

# