

# MAKING CONNECTIONS

## Between Multi-Level Systems of Support and English Learners

A **MULTI-LEVEL SYSTEM OF SUPPORT** [*Response to Intervention (RtI)* and *Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)*] is the practice of systematically providing differing levels of supports based on student need. Wisconsin's vision of a multi-level system of support consists of four essential elements: **HIGH QUALITY INSTRUCTION, BALANCED ASSESSMENT, COLLABORATION, and CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICES.**

**ENGLISH LEARNERS** are an increasingly diverse group, representing numerous countries, cultures, and languages. They come from all socioeconomic levels and with varied educational experiences and backgrounds. A multi-level system of support helps address the complex needs of students who are in the process of developing another language (English). At the same time, the system validates, affirms, builds upon, and bridges to the students' first language, cultural strengths, intellectual capabilities, and prior accomplishments.

A multi-level system of support provides English learners with:

- A focus on culturally competent teaching to ensure strong academic literacy and English language development for long-term student achievement
- A research-validated framework for a comprehensive education that benefits ALL students
- A commitment to district-wide and school-wide inclusive practices
- Strengths-based thinking and culturally competent solutions

### Connecting English Learners to Balanced Assessment

- Use valid and reliable measures aligned with state and local standards, including English Language Standards
- Tie in the language acquisition stages and students' cultural backgrounds
- Implement strategic assessment practices to measure students' academic content, language knowledge, and skills
- Provide grade-level appropriate assessments and allow for equitable alternatives when necessary

### Connecting English Learners to Collaboration

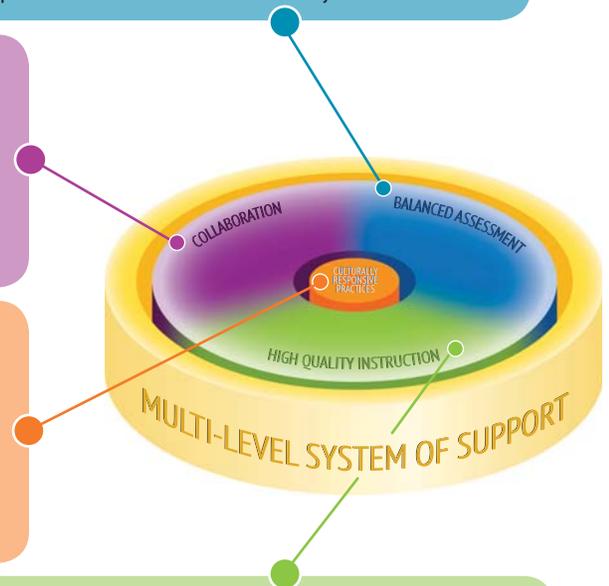
- Involve educators, family, and community when making critical decisions about instruction and practices
- Team up with colleagues to plan and deliver instruction that integrates language and content
- Provide collaborative, authentic opportunities to learn by addressing specific language and/or cultural barriers

### Connecting English Learners to Culturally Responsive Practices

- Believe that English learners can and will learn at high levels
- Understand we all have unique identities
- Create authentic, relevant learning experiences that validate and affirm students' culture and language
- Build a sense of belonging that honors English learners' racial and ethnic identities

### Connecting English Learners to High Quality Instruction

- Make content understandable by leveraging students' first language, cultural assets, and prior knowledge
- Use instructional practices designed to integrate conceptual understanding and language competence
- Align learning and supports to college and career readiness
- Take proficiency level(s) and prior schooling experiences into account when designing instruction



#### Additional sources:

Guiding Principles for English Language Learners, George Washington University (<http://www.cgu.edu/include/guidingprinciples.pdf>)  
Key Principles for ELL Instruction, Stanford University (<http://tinyurl.com/nfy783x>)  
U.S. Dept. of Education's English Learner Toolkit for State/Local Education Agencies (<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/introduction.pdf>)



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