

ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL: DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES FOR ELL LEARNERS

Paula Neri Hennessey

pn8488@comcast.net

35th Day of Reading Conference

November 5, 2011



ESL/ELL

- ESL = English as a second language
- Most immigrants of the last century came from Europe and Latin America where English was their second language
- ELL=English language learner
- This acronym takes into account that English may not be the second language of the learner.
- With the influx of immigrants from Asia and Africa, this is becoming more socially acceptable.

LEP

“Students of Limited English Proficiency” means students in preschool, kindergarten or any of grades 1 through 12, whether born in the United States or born elsewhere, whose home language background is a language other than English and whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding English may be sufficient to deny them: the ability to meet the State’s proficient level of achievement on State assessments; the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or the opportunity to participate fully in the school setting.

(Source: Amended at 34 Ill. Reg. 11581, effective July 26, 2010) ISBE

ELLs in Illinois (2006 data)

- Cook County: approximately 102,000 students are classified as LEP
 - In Chicago Public Schools there are approximately 60,000 LEPs
- DuPage County: approximately 12,000 students are classified as LEP
- Will County: approximately 4,600 students are classified as LEP
- Indian Prairie D-204:
 - Approximately **24% of students** come from homes where a language other than English is spoken (**115 different languages**)
 - More than 4% of students are ELLs and receive specialized services.

WIDA

WORLD CLASS INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN AND ASSESSMENT

**(WWW.WIDA.US) – SLIDES ON WIDA COMPONENTS/ ASSESSMENTS
ATTRIBUTED TO THIS SITE**

Laws Governing ELL Programs

- The state requires that any child whose **home language survey** indicates that a child speaks another language other than English and/or lives in a home where another language is spoken on a REGULAR basis be considered for inclusion in an ELL program unless there is evidence to the contrary.

Home Language Survey



- Does the student speak a language other than English **REGULARLY** with family or with friends?
- Is a language other than English spoken at home on a **DAILY BASIS**?
- If the answer to one or both is 'yes' further action is needed.

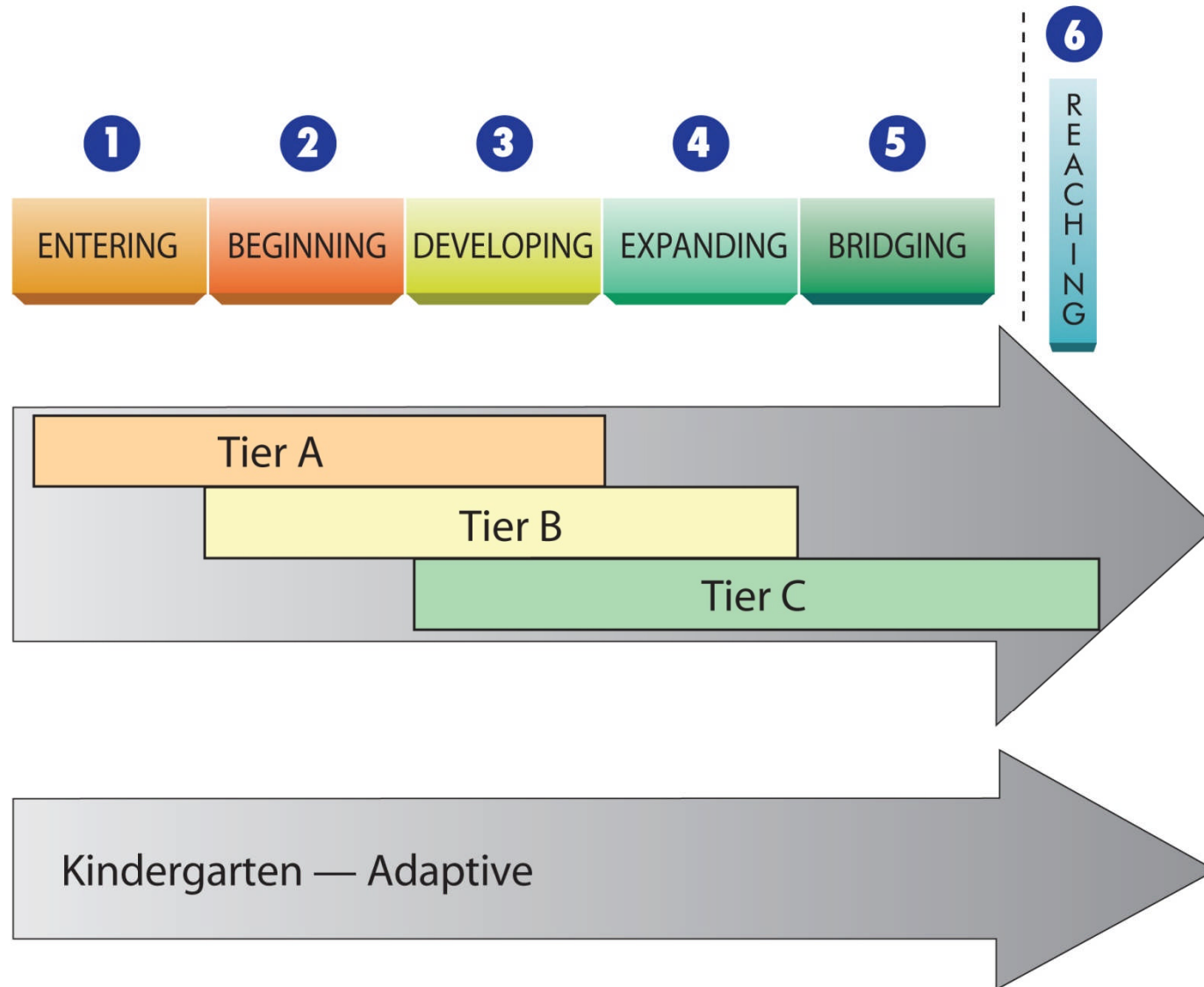
ACCEPTABLE EVIDENCE

- The student's file shows evidence of past screenings/tests that indicate proficiency and/or release from an ELL program.
- Has been performing at or above grade level as evidenced by having met or exceeded Illinois Learning Standards in reading and math on the student's most recent State assessment. This provision applies only to a student who has been enrolled in any of the grades in which the State assessment is required to be administered in accordance with the School Code.
- Illinois Administrative Code 228.15; subchapter f

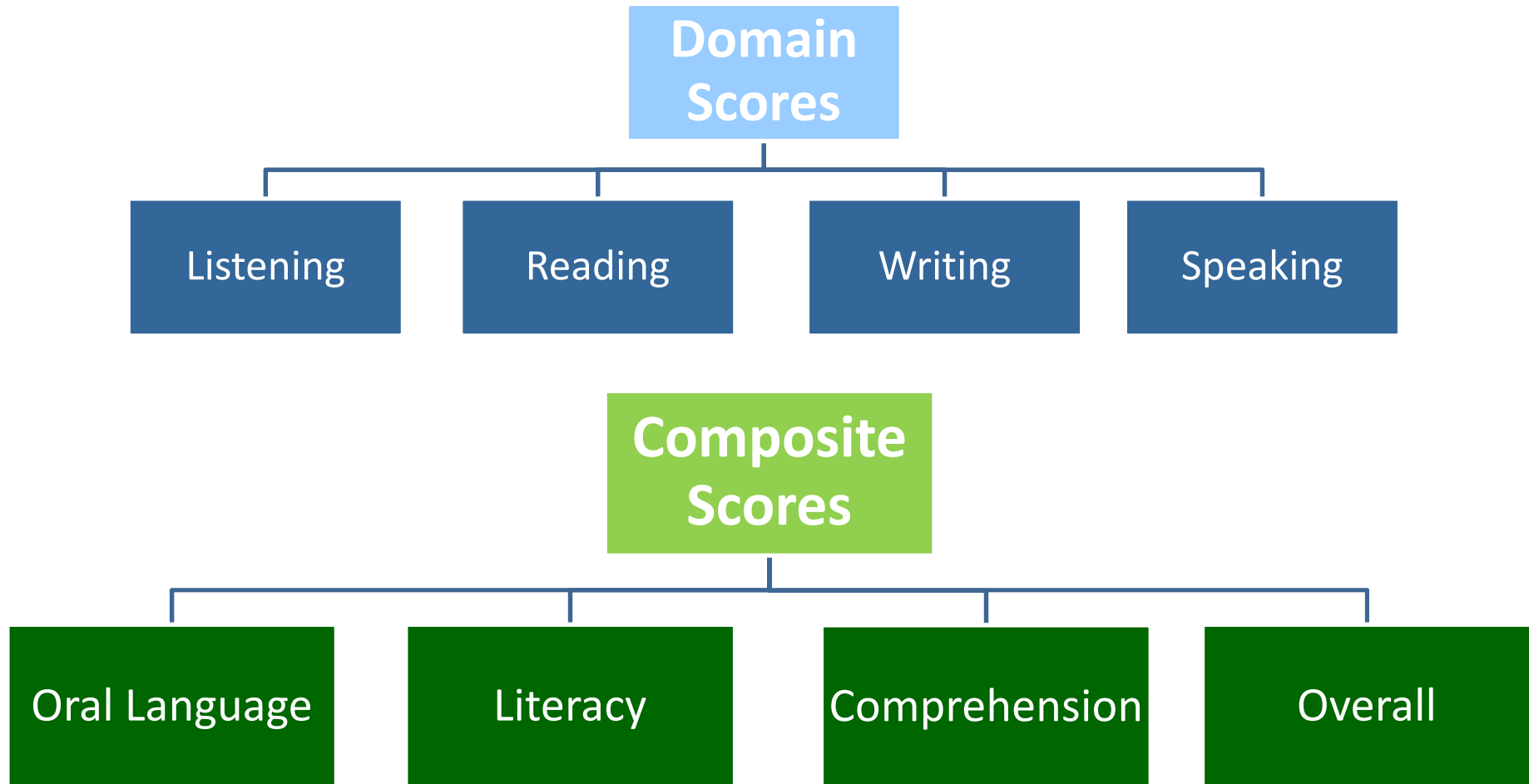
WIDA ASSESSMENTS

- W-APT stands for the WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test. It is an English language proficiency "screener" test given to incoming students who may be designated as English language learners
- ACCESS for ELLs (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners) is a secure large-scale English language proficiency assessment given to Kindergarten through 12th graders who have been identified as English language learners (ELLs).

Test Alignment with Proficiency Levels



ACCESS for ELLs Scores



Strategies Across Domains

- The ACCESS for ELL's measures proficiency across four domains:
- Listening
- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing

Strategies need to be put in place to address all four domains.

Speaking

- For many ELL learners, the school setting is the only place where they can practice speaking English.
- Many ELL learners go home to parents who cannot speak English.
- Many ELL learners socialize with other families from their native culture and do not speak English in these circles.

Speaking vs. Reading

- Although many researchers caution against drawing analogies to first language acquisition that occurs at about age 2 to second language acquisition, connections do exist.
- Just as a child learns to speak before they learn to read, this process is repeated in SLA.

Processing Speed

- Most ELP students who are at or below proficiency on the listening portion of the ACCESS are not able to process at a speed necessary to keep up with their English proficient peers.
- Extra time is needed to allow an ELP student to process the question and prepare their response.

Changing Places - Speaking

- Let's try to replicate the difficulty encountered by an ELP student who is trying to process a question/answer response.
- Please take a moment to think of something you did recently or something you plan to do this weekend.
- In a moment I will ask you to share your thoughts with a partner.

Strategies to Improve SLA in the Domain of Speaking

- Create sentence starter sheets for ELL learners of frequently asked questions.
- For example, if you are the math teacher and you ask, “What is the answer to # _____” frequently throughout the class, create a sentence starter that states,
- *The answer to # _____ is _____.*
- Give the student prior notice that he/she will be asked to answer a question.
- After circulating to make sure the student in question has the correct answer, state:
“Juan, I am going to ask you to answer the next question.”

Social vs. Academic Language

- Social language is used in settings outside of school.
- Academic language is language used in classrooms and in situations that involve learning new concepts.

LISTENING

Social Language

- Many ELL learners pass through a stage that some researchers refer to as the 'silent period'. During this stage, ELL learners can be compared to a sponge – soaking up all the sights, sounds and language in their new environment.
- At the end of the silent period they begin to speak some social language.

Academic Language

- In class, most of the listening and oral comprehension involves academic language.
- Academic language encompasses not only content specific vocabulary, but also terms such as 'define', 'determine' 'compare' 'contrast'

Pause to Reflect

- Turn to a partner(s) and spend about 2-3 minutes brainstorming a list of academic language a student needs to master to be successful in an academic setting.

Additional Suggestions

- Do not assume after asking if there are any questions that an LEP students will ask questions.
- Walk over to the student and clarify.
- Simplify the directions or mandates of the assignment.
- Allow them to use a highlighter or post-its to draw attention to vocabulary breakdowns

Secondary Phonics

- Many secondary teachers are not comfortable with teaching emergent literacy and phonics.
- Many second language learners lack the phonemic awareness needed to read fluently and for meaning.
- Since acquisition of social language outpaces academic language ELL learners may find themselves deprived of instruction needed for reading comprehension across disciplines.

Helpful Hints

- Check the components of your reading intervention program for components that address phonics.
- Pair the ELL learner with a buddy and allow for read alouds whenever possible.
- Provide the ELL learner with books on CD's.
- Provide easy to read summaries of lessons.

S -W- B- S

Effective strategy for summarizing

- Somebody
- Wanted
- But
- So

Provides the essentials of the lesson required to understand the main idea.

Sample S-W-B-S

- Somebody: The United States
- Wanted: wanted to remain out of WWII
- But: but the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor
- So: so the United States declared war on Japan and entered WWII.

Once the 'bones' of the SWBS are in place, students can elaborate and add details based on their levels of ELP.

Your Turn

- With a partner or in a small group, share a favorite short story, novel, or historical event by creating a 'bare bones' S-W-B-S.

Note Taking and Listening

- Non ELL secondary students without processing difficulties can be expected to listen to a lesson being taught and respond when asked. In school, the domains for improvement include reading and writing for meaning.
- ELL students engage in a complicated process of translating oral information. During the early stages of language acquisition, their concentration is on listening and speaking.
- Teachers can assist the process by employing various strategies to assist with note taking.

Note Taking Strategies

- Highlight essential knowledge on handouts given to ELL students
- If you ask students to copy notes from projections systems, provide a copy of the notes to ELL students
- If possible, provide copies of notes to ELL teachers in the school to reformat according to the students proficiency level and learning style.
- Ask: What is the essential knowledge of this unit?

Drawing Connections/Shuffle the Deck

- Flashcards (essential term on front; illustration on back)
- Rote vs. meaningful learning
- ‘Shuffle’ the cards into various categories to allow students to see connections between and among terms
- Social Studies categories: people, places, dates, conflicts, policies, laws, artifacts, etc.

CULTURE

What is 'culture shock' and how can it impact learning?

- What is the 'culture' of the classroom and the school setting?
- How does the culture compare/contrast to the child's academic culture in his/her country?

Academic Culture Components

- Class Size
- Classroom configuration
- Movement within the building
- Cafeterias
- Behavior management
- Grading
- Cooperative learning
- Differentiation
- Homework
- Technology

Determine and Capitalize on Background Knowledge

- Focus on what the ELL learner brings to the classroom rather than the challenges they face.
- Find ways for the ELL learner to share their background knowledge and experiences.
- Incorporate opportunities for them to share experiences native to their culture that may not be part of the American culture.

ELL Science Experts

Students may have first-hand experiences with diseases such as:

Polio

Malaria

Diphtheria

Cholera

Students can share background knowledge of:

Wild animals

Snakes

Natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, typhoons

ELL Social Studies Expert

- Students who have grown up in a country that is not a democracy can share first hand experiences.
- This can be done with pictures in a compare/contrast format if the child is LEP.
- Child labor is still prevalent in many developing countries.
- Students may have first hand experience with this topic.
- Always be sensitive to the child and the impact sharing experiences may have.

WIDA CAN-DO DESCRIPTORS

- Provide an easily accessible and user friendly way of differentiating instruction
- Are adapted to the various levels of ELP 1-6
- Minimize frustration and maximize learning

Effective ELL Teachers

The effective ELL classroom teacher (Halliday, 1983) designs and structures curriculum and activities to guide and support students as they:

- Learn language/culture
- Learn about language/culture
- Learn through language/culture

Any QUESTIONS?

What did you learn?
What questions remain?