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/curriculum/bilingual/CAPELL\\_SPED\\_resource\\_guide.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/curriculum/bilingual/CAPELL_SPED_resource_guide.pdf))

# Glossary

(Adapted from Echevarría and Vogt, 2011 except where noted)

**Academic language:** Language proficiency associated with schooling, and the abstract language abilities required for academic work; a more complex, conceptual, linguistic ability that includes analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Academic language and vocabulary can be generic across content areas, or unique for each type of content, and both represent considerable challenges for English learners and struggling readers.

**Accommodation:** Teaching supports and service that the student may require to successfully demonstrate learning. Accommodations should not change expectations to the curriculum grade level.

**Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP):** Integral to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, this term refers to the annual minimum growth needed to meet the requirements of NCLB within a specified timeframe.

**Assessment:** The orderly process of gathering, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting student performance, ideally from multiples sources over a period of time; also, the broad process of obtaining information used in decision-making about a student, group of students, curriculum, program, or educational policy.

**AMAO:** Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives: Within Title III of NCLB, each state is required to measure and report the linguistic progress, linguistic proficiency, and academic progress of ELLs.

**Baseline data:** Basic information on a student's current performance level, which is gathered before a program or intervention begins. It is the starting point to be used to compare a student's learning before a program of instruction begins.

**Benchmark:** Important student outcomes or goals for a grade within a particular domain (e.g., reading), that students should be achieving during the course of a school year (e.g., fall, winter, spring) in order to be on target for end-of-grade performance by the end of that school year (Connecticut's Framework for RTI, 2008).

**Benchmark assessments:** Assessments used to set benchmarks (e.g., according to local norms) and/or to determine whether students are achieving grade level standards (Connecticut's Framework for RTI, 2008).

**Bilingual instruction:** School instruction using two languages, generally the native language of a student and a second language. The amount of time that each language is used depends on the type of bilingual program, its specific objectives, and students' levels of language proficiency.

**Collaborative team:** A group of people at a school or district who meet on a scheduled or as-need basis to fulfill a specific purpose or function. Collaborative teams in SRBI may include teachers, parents, administrators, and other interested community members who work in cooperation, with shared goals, and perceived outcomes occurring in a climate of trust.

**Common assessments:** A broad term for assessments that are given routinely to all students in a grade and that are the same for all students in a grade, and they may be summative or formative

**Content-based ESOL:** An instructional approach in which content topics are used as the vehicle for second language learning. A system of instruction in which teachers use a variety of instructional techniques as a way of developing second language, content, cognitive, and study skills.



**Content standards:** Definitions of what students are expected to know and be capable of doing for a given content area; the knowledge and skills that need to be taught in order for students to reach competency; what students are expected to learn and what schools are expected to teach. There may be national, state, or local- level standards.

**Core curriculum:** The planned instruction in a content area, which is central and usually mandatory for all students of a school (e.g., reading, math, science). Core curriculum in Connecticut should be based on the Common Core State Standards, which were adopted by the State Board of Education on July 7, 2010.

**Curriculum-Based Measurements (CBM):** A concise method used to find out how students are progressing in basic academic areas such as math, reading, writing, and spelling; CBMs are widely available and well-researched tools for collecting ongoing assessment data during intervention.

**Data-based decision-making:** The use of student assessment data to guide the design, implementation, and adjustment of instruction; considered by some to be synonymous with progress monitoring because both require the collection and use of data.

**Diagnostic assessments:** Assessments used to clarify and target the needs of individual students when the information provided by other types of assessments, such as common assessments, is not sufficient or too broad (Connecticut’s Framework for RTI, 2008).

**Differentiated instruction:** Instruction that matches the specific strengths and needs of each learner; includes providing alterations to curriculum, instruction, and assessment that recognize students’ varying background knowledge, language proficiency and academic abilities.

**Dominant language:** The language in which the speaker has greater proficiency and/or uses more often (NCELA website).

**Dual-language/Two-way Bilingual Education Programs** – A Developmental Bilingual Education Program in which the goal for all participating students is to develop proficiency in two languages. In Dual-language or Two-way Bilingual Programs, native English-speaking students and students who speak another native language participate in classes together, with the goals of bilingualism and biliteracy being the same for all students (SERC, 2010).

**Early intervention services:** A set of coordinated services for students in kindergarten through grade 12 (with particular emphasis on students in kindergarten through grade 3) who are not currently identified as needing special education or related services, but who need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in general education.

**English language learners (ELLs):** Children and adults who are learning English as a second or additional language. This term may apply to learners across various levels of proficiency in English. ELLs may also be referred to as English learners (ELs), non-English speaking (NES), limited-English speaking (LES), and a non- native speaker (NNS).

**English Mastery Standard:** The standard for mastery, in terms of English language proficiency and academic achievement, set by the Connecticut State Department of Education.

**ESOL: English to Speakers of Other Languages:** Used to refer to programs and classes to teach students English as a second (or additional) language. Refers to specialized English instruction provided to ELLs within the district’s ELL and/or bilingual program. This support typically includes content-based instruction so that ELLs are learning English while developing skills to assure success in subject areas. Program models vary among districts. ESOL may also be referred to as **ESL** (English as a Second Language).

**Evaluation:** Judgments about students’ learning made by interpreting and analyzing assessment data; the process of judging achievement, growth, product, processes, or changes in these; judgments of education programs. The process of assessment and evaluation can be viewed as progressive: first, assessment; then, evaluation.

**Explicit instruction:** Instruction that is clear, deliberate, and visible.

**Fidelity:** Instructional programs, methods, or models are implemented with intensity, accuracy, and consistency; using a program or method of instruction as it was intended to be used.

**Grouping:** The assignment of students into groups of classes for instruction, such as by age, ability, or achievement; or within classes, such as by reading ability proficiency, language background, or interests. Flexible grouping enables students to move among different groups based on their performance and instructional strengths and needs.

**Home language:** The language or languages spoken in the student’s home by people who live there; also referred to as first language (L1), primary language, mother tongue, or native language.

**Instructional intervention:** Clear, deliberate, and carefully planned instruction delivered by trained personnel tailored to meet the identified needs of struggling students.

**Intensive intervention:** Explicit and systematic instruction delivered by highly skilled teacher specialists (**Interventionists**) that provides students with increased opportunities for guided practice and teacher feedback. This instruction is targeted and tailored to meet the needs of struggling learners in small groups.

**L1: Native/First/Home language:** The language a person acquires first in life; it is sometimes called a “mother tongue.”

**L2: Second Language:** The language a person acquires or learns in addition to the native language.

**Language proficiency:** The degree to which a person’s language skills are developed, regardless of how the skills were learned or acquired.

**Language proficiency tests:** Tests designed to measure the fluency and accuracy with which a person uses the various language components, such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension. In Connecticut, the LAS Links, a language proficiency test, must be administered annually to all English Language Learners.

**Language Assessment System (LAS) Links:** The language proficiency test produced by CTB/McGraw-Hill, used in Connecticut, to measure yearly progress in acquiring English as an additional language. This proficiency test is also available in Spanish.

**LEP-Limited English Proficient:** Is a term often used by the federal government and some states to identify those students who are not yet proficient enough in English to succeed in English-only classrooms without ESOL/Bilingual education support. In Connecticut and many other states, the term ELL is preferred.

**LTSS- Language Transition Support Services:** In 1999, the Connecticut General Assembly revised the state’s bilingual education statute. One provision mandates that students who do not meet the English mastery standard on the annual assessment, at the end of 30 months in a transitional bilingual education program, must receive language transition support services (LTSS) until they meet the standard.

**Measurement:** Refers to the procedure of assigning scores or numbers to describe the degree to which a student has acquired a particular skill or attribute.

**Monolingual:** Term used to describe students who speak one language. Usually refers to native speakers of English.

**Native English speaker:** An individual whose first language is English. Native language is an individual's first, primary, or home language (L1).

**No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 [NCLB; also known as the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)]:** Under this legislation, all children must reach proficiency, as defined by each state's proficiency measures; requires annual testing in Grades 3—8 and 10 in reading and mathematics; also requires disaggregated reporting of scores on an annual basis to the federal government.

**Primary language:** The language in which bilingual/multilingual speakers are most fluent, or prefer to use. This is not necessarily the language first learned in life.

**Progress monitoring:** In an intervention model, the process of frequently checking student's progress toward meeting established goal.

**Response to Intervention (RtI):** The practice of providing scientific, research-based instruction and intervention matched to students' needs, with important educational decisions based on students' levels of performance and learning rates over time (*Response to Intervention: Policy Considerations and Implementation*, National Association of State Directors of Special Education, 2005). In Connecticut, the RTI process is referenced as **SRBI** (Scientific Research-Based Interventions) because this language is contained in both NCLB [Section 9101(37) of ESEA] and IDEA Regulations [Section 300.307 (a)(2)].

**Scaffolding:** Adult (e.g., teacher) support for learning and student performance of tasks through instruction, modeling, questioning, feedback, graphic organizers, and more, across successive lessons. These supports are gradually withdrawn ("gradual release of responsibility"), thus transferring more and more autonomy to the child. Scaffolding activities provide support for learning that should be removed as learners are able to demonstrate strategic behaviors in their own learning.

**Sheltered Instruction (SI):** A means for making content comprehensible for English learners while they are developing English proficiency. Sheltered classrooms, which include a mix of native English speakers and English learners or only English learners, integrate language and content while infusing socio-cultural awareness. SOAIE, Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English, is a term for sheltered instruction that is used in several states. It features strategies and techniques for making content understandable for English learners. Although some SDAIE techniques are research-based, SDAIE itself has not been scientifically validated.

**Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP®):** A scientifically validated model of sheltered instruction designed to make grade-level academic content understandable for English learners while at the same time developing their English language. The Protocol and lesson planning guide ensure that teachers are consistently implementing practices known to be effective for English learners.

**Scientific Researched-Based Interventions (SRBI):** See RtI, above.

**Stages of language proficiency:** Depending on where you live and teach, the labels for the following stages may be somewhat different, and there may be fewer or more designations. What follows are the stages of language.

**Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL):** In Connecticut this can refer to the teaching certificate 111. On a national and international level, TESOL is also known as the field of teaching English to students from other language backgrounds.

**Transitional Bilingual Education Programs (TBE):** A bilingual program model in which students are taught through two languages: English and the student’s native language. The primary purpose of this type of program is to transition students to an all English academic program when he or she is proficient enough in English to be successful in the monolingual general education program. In Connecticut, students are allowed a maximum of 30 months in a TBE program. Students who do not meet the English mastery standard after 30 months can receive Language Transition Support Services (see *LTSS* above).

**True peers:** Students who have similar proficiency levels, as well as similar amounts of time in the U.S. and similar educational and cultural backgrounds.

**Universal screening (school-wide screening):** A quick-check assessment of all students’ current level of performance in a content or skill area.

**Universal common assessments:** a term for assessments that are given routinely to all students in a grade and that are the same for all students in a grade within a school or district; universal common assessments may be summative or formative and include, but are not limited to, benchmark assessments (Connecticut’s Framework for RTI, 2008).

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# Appendix A- SRBI Implementation Survey

## to be completed by School-Wide SRBI/Data Team\*

Adapted from Echevarría & Vogt, Virtual Institute, 2010

Rate your school on a scale of 1-4 on the following indicators. Score a 1 for a low level of implementation and a 4 for a high level of implementation. Specifically consider ELLs.

| <b>INSTRUCTION</b>  | <b>Score</b> | <b>Explanation</b> |
|---|--------------|--------------------|
| There is evidence of high quality, research-based classroom instruction, which considers a student’s cultural background and experiences as well as their linguistic proficiency, and uses research-validated CCSS-based core reading, math and writing program with 80% success rate.                                |              |                    |
| <b>SCREENING</b>  | <b>Score</b> |                    |
| Universal screening tools are administered to all students 3 times a year in reading and mathematics to decide which students are at-risk. Interpretation of the results of universal screening takes into consideration the student’s language proficiency in their native language and English acculturation level. |              |                    |
| <b>INTERVENTIONS</b>  | <b>Score</b> |                    |
| The school uses a range of research-based instructional interventions, which are developmentally, culturally, linguistically and experientially appropriate for students at risk of not reaching goals, including those already experiencing academic failure.  |              |                    |
| <b>PROGRESS MONITORING</b>  | <b>Score</b> |                    |
| Systematic, frequent, documented and shared data conversations to inform instructional decisions are part of the SRBI progress monitoring. Students are compared to “true peers” and assessment and instruction are both linguistically and culturally congruent.   |              |                    |
| <b>FIDELITY</b>   | <b>Score</b> |                    |
| Instruction is delivered as it was intended, assessments are given as designed, and the SRBI process is implemented with integrity.   |              |                    |
| <b>STAFF DEVELOPMENT</b>  | <b>Score</b> |                    |
| The school SRBI team has access to at least one professional who has been well-trained in differentiating cultural and linguistic differences from disabilities. This professional will be part of the team to make collaborative decisions about student outcomes and placement.                                     |              |                    |
| Professional development includes first and second language acquisition principles, and culturally responsive pedagogy which is delivered through job-embedded coaching, professional dialogue, and peer feedback.  |              |                    |
| <b>PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT</b>   | <b>Score</b> |                    |
| Parents are included in the information collection and decision-making processes involving their children. Appropriate steps are taken to ensure understanding and participation, despite possible language barriers.   |              |                    |

\* This form can be adapted for use at the district level.



## Appendix B.1- Guiding Questions for SRBI Teams Considering English Language Learners at Tier I

“Research has shown that educators today have at their disposal the tools and strategies necessary to provide effective instruction to all students (August & Shanahan, 2006; Ellis & Worthington, 1994; Genesee et al., 2006; Marzano, Gaddy, & Dean, 2000). By using an SRBI framework to guide their professional decisions, teachers can provide specialized supplementary instruction and intense intervention to those students who need such additional assistance. With English Language Learners, it is imperative to consider whether current classroom instruction reflects best practices for their specialized needs. When making these decisions, it is important to consider each child’s particular set of life experiences and to work closely with families to identify relevant cultural influences and considerations (Brown & Doolittle, 2008).” Excerpted from Jana Echevarria, 2009 ([Response to Intervention and English Language Learners](http://www.cal.org/create)) [www.cal.org/create](http://www.cal.org/create).

