

# Response to Intervention for English Language Learners: Appropriate Screening, Progress Monitoring, and Instructional Planning

## Part 1



**Slide 1**

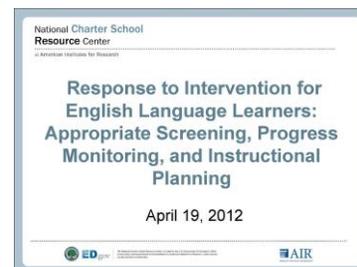
### **PEGGIE:**

This is Peggie Garcia from the National Charter School Resource Center. Welcome to our webinar: "Response to Intervention for English Language Learners: Appropriate Screening, Progress Monitoring, and Instructional Planning."

We're going to get started in just a minute, and I will introduce Julie Esparza Brown. But before we do that, I wanted to give you a quick orientation to the webinar platform. And then we'll do a couple of polls to learn a little bit more about you.

On the left-hand side of our platform, there is a chat box. There's a little bit of information there. We strongly encourage people to listen to the webinar through your computer, but if you do have audio problems while listening through your computer, you can go ahead and call in over the phone. Please dial the conference number that you see in the chat box and enter the participant code that is also listed there.

If you do listen to the audio portion [Audio Skips]. I also put a link in the chat box to a helpful resource that you all might want to check out later that's authored by Dr. Brown: *A Cultural, Linguistic, and Ecological*



**Slide 2**

*Framework for Response to Intervention With English Language Learners.*

On the lower left-hand corner, there is a file share window. The slides for the presentation are there. If you did not receive the reminder from Amanda this morning and you'd like to print out the slides and take notes on them, all you have to do is just click on the file RTI ELL slides and then the Save to My Computer button at the bottom of that box, and it should open up and prompt you to download it.

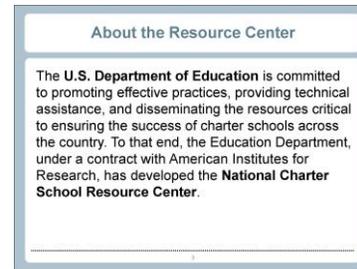
Underneath the PowerPoint, there are a few participant notes. For example, to ask a question, please enter your question in the chat box to the left at any point during the webinar. We'll ask Dr. Brown to speak for 35–40 minutes. And then we'll leave some time at the end for Q&A. But please go ahead and enter your questions throughout the webinar, and we'll cue them up and have a list ready to go for her.

If the slides are too small at any point, you have at least two options: (1) You can use the full screen option on the top right of your screen, or (2) you can use the file download function that I described earlier.

If you do listen over your computer, please note that your bandwidth will affect the quality of the audio that you hear. To hear the highest quality audio possible, you should use a wired connection as opposed to wireless and close all applications other than Adobe that are running on your computer.

The webinar is being recorded, and an archive will be available on our website within three business days at [www.charterschoolcenter.org/webinars](http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/webinars).

The National Charter School Resource center is funded by the U.S. Department of Education. And this year we are sponsoring a series of 12 webinars that are focused on different topics related to ELLs. This is the eighth in the series that we're really excited about with a special focus on response to intervention [RTI] for ELLs.



### Slide 3

Before I introduce Dr. Brown, we're going to go ahead and do a few polls so that we can understand who you are.

The first is about your role in the charter school community. Which of the following best describes the organization that you represent or your role?

- Are you a teacher, leader, [or] board member?
- Do you work for an authorizer, a CMO [charter management organization], [or] a state level or national charter support organization?
- Do you work for an institution of higher-education] or nonprofit, a school district, or LEA [local education agency] or SEA [state education agency]?

It looks like most of you are charter school teachers with a good number also from charter support organizations. And some from LEAs and SEAs. So that's a nice mix. Great.

The second question is related to if you are a teacher, the percentage of ELLs [English language learners] in your school. If you work for a school district, the [ELL] percentage in your LEA, and if you work for a state, the [ELL] percentage in your SEA.

It looks like you're pretty evenly split, with some having a small percentage and a few having quite a large percentage of ELLs. Great.

The third question is about special training. How many of you have special training to serve ELLs?

- You have not received any special training.
- You have some limited training or participated in some related PD [professional development].
- You received quite a bit of training focused [Audio Skips] on serving ELLs.

Okay, we have some beginners and some experts with us. Good; a nice mix.

And, finally, this webinar will focus on the intersection of ELLs with RTI. So we're wondering about your familiarity with RTI.

- You've never heard of it.
- You have limited knowledge about RTI.
- You're currently implementing an RTI model in your school.
- You have deep knowledge and expertise about RTI.

Okay, it looks like limited knowledge and currently implementing the model are sort of the majority. Great, thank you all for sharing. That's helpful in helping Dr. Brown to guide her presentation.

Julie Esparza Brown is an assistant professor of special education at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon, where she teaches graduate courses in assessment, educational psychology, biliteracy development, and bilingual special education. She also consults nationally on issues related to RTI and ELL students, [the] least biased assessment of ELL students, and [the] effective instruction for diverse learners. She serves on the National Advisory Committee for the National Center on Response to Intervention and a number of other boards for



**Slide 4**

educational organizations. Welcome, Dr. Esparza Brown. Are you ready?

**DR. BROWN:**

I'm ready. Thank you.

**PEGGIE:**

Great. I'm going to turn it over to you; thank you.

**DR. BROWN:**

Welcome. I'm glad to see so many people virtually attending this.

Our webinar outcomes for the day are to examine a framework for developing a culturally and linguistically responsive RTI system for English learners or ELs. It is what we're using to term this population of students.

English learners are called by many, many different labels in the United States. You may be familiar with LEPs (limited English proficient). That's a term that's still used by the federal government, but the field has really moved away from using because we don't like to emphasize the "limited" term. They've been called English language learners (ELLs). Now the latest, I think, is English learners. California, I think, has a new label that I can't recall at the moment, what it is. So this group of children for whom English is not the native language in the home, we'll term as English learners.

We will also, by the end of the seminar, understand the factors that must guide instruction and intervention for English learners within an RTI process and consider application of this framework to your own context

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**Response to Intervention for  
English Learners: Appropriate  
Screening, Progress Monitoring,  
and Instructional Planning**

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April 19, 2012



**Slide 5**

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**Webinar Outcomes**

- Examine a framework for developing a culturally and linguistically responsive RTI system for English Learners (ELs).
- Understand the factors that must guide instruction and interventions for EL students within an RTI process.
- Consider application of this framework to your context through Questions and Answers.



**Slide 6**

through questions and answers, which we will leave time for.

Here we go. “RTI has the potential to affect change for ELLs by requiring the use of research-based practices based on individual children’s specific needs.” Now that is a quote that a colleague and I wrote in the brief that Peggie had referenced earlier that’s in the chat notes. I encourage you to go download that free resource.

RTI does have great potential for positively impacting the educational success of English learners, yet it also has the potential of creating similarly biased systems if we’re not really careful. So we today will learn a framework in which we are really considering all of an English learner student’s context.

The National Center on Response to Intervention defines RTI as [follows]: “Rigorous implementation of RTI includes a combination of high-quality, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction; assessment; and evidence-based intervention. Comprehensive RTI implementation will contribute to more meaningful identification of learning and behavioral problems, improve instructional quality, provide all students with the best opportunities to succeed in school, and assist with the identification of learning disabilities and other disabilities.”

Now that’s a very large task, isn’t it? What I appreciate about this definition in particular is the reference to culturally and linguistically responsive instruction because unless we look at all of our students, we can’t say that we have an equitable educational system.

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#### RTI for ELs

- “RTI has the potential to affect change for ELLs by requiring the use of research-based practices based on individual children’s specific needs” (Brown & Doolittle, 2008).



### Slide 7

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#### RTI Defined



“Rigorous implementation of RTI includes a combination of high quality, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction; assessment; and evidence-based intervention. Comprehensive RTI implementation will contribute to more meaningful identification of learning and behavioral problems, improve instructional quality, provide all students with the best opportunities to succeed in school, and assist with the identification of learning disabilities and other disabilities.”

National Center on Response to Intervention



### Slide 8

What is RTI? Here are the principal features of RTI. It's a system that provides universal screening for all students at the beginning of the year with instructional support, intervention, and progress monitoring for struggling students. The emphasis is on appropriate, research-based core instruction. It's a multitiered system with increasingly intense support at each tier.

So what this means to English learners is that the emphasis on core instruction means that we are succeeding with at least 80 percent success of all subgroups of children in our core instruction. In general education, 80 percent of your subgroups of students should be successful. That does not mean that if 80 percent of your classroom is meeting academic success and 20 percent are struggling and those 20 percent are all English learners, that's not appropriate because we are looking across subgroups. And that, to me, if you find that all of your English learners are the ones that are struggling, then that is really saying we have a problem within our core instruction—meaning, we have not appropriately adapted and adjusted core instruction to meet the needs—both cultural and linguistic needs and differences—of English learners.

There are three categories of English learners who experience academic challenges.

The first one: those with ineffective instructional programs and environments—that's what we were just discussing. When instruction is not appropriately adjusted to their language needs, then we're going to find large groups of English learners that are struggling.

The second category of English learners are those who have difficulties in school due to life circumstances. If I had you in front of me, I would say raise your hand if you have English learners that have life experiences that maybe have caused a barrier to education:

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### RTI as a Promising Practice for ELs

- The principle features of Response to Intervention (RTI) are:
  - Universal screening for all students
  - Instructional support/intervention and progress monitoring for struggling students
  - An emphasis on appropriate and research-based core instruction
  - A multi-tiered system with increasingly intense support at each tier
- This emphasis on core instruction means that instructional practices must be appropriate for all subgroups of students



## Slide 9

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### Three Categories of ELs Who Experience Academic Challenges

- Those with ineffective instructional programs and environments
  - Instruction is not appropriately adjusted to students' language needs
- Difficulties in school due to life circumstances
  - Interrupted schooling, limited formal education, high mobility, limited access to standard English models, etc.
- Intrinsic disorders



## Slide 10

- **Interrupted schooling.** Perhaps they're from rural areas of other countries where they have itinerant teachers that can't reach the school when the road washes out during the winter months.
- **Limited formal education.** Many of our families emigrate from countries where the educational system only goes up to eighth grade—more limited than what we would expect our populous to have as their educational background.
- **High mobility.** Many of our students, their parents work in fields that are mobile. Sometimes families like to go back to their native countries around the holidays, and children miss months of school.
- English learners often have limited access to standard English models—meaning, if English is spoken in the home, for example, by the parents and it's not their native language, they are probably not speaking standard and highly academic English, so students have limited access to those models of high vocabulary and standard English.

Then the third group of students are those students who truly do have intrinsic disorders. Of course, there are going to be English learners with disabilities at about the same percentage as the monolingual population. That's really a challenge for us, determining which are the students that truly need to be referred for a comprehensive special education evaluation or those that unfortunately it might be one of the first two reasons here of why they're experiencing challenges.

Why is this child struggling? To support struggling English learners through the RTI process, we first need to really consider the question “why.” To address the “why,” we have to assess first whether the curriculum has been appropriately adjusted to the student’s unique linguistic, cultural, and experiential backgrounds. That’s really the first investigation. At the first sign of academic challenges, in order to answer the “why,” we have to gather background information on the student. We have to have a clear understanding of their education [Audio Skips], what their first and second language abilities look like, and so forth.

Here is a framework or the tiered support system: RTI for English learners. Typically, RTI is represented as a triangle with the bottom, or the green, base, representing core instruction. Core instruction should be where 80 percent of [the] students meet academic success.

Once again, we need to look at our students disaggregated by subgroups. So, 80 percent of [the] students in each subgroup should be meeting success in the core curriculum. If not, then there’s an issue with core.

One thing as I talk to many groups across the country that’s commonly confused is that for English learners, their English language development [ELD] or ESL [English as a second language] services, whatever we want to call it, they have a federal mandate that if they come from a home where a language other than English is spoken, that they receive core instruction that will increase their English language proficiency. That does not count as an intervention. ESL/ELD services are core instruction for English learners and cannot be included as an intervention. That is as important to them as reading and math[ematics], and that’s part of their core.

### Why is This Child Struggling?

- Supporting struggling EL students through the RTI process initially occurs without needing to answer the “why.”
- The first “why” to address is to assess whether the curriculum has been appropriately adjusted to the student’s unique linguistic, cultural, and experiential backgrounds?
- Thus, at the first sign of academic challenges, we must rather information on the student’s background.



### Slide 11

Consider how this model is different from your RTI process?



### Slide 12

If then we find that 20 percent of our EL students are struggling, then we move those students up to the strategic level. Within the strategic level, the yellow, Tier 2, we call that where students receive a double dose of instruction. It's core instruction plus strategic, evidence-based intervention. They receive core instruction in literacy in the general-ed[ucation] classroom, and then they receive another dose of instruction on those same concepts, oftentimes using different curriculum and within a small group—perhaps five to seven within the grouping number.

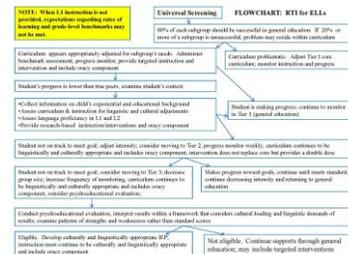
For English learners, what's important to remember is instruction and intervention must always consider that oracy component—meaning, literacy takes care of reading and writing; oracy is where we focus on listening and speaking.

Our students may struggle with many of the current intervention programs commonly used because the intervention programs do not appropriately adjust, adapt, and provide enough background on the language and sometimes the experiences that our students have. If we're working on the skill of retelling, for example, in our intervention [for] English learners, we have to consider what kind of language will they need to know in order to be able to retell? And that would be they might need to know language like *first, second, last* or *first, next, then, last*. But we have to ensure that we are directly instructing the language that the students will need in order to be successful at the skill. That is really at all instructional phases with English learners.

Of those students that were the 20 percent from gen[eral] ed[ucation] that were referred to the second Tier 2 or strategic [level], about 5 percent of those students may not have their needs met with a double dose, and they may need to be referred up to what we call Tier 3, or intensive instruction. It continues to be

evidence based. For English learners, it still includes that oracy component because we have to really attend to students' vocabulary and oral language needs in order for them to make academic success.

Moving on. Here is a flowchart that I created that really walks us through the things to think about when we face English learners that are struggling in general ed[ucation].



Slide 13

The first thing I want to point your attention to is the yellow box on the left-hand side. Note, when L1, or first language instruction, is not provided, expectations regarding rates of learning and grade-level benchmarks may not be met.

I can't emphasize clearly enough that the data is clear that native language instruction is a more efficient and quicker way to English literacy for English learners than all English instruction. It may not make sense, but that's what the data has shown us.

When we don't provide native language instruction, kids can be behind simply because they're needing to learn skills and content in a language that they're still learning. And yet that's difficult.

Moving here to universal screening. As we said earlier, universal screening then occurs for all students at the beginning of the year. Then we look to see if 80 percent of each of our subgroups within a classroom is meeting success within the general-ed[ucation] classroom. So once again, if more than 20 percent of a group of children, like if all your strugglers are only ELL, then the problem might reside within the curriculum. If that's the case, following this arrow to the right, if the curriculum is problematic, then we have to adjust Tier 1 core instruction. However, if we've determined that the curriculum has been instructed, then we move to the arrow on the left. The curriculum appears appropriately

adjusted for the subgroup's need. We administer benchmark assessments, progress monitor, and provide targeted instruction and intervention and include that oracy component.

At the first tier, that might be small-group instruction or reteaching in the general-ed[ucation] classroom. We monitor and hopefully give them that extra boost that they need to return back to not needing that extra small-group instruction.

To help gauge what's appropriate progress for an English learner, where there's not a lot of data, particularly in dual-language programs, as to what is appropriate progress, sometimes we may be needing to look at a child's peer group. What I mean by true peers are [as follows]:

- What does progress look like for the children that have a similar language background, similar native country of birth or whether they're first generation born in the United States?
- What has their prior educational history been?
- How about preschool experiences?

So taking into account, trying to find a peer that is as alike as the struggling student as possible and looking to see—does this indicate that we should be really concerned about a student who, even with the similar context, peers are making progress, and there's one child that's standing out because they're not making the same rate of progress? I know that's not a real clear way of targeting benchmarks. But for some of our students, particularly those from more exotic language groups, that may be the only comparison that we have.

At the get-go of a child struggling, we want to collect background information. We want to look at the child's experiential and educational background, look at the

curriculum, and assess their language proficiency in L1, their native language, and in L2, English.

For students who identify on the home language survey, which is part of every child's registration packet, that there is a language other than English spoken in their home, that automatically triggers an English language proficiency test. However, there are no guidelines on measuring their proficiency in their native language.

When a child is struggling, we must collect that information. That's easily done for students for whom Spanish is their native language. There are several tools on the market that will measure language proficiency in English and in Spanish. There's only one tool that I know of that even looks at a language other than Spanish; it's called the BVAT—[the] Bilingual Verbal Abilities Test and that assesses...that has about four subtests where it assesses children's language ability in English. And then the items that they've missed, an interpreter can go back and administer those in a child's native language. And you're getting a gauge of how much the student's native language will help them understand content. That's about the only tool that I know of to measure a second language other than Spanish. But for students for whom Spanish is not their second language, even getting just a language sample using an interpreter will give you valuable information.

Don't forget, what's really key here is talking to the parents and getting a good developmental history and understanding when the child first spoke in their native language; when was the second language introduced. Often, parents will give you some guidance. If a child is really struggling, they've seen that this child is different than their siblings. Don't forget to get information from the parents right away. At this point, we, of course, provide research-based instruction, interventions, and keeping that oracy component.

I see that I have a question here that was asking how this relates to DIBELS. We'll talk about that a little later. But universal screening and progress monitoring could certainly be done using the DIBELS or Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills and the Spanish counterpart IDEL [Indicadores Dinámicos del Éxito en la Lectura] are both screening measures and progress monitoring measures. They do come in the two languages, so that's been very popular in our study with many English learners in schools. The [Inaudible] and AIMSweb is another example of screening and progress monitoring tools that are available in English and Spanish.

Other than that, there are a few things on the market—curriculum-based measures—that might have a few measures in Spanish. But those are the two that I recommend that have many assessment tools in both languages.