The following questions, adapted from Brown & Doolittle (2008), should be addressed for ELLs at Tier I **in addition to** general SRBI questions.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

| Tier I Questions  | Answer |
|---|--------|
| Is scientifically-based instruction in place for the target student and consideration given to his/her cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic and experiential background? |        |
| Is instruction targeted to the student’s level of English proficiency?  |        |
| Is the concern examined within the context (i.e., language of instruction, acculturation)?  |        |
| Is language proficiency monitored regularly? If a student is in a bilingual education program, L1 proficiency should also be monitored.                                 |        |
| Has the <i>ecology</i> of the classroom and school been assessed (i.e., immigration patterns, culture, socioeconomic status, educational history)?                      |        |
| Have specific Tier 1 SRBI interventions that are culturally, linguistically and experientially appropriate been developed?  |        |
| Are assessments technically sound, valid, and used appropriately for ELLs?  |        |

## Appendix B.2- Guiding Questions for SRBI Teams Considering English Language Learners at Tier II

“Research has shown that educators today have at their disposal the tools and strategies necessary to provide effective instruction to all students (August & Shanahan, 2006; Ellis & Worthington, 1994; Genesee et al., 2006; Marzano, Gaddy, & Dean, 2000). By using an SRBI framework to guide their professional decisions, teachers can provide specialized supplementary instruction and intense intervention to those students who need such additional assistance. With English Language Learners, it is imperative to consider whether current classroom instruction reflects best practices for their specialized needs. When making these decisions, it is important to consider each child’s particular set of life experiences and to work closely with families to identify relevant cultural influences and considerations (Brown & Doolittle, 2008).” Jana Echevarria, 2009 ([Response to Intervention and English Language Learners](http://www.cal.org/create)) [www.cal.org/create](http://www.cal.org/create).

The following questions, adapted from Brown & Doolittle (2008) and Echevarria & Vogt (2010), should be addressed for ELLs at Tier I **in addition to** general SRBI questions.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

| Tier II Questions   | Answer |
|---|--------|
| Does the child’s learning rate appear to be lower than that of an average learning “true peer”?   |        |
| Is scientifically-based instruction in place for the target student and consideration given to his/her cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic and experiential background? |        |
| If the student is enrolled in a bilingual education program, which language(s) will be used to provide Tier II intervention?  |        |
| Who will be the Tier II interventionist?  |        |
| How will the classroom teacher or interventionist & ESL teacher collaborate?  |        |
| What assessments can we use to measure both language and academic progress?   |        |
| Despite possible language barriers, how can we best communicate to parents about their children’s progress in Tier II?  |        |
| If additional assessments are used, are the instruments technically sound, valid, and used appropriately for the ELL?   |        |

## Appendix B.3- Guiding Questions for SRBI Teams Considering English Language Learners at Tier III

“Research has shown that educators today have at their disposal the tools and strategies necessary to provide effective instruction to all students (August & Shanahan, 2006; Ellis & Worthington, 1994; Genesee et al., 2006; Marzano, Gaddy, & Dean, 2000). By using an SRBI framework to guide their professional decisions, teachers can provide specialized supplementary instruction and intense intervention to those students who need such additional assistance. With English Language Learners, it is imperative to consider whether current classroom instruction reflects best practices for their specialized needs. When making these decisions, it is important to consider each child’s particular set of life experiences and to work closely with families to identify relevant cultural influences and considerations (Brown & Doolittle, 2008).” Jana Echevarria, 2009 (Response to Intervention and English Language Learners) [www.cal.org/create](http://www.cal.org/create).

The following questions, adapted from Brown & Doolittle (2008), should be addressed for ELLs at Tier I **in addition to** general SRBI questions.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

| Tier III Questions  | Answer |
|---|--------|
| Does the student differ from “true peers” in the following ways:<br>– Level of performance?<br>– Learning slope?                        |        |
| What are the child’s functional, developmental, academic, linguistic, and cultural needs?   |        |
| If additional assessments are used, are the instruments technically sound, valid, and used appropriately for the ELL?                   |        |
| Are test results interpreted in a manner that considers a student language proficiency in L1 and L2 and his/her level of acculturation? |        |
| Do assessments include information in the student’s home language and English?  |        |
| Has the student received continuous instruction (i.e., absences do not make up a good portion of the student’s profile)?                |        |

## Appendix C- Committee Members

This document was the result of the work of the Connecticut Administrators of Programs of ELLs (CAPELL) Bilingual Education Committee members and the State Department of Education's Bureau of Accountability and Improvement.

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