As we move down the chart then, looking at the middle long reference to Tier 2 here—long box—if a student is not on track in Tier 1 to meet the goals, we look at adjusting intensity, consider moving to Tier 2, [and] progress monitor weekly. So we want to boost up the intensity and the progress monitoring, and the curriculum continues to be adjusted for their linguistic and cultural needs—meaning that we teach the language that they're going to be needing to use in the skill instruction [Audio Skips], but it's a double dose. So they get additional minutes in meeting the goals of core instruction.

When perhaps 5 percent of the students aren't making progress here, we want to ask again, "Is it the curriculum?—that's the right-hand arrow. If it's not, the left-hand arrow tells us, consider moving to Tier 3. Here we decrease the group instructional size, increase the frequency of monitoring, and the curriculum continues

to need to be adjusted. At Tier 3, we may or may not consider a full psychoeducational evaluation for potential placement in special education. If that occurs, that we do go on to recommend a child for assessment, then we conduct that psychoeducational evaluation and interpret the results within a framework that considers the cultural loading and linguistic demands of the results of the test.

And I'll refer you to the work of Don Flannigan and Sam Ortiz from St. John's University. They have a lot of information on a very unique framework to help interpret standardized scores—where we're really examining the patterns and strengths and weaknesses rather than looking at the scores themselves.

If a student is not eligible, they may continue to need intensive levels of support. The beauty of the RTI system is that we continue to deliver the intensity of instruction and intervention in order for that student to make progress. Regardless of whether they have a label or not. If the student, on the other hand, does qualify, then we develop a culturally and linguistically appropriate IEP [individualized education program] and provide a special education program, where we adjust for the culture and language background and we continue to adjust in gen[eral] ed[ucation].

So [that's] a lot of information but something to think about. And I think what's different about my model here is we're really putting a big spotlight on the curriculum. Is the curriculum effective? And the majority of curriculum on the market and intervention programs do not adjust enough for the child's language needs.

[End of chapter 1]

## Part 2

### DR. BROWN:

As we said, you need to ask why. Knowing your students' history will give you some ideas as to why they may not be experiencing the success that you're hoping for. It's really important to understand the educational opportunities that they've had in both languages. So gather the data that's listed here.

At Tier 1, research is clear that when we intervene early with children before third grade, most students can acquire adequate literacy skills. However, if Tier 1 instruction is implemented poorly and several students in the classroom fail to progress towards grade-level expectations, then the assumption that generally effective instruction is in place is compromised.

Once again, I can't highlight enough the importance of that Tier 1 instruction that is specifically modified or adjusted to address the needs of English learners.

Make appropriate comparisons. To gauge student progress, each student must be compared to the appropriate peer group. We discussed a little earlier the concept of true peers—true peers being those with similar language backgrounds.

You may have instances where you have students with really unusual second languages, where there's a very small population in your community, and it may be that child's family is the population of native speakers of that language. While we don't like to compare siblings, that may be the only gauge that you have. So really talking to the parent and gauging how this child that is struggling, how their development and how their education, how their progress is in comparison to siblings.

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### Knowing Student's History

- It is imperative to understand the opportunities the student has had to learn language (both L1 and L2), skills and content.
- You must gather data on:
  - First language proficiency
  - Second language proficiency
  - Third language proficiency (if applicable)
  - Educational history (in U.S. and outside U.S.); including preschool
  - Model of bilingual instruction
  - Attendance and mobility



## Slide 14

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### Tier 1

- Research indicates that when we intervene early, before third grade, most students can acquire adequate literacy skills (Lesaux & Siegel, 2003; Sun, Nam, & Vanderwood, 2010; Vaughn et al., 2006).
- "If Tier 1 instruction is implemented poorly and several students in the classroom fail to progress toward grade-level expectations, then the assumption that generally effective instruction is in place is compromised" (McMaster & Wagner, 2007, p.227).
- Instruction in Tier 1 must be designed or modified to address the language **and** literacy needs of ELs.



## Slide 15

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### Make Appropriate Comparisons

- To gauge student progress, each student must be compared to the appropriate peer group.
- In particular, when determining adequate growth, EL students should be compared to "true peers" (Brown & Doolittle, 2008).
- True peers are children with similar language backgrounds, birth country, educational history, age and grade.



## Slide 16

For Tiers 2 and 3, interventions must be in the same language as the students' core literacy. I know that the majority of English learners in the United States receive their core instruction in English, so it's really not a problem to find intervention programs in English. It meets the language of their core instruction.

But if students are fortunate enough to be in a dual-language model, then those interventions need to take place in their language of instruction. In two-way programs, we need to have the discussions as to which language are we going to focus on to really put our resources towards so they become a reader in one language.

In some cases, if a child is in a dual-language program where they're getting 50 percent of their instruction in English [and] 50 percent in Spanish, we may choose to really focus and provide those interventions in their native language. Because they're going to have more language to build on in their native language than in their second language.

The research, I'm happy to say, is clear that English language learners do make progress even when instruction is in English when this intentional oracy component is included in instruction and intervention. That oracy component also matches the language of instruction and intervention.

Interventions must combine that oracy component with all of your literacy skills: phonological awareness, word study, vocabulary, fluency, listening, and reading comprehension. Those are all areas of which you might have targeted intervention, and you have to intentionally provide language support for all of those skills for our students to really grow in all and any of those skills.

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### Tiers 2 and 3

- Interventions must be in the same language as the student's core literacy.
- Research is clear that ELs make progress when an oracy (listening & speaking) component is included with the literacy (reading & writing) interventions regardless of language of instruction (L1 or L2) (Nag-Arulmani, Reddy, & Buckley, 2003; Haager & Windmueller, 2001; Pollard-Durodola, Mathes, Vaughn, Cardenas-Hagan, & Linan-Thompson, 2006).
- Interventions must combine oracy component with, phonological awareness, word study, vocabulary, fluency, and listening and reading comprehension for EL students make progress.



## Slide 17

As a reminder, Tier 2 is a double dose of core instruction.

Tier 3 is the most intensive instructional support with the smallest group. It may or may not include special education.

I'm sure that many of you are asking this next question here posed on the slide: "How do you set goals for English learners when there's a paucity of research on growth trends for them?"

Well, the National Literacy Panel (<http://www.cal.org/projects/archive/natlitpanel.html>) reported that English learners can make comparable progress to English-only peers on beginning literacy skills when the language requirements of the tasks is relatively low.

So that's good news. We used to say in the bilingual field that, well, we really can't teach students to read until they have a foundation of English—if we're teaching them to read in English. That's actually not the case because research has been very clear also that the beginning literacy skills, like phonological/phonemic awareness [and] phonics skills are transferrable skills—meaning, if we teach students those skills in their native language, we don't need to teach it twice. Then they understand; they have that skill to then transfer to English reading. Now we might have to point out to them, look, you know this sound. You know the sound *a* in Spanish. Here's what it looks like, the *a*, now you know it in English. It could make this sound. You look at what transfers or what might be a confusion to students. So you can intentionally plan for that instructional transfer.

The method of setting goals for English learners has to be comparable to those of English-only students in that

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### Tiers 2 and 3 (cont.)

- Tier 2 is a "double dose" of core skills (3-5 in group).
- Tier 3 is the most intensive instruction (1-3 in group) and may or may not include special education.
- If special education placement is a consideration, a full comprehensive evaluation should occur.
- All assessment data must be interpreted within a least biased framework (refer to the work of Flanagan and Ortiz)



## Slide 18

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### How Do You Set Goals for EL Students?

- There is a paucity of research on growth trends for EL students.
- However, the National Literacy Panel (NLP; August & Shanahan, 2006) reported that ELs can make comparable progress to English-only peers on beginning literacy skills (e.g., phonological skills, decoding, word recognition) where the language requirement of the tasks is relatively low.
- One method of setting goals for ELs is to set the same goal as you would for English-only students and understand that it is very unlikely that the EL student will meet that goal within the same time frame (except perhaps as noted above on foundational skills)



## Slide 19

it is our job to get all students to grade-level benchmark, right?

Thus, we have to set those same goals for English learners. However, they may start out considerably below the level of our English-only students—meaning, our instruction has to be so rigorous that we have to help them make a year and a half, sometimes two years progress, in one year’s time. It’s not enough to have them make the same rate of progress as English-only students because they have to catch up. It may be helpful to think of setting short-term goals to reach some of the long-term, grade-level benchmark goals.

The National Reading Panel did report that there was a need to modify the content to make the instruction more accessible and comprehensible for English learners. That’s what I’ve been talking about this entire webinar—considering that oracy component. We’ve talked about setting short-term goals to reach the grade-level goals and comparing the students’ learning trajectory to their true peers.

In other words, we can be concerned about a student—an English learner—when they are achieving both below grade-level goals and below that of true peers. Regardless of the reason they’re not learning, we have to provide support for all students that are not reaching benchmark.

How do we assess progress? Progress monitoring must consider English learners...and to remember that once a child reaches fluent English proficiency, that does not mean that they’re comparable to a native English speaker.

You may have a child in your class for whom they do not need ELD or ESL services any longer and they’ve been reclassified as a fluent English-proficient student. But they still do not have the same English-language

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#### How Do You Set Goals for EL Students?

- The NLP also reported the need for modifications to make the content more accessible and comprehensible.
- Thus, it may be most appropriate to set short term goals to reach the grade level goal.
- It is also important that we compare each child’s trajectory to their true peers to help gauge the impact of their cultural and linguistic background.
- In other words, concern is appropriate when the student is achieving below grade level goals *and* below that of his/her true peers.
- Regardless, support must be provided to all students not at benchmark.



### Slide 20

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#### How Do We Assess Progress?

- Progress monitoring must consider that once a child reaches fluent English proficiency, it does NOT mean they are comparable to a native English speaker.
- Research demonstrates the dramatic effect that differences in early language experience can have on later academic achievement.



### Slide 21

skills and ability as a native English speaker because they have not had the benefit of developing that full reservoir of one language. We have to remember that even students at high levels of English proficiency, we still have to really consider the need for extra language support.

Research does demonstrate the dramatic affect that differences in early language experience can have on later academic achievement. If we really want to be looking at the rate of progress for an English learner, then we're considering early childhood programs and providing early literacy experiences in their native language.

The language of progress monitoring is...how do you determine that?

The progress monitoring is going to be provided in the language of the intervention, which matches the language of core instruction. If you are only providing English instruction and the student has only had English instruction, then we would progress monitor only in English. We'll have a couple of case studies here in a bit that will help us to envision this a little more.

Progress monitoring measures are robust, powerful indicators of a student's literacy health, really. Brief and easy to administer, so they're efficient. They can be administered frequently and must have multiple equivalent forms. And they must be sensitive or dynamic. I've mentioned a couple of screening and progress monitoring tools earlier: DIBELS and AIMSweb and their Spanish counterparts.

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**Language(s) for Progress Monitoring**

- One of the first considerations for ELLs is whether progress should be monitored in all languages.
- If ELs receive reading instruction in their native language, then it is critical to monitor progress in their native language.
- If an EL student is not receiving reading instruction in the native language, there may be no need to monitor literacy progress in any language but English.

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 **Slide 22**

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**Progress Monitoring Measures Are...**

- **Robust** (*powerful indicators* of academic health-link to meaningful outcomes)
- **Brief** and **easy** to administer-**efficient**
- Can be administered frequently
- Must have **multiple, equivalent** forms
  - (If the metric isn't the same, the data is meaningless)
- Must be **sensitive- Dynamic**

Stiefel & Putnam, 2008

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 **Slide 23**

To progress monitor English learners though, we have to remember to progress monitor in their languages of instruction. Once again, a case study will help us to unpack this a little more.

We have to set rigorous goals that provide support towards their meeting grade-level standards, even though we understand they're not going to meet them within the same timelines as English-only students. That we evaluate their growth frequently, increasing the intensity of instruction when growth is less than expected, and evaluate growth as compared to their true peers.

I see a question that was posed. "Does RTI work in nonbilingual schools?" Absolutely, but the same principles that we are making comparisons to like peers and that we're not setting the same expectation of meeting grade-level goals within the same timeframe as English-only students because realizing that they probably start out at a lower...with less skills in English because that's not their native language.

Here are some sources for progress monitoring tools, and I'm going to move us ahead to some case studies.

### Recommendations for Progress Monitoring ELs

- Monitor student progress in all languages of instruction.
- Set rigorous goals that support students towards meeting grade level standards.
- Evaluate growth frequently, increasing intensity of instruction when growth is less than expected.
- Evaluate growth as compared to that of true peers.

National Center on Response to Intervention

## Slide 24

### Sources for Progress Monitoring Tools

(Sanford & Putnam, 2008)

- National Center on Response to Intervention: ([www.rti4success.org](http://www.rti4success.org))
- National Center on Student Progress Monitoring ([studentprogress.org](http://studentprogress.org))
- DIBELS ([dibels.uoregon.edu](http://dibels.uoregon.edu) - Free to Oregon Schools)
- AIMSWEB ([www.aimsweb.com](http://www.aimsweb.com))
- Easy CBM ([www.easycbm.com](http://www.easycbm.com))
- Monitoring Progress of Basic Skills (Fuchs & Fuchs; Reproducible masters)
- The ABC's of CBM (Hosp, Hosp, & Howell)

National Center on Response to Intervention

### Case Studies of ELL Students



National Center on Response to Intervention

## Slides 25 and 26

Quickly, to give you an idea of the considerations for bilingual children, for English learners.

Luis was born in Mexico and is the youngest of five siblings. His family came to the United States when he was four.

In Mexico, while he did not attend preschool, his brothers and sisters attended private schools and spent a lot of time reading stories to him and entertaining him. In their private school, while the instructional language was Spanish, they also learned English. Remember, the siblings are spending a lot of time with him, and they're bilingual.

Luis is now in first grade in the United States in a bilingual program. His language proficiency scores on the Woodcock Muñoz indicate he is a Level 2 in English and a Level 4 in Spanish. This Woodcock Muñoz test that I'm referring to is a language proficiency test that's available in English and Spanish. Like most language proficiency tests, it scores on a rubric of one to five: one being non-English speaker, [and] five being fluent English speaker or Spanish speaker.

What we see is Luis is stronger in his Spanish language, which makes sense because he grew up his first four years in Mexico. Then English, but he does have some ability—the second level of English—most likely because, remember, his siblings had formal English instruction in school. He's had some exposure to both languages, and now he lives in an English-speaking country, but he's enrolled in a bilingual program.

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### Scenario 1: Luis



- Luis was born in Mexico and is the youngest of five siblings. His family came to the United States when he was 4. In Mexico, while he did not attend preschool, his brothers and sisters attended private schools and spent a lot of time reading stories to him and entertaining him. In their private school, while the instructional language was Spanish, they also learned English. Luis is now in first grade in a bilingual program. His language proficiency scores on the Woodcock Muñoz indicate he is a level 2 in English and level 4 in Spanish.

National Center on  
Response to Intervention

## Slide 27

If we were to look at the first-grade DIBELS measures and his scores, on Letter Naming Fluency, Luis scored a 27, which puts him at some risk; Phoneme Segmentation Fluency, Luis scored 30, so he's emerging; and Nonsense Word Fluency, a score of 11 puts him at risk. If you were to then look at these scores, what tier would you consider providing support for Luis?

FIRST GRADE - DIBELS	Decision Criteria - Beg of Yr	Luis
Letter Naming Fluency (LNF)	At Risk 0-24	
	Some Risk 25-30	27
	Low Risk 31+	
	Established 36+	
Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF)	Deficit 0-9	
	Emerging 10-34	30
	Established 35+	
	Established 36+	
Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF)	At Risk 0-12	11
	Some Risk 13-23	
	Low Risk 24+	
	Established 25+	

**Slide 28**

I wish I had a way to poll all of you. I will tell you that generally when I show this slide to groups, they'll say, okay, he's got some intensive needs. He is not established in any of those first-grade skills, so we might be considering this child to need Tier 2 or strategic or double dose of support.

However, is this all the information that we need? Although Luis did not have formal instruction in Spanish, we know he had some informal literacy experiences with his siblings in his native language. We want to know, "What did he learn from those experiences?"

So we administer the same measures, the IDEL, the Spanish component of the same measures, and see that in Letter Naming Fluency, he's at some risk; Phoneme Segmentation Fluency, he's emerging; and Nonsense Word Fluency, he's at some risk.

FIRST GRADE - IDEL	Decision Criteria - Beg of Yr	Luis
Fluidez en nombrar letras (FNL) Letter Naming Fluency	At Risk 0-19	
	Some Risk 20-34	33
	Low Risk 35+	
	Established 36+	
Fluidez en la Segmentación de Fonemas (FSF) Phoneme Segmentation Fluency	Deficit 0-34	
	Emerging 35-49	41
	Established 50+	
	Established 50+	
Fluidez en las Palabras sin Sentido (FPS) Nonsense Word Fluency	At Risk 0-24	
	Some Risk 25-34	32
	Low Risk 35+	
	Established 36+	

**Slide 29**

Well, hmm, he's not really established in Spanish either. We might be saying he's not very solid in his beginning phonemic awareness skills in either language, so we might provide him a double dose of support.

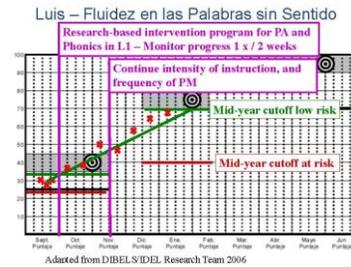
Progress monitoring might look like this. So we identify the need for support and give him three measures in September, and we set our goals.

My slide is not moving ahead. There we go. I can't move it ahead from here. So there's our aim line, and we know we want to get him up to that grade-level standard, but it's likely that he's going to need some extra support.

There should be another set of scores coming up on the screen. There we go. What we see here is we provide this research-based intervention for phonemic awareness and phonics in the first language because he's in a bilingual setting. We know that he's stronger by the language proficiency scores in his native language. So we're providing that native language support, and we're seeing that, wow, he's on target. We're going to continue this intensity of support in his native language. Is he on goal? Yep. Looks good.

Okay, next slide. So we do the same thing. We've identified the need for support, we have given him three measures in September, and set the same goal. In this case, when we progress monitor...he's below our goal line. We have to do something different, and that might be increasing the intensity of his intervention. It might be increasing time, a smaller group size, and progress monitoring more frequently. And we remember that all of these interventions include that oracy component—even in Spanish—because now he's in this bilingual environment, so he doesn't have the opportunity to fully develop and continue to develop his Spanish or his English. What we need to do, particularly if we're in an English-only instructional environment, we need to remind parents that their job is to support that child's continued native language support and growth.

The best practice is for them to speak to their child and read to their child in their native language if possible. If



Slide 30



Slide 31

they're illiterate, just to tell stories and to have discussions with their child in that native language and demand that the student answer in their native language because we really do want to develop bilingual citizens.

Okay, I see that I'm quickly running out of time, so I think I'll leave you with this case study.

### Scenario 2: Margarita

- Margarita came to the United States at the age of one. She attends a bilingual school with an early-exit program model; thus, she is transitioning to English literacy instruction. Her language proficiency scores on the Woodcock Muñoz indicate she is a level 2 in English and level 3 in Spanish.

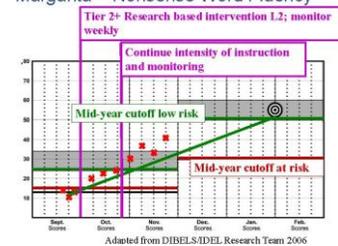


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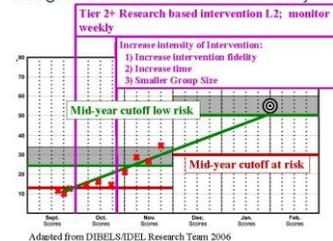
FIRST GRADE - DIBELS	Decision Criteria - Beg of Yr	Margarita
Letter Naming Fluency (LNF)	At Risk 0-24	27
	Some Risk 25-30	
	Low Risk 31+	
Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF)	Deficit 0-9	30
	Emerging 10-34	
	Established 35+	
Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF)	At Risk 0-12	11
	Some Risk 13-23	
	Low Risk 24+	

FIRST GRADE - IDEL	Decision Criteria - Beg of Yr	Margarita
Fluidez en nombrar letras (FNL) Letter Naming Fluency	At Risk 0-19	19
	Some Risk 20-34	
	Low Risk 35+	
Fluidez en la Segmentación de Fonemas (FSF) Phoneme Segmentation Fluency	Deficit 0-34	31
	Emerging 35-49	
	Established 50+	
Fluidez en las Palabras sin Sentido (FPS) Nonsense Word Fluency	At Risk 0-24	12
	Some Risk 25-34	
	Low Risk 35+	

#### Margarita – Nonsense Word Fluency



#### Margarita – Nonsense Word Fluency



Slides 32 through 36

And it's time for questions. So I'm going to open it up to questions because I see our time is running very quickly.

**PEGGIE:**

Thank you, Julie. Actually, could you talk a little bit about the PLUSS model on the last slide? I'll flip through them very quickly. I think that might be really helpful for people, and then we'll launch into the questions.

**DR. BROWN:**

My colleague Amanda Sanford and I at Portland State, we have developed a model that helps us think about a systematic way to provide that oracy support for instruction and intervention.

Now in gen[eral]-ed[ucation] instruction, some of you may be familiar with the SIOP [[Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol](#)] model or GLAD [[Guided Language Application Design](#)]. Those are sheltered instructional strategies in which we're looking at how, again, to help lessen the language demands and make the language more comprehensible for students while keeping the same academic goals.

In our case, we're not trying to replicate that, but we are trying to come up with a way to really think about the interventions that we provide based on what the research tells us about the effective instruction of English learners. So we've developed the PLUSS model—meaning, preteach critical vocabulary and academic language. It's more than just picking out the vocabulary words that are bolded in the text; usually, that's not the language that our kids struggle on.

They may really struggle on language that they know in one context, like the word *bank*. If we were to ask many of our students, do you know the word *bank*? They would nod their head, yes, I'm familiar with that word.

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**The PLUSS Model for Core and Interventions**  
(Sanford & Brown, in preparation)

- **P:** Preteach critical vocabulary and academic language
- **L:** Language modeling and opportunities for using academic language
- **U:** Use visuals and graphic organizers
- **S:** Systematic and explicit instruction in reading components and strategies
- **S:** Strategic use of native language

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**Slide 37**

And they would be thinking of bank like ATM [automatic teller machine] and money. But if we use *bank* in the context of refer to the word *bank* or the *bank* of flowers, they will be lost.

So really intentionally thinking of...where are they going to stumble with the language within our curriculum? Then we provide language modeling for them—teaching the structure of English and opportunities for using that language.

Our classrooms should not be quiet classrooms. But language learners need multiple opportunities for practicing that language. We use visuals and graphic organizers. We know that’s good for all students, but it’s really imperative for our English learners. And then we provide systematic and explicit instruction in reading components and strategies. Direct instruction of skills is important for children who are starting out behind, and when useful and when possible, [the] strategic use of native language. That might mean we have an instructional assistant or a parent volunteer who can quickly provide some interpretation of concepts or vocabulary that can be the bridge for that student understanding what the lesson is about.

If we move to the next slide—Peggie, can you move to the next slide?—here is some example or definition of the PLUS components. Here’s the evidence base for it.

On another day, I can really unpack this and walk you through it. We don’t have much time today. Hopefully we’ll have an article coming out soon that describes this model more deeply.

PLUS Framework for Research-Based Instruction for ELLs

Plus Component	Evidence
Identify and explicitly teach vocabulary that is unknown and critical to understanding a passage or area of instruction	Collins, 2017; Cohen, et al., 2006; Eckerman, Vogt & Short, 2008; Linn-Thompson & Vaughn, 2007
Teacher models appropriate use of academic language; then provides instructional opportunities for students to practice using the language in meaningful contexts	Dunn & Maran, 2003; Eckerman, Vogt & Short, 2008; Gilmore, 2003; Linn-Thompson & Vaughn, 2007; Scavelli, 2003
Strategically use pictures, graphic organizers, gestures, models and other visual prompts to help make critical language concepts and strategies more comprehensible to learners	Brockel, 2001; Eckerman & Cohen, 1998; Hauger & Klingner, 2005; Linn-Thompson & Vaughn, 2007; O'Malley & Chaston, 1990
Explicit, model provided guided practice with feedback, and opportunities for independent practice in content, strategies, and concepts	Collins, 2007; Faggella-Luby & Dunbar, 2009; Gilmore, 2003; Hauger & Klingner, 2005; Klingner & Vaughn, 2006; Wadman & Alcant, 2004
Identify concepts and content students already know in their native language and allow to explicitly explain, define, and help them understand new language and concepts in English	Carillo, Brown, Davis & Spletzer, 1995; Hargrave, et al., 1995; Gonzalez, Giza, Doolittle, & Kuvshinov, 2006; Oller, 1995; Schacter, & Bialystok, 2002

## Slide 38

**PEGGIE:**

Great. Thank you. That was really helpful. So Jennifer had a few questions. I think you responded to her question about DIBELS and RTI in nonbilingual schools. But Jennifer, please enter a follow-up question in the chat.

Another question she had, “What assessment tools are available that you might recommend for students who speak low-incidence languages?” You talked about the Bilingual Verbal Abilities Test. Are there any other tools you might recommend?

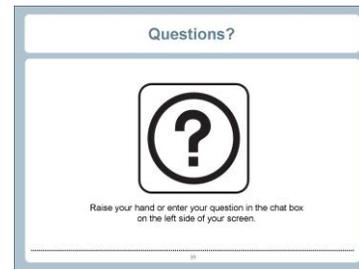
**DR. BROWN:**

No. I think I said earlier that there might be times when really all we can do is get a language sample in that native language through using an interpreter and working with the family to find out, well, “Is this child’s language comparable to other members of the family?”

Let me just give a quick example. A while back I was assessing an initial assessment of a high school student who was a native Vietnamese speaker. He had lived in a refugee camp for many years and then had entered our program. The schools had passed him on through about sixth grade and now he’s in 10th grade, and he’s always had some struggles. But they couldn’t figure out what really he was struggling with.

When I started the assessment process, I brought in a Vietnamese interpreter. She took a language sample, talked to him for a while, and said to me, “His language does not sound typical of the region of Vietnam where he’s from.”

Then the next question is, well, “Is his language and the patterns of his language learned or are they innate to him different from his family?” The next thing is we go to talk to the family, listen to their language, and then talk to them about his language development. And sure



**Slide 39**

enough, the family said he didn't start to speak until he was four, and they have trouble understanding him, and they often have to interpret for him to extended relatives. So really even that informal language sampling can give you lots of information.

**PEGGIE:**

Great. That's really helpful. I'm wondering about recommendations you might have for whole-school models for implementing RTI programs that are effective for ELLs. "What components of those models do you think are particularly important to ensure that ELLs have a wide range of supports?"

**DR. BROWN:**

I think it goes back to that first point of core instruction has to be appropriate—whether it's in their native language or in English—realizing that mostly it's English-only models for the majority of English learners in the United States.

So that means, then, that we have to consider that need for additional language support in everything that we're teaching. The PLUSS model can give you some guidance in what it is that you have to think about in your lessons that help make English learners access your core instruction. That's the first point.

I think the other important key is to disaggregate by subgroups your data and make sure that your 20 percent that are struggling are not only your second language learners. And then considering the need for oracy support throughout their instruction—if that means Tier 2 or Tier 3—that language always has to be a part of their instruction—intentional language instruction. I think those are the big keys.

**PEGGIE:**

Great. That's really helpful. Could you talk a little bit about effective professional development practices to

help teachers get prepared to teach in a model like this that works well for ELL?

**DR. BROWN:**

Yes, absolutely. I think that...I'm in a teacher preparation program, and we're not doing this yet, and I'm not sure why. I've talked about it for 12 years.

Frankly, every general-education teacher in this country needs to have some professional development around second-language acquisition and culturally responsive instruction. But every gen[eral]-ed[ucation] teacher really has to understand how a first and a second language is developed and how very often our students could look like they have a language impairment because our U.S.-born English learners often have a midlevel of language in their home language and a midlevel on that rubric of one to five of language in English. And it's really hard to get them to be fully fluent in either language.

When we don't help them to develop that first language to high levels, it's hard to build a second story on a foundation of quicksand. And that's what we're doing when we replace their native language with English [Audio Skips] English speakers sometimes.

Professional development has to be given to all teachers. I would recommend that when we have those back-to-school professional development days in August, that one of those days in all of our systems be targeted to understand our EL students' needs.

**PEGGIE:**

Great. Thank you. So we're almost out of time. But we have one more question from Jennifer. So if we can squeeze it in, she's asking, "How does RTI support the new Common Core [State] Standards in English language arts?"

**DR. BROWN:**

What that would mean is our targets might look a little different based on the new standards, and I hear they're a little more rigorous than what we have in place in some states now. That means that we have to have more rigorous instruction than we do now to help children—EL learners—close the gap.

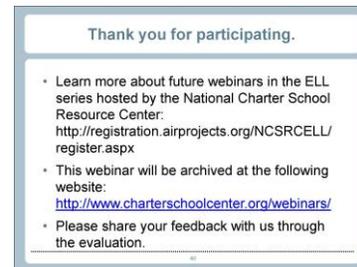
If we're saying that they come to school behind in English and they have different experiences that may not translate that well to success in an English-only school system, we really have to intentionally be looking at how we support them, progress monitoring them frequently to make sure that we are helping to close that gap. They can't make the same amount of progress as our English-only students. They can't. They have to make one and a half or two years growth in that same amount of time, so our instruction has to look markedly different.

**PEGGIE:**

Dr. Brown, thank you so much. This has been incredibly informative, and you've given us a great deal to think about and to apply to our schools. I'd like to thank all of the participants for joining us and a special thanks to Dr. Brown for sharing so many wonderful insights with us.

Please visit our website to learn more about future webinars in the ELL series. We'll have four more. And check out the archives on our website so that you can share Dr. Brown's insights with other members of your school.

We're going to send you to an evaluation in a moment. If you could share your feedback with us, that would be great. Again, thank you everyone for joining us and have a wonderful afternoon.

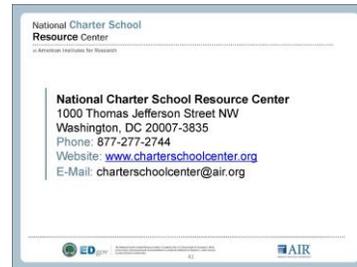


Thank you for participating.

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**Slide 40**

**DR. BROWN:**  
Thank you all. Bye.



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**Slide 41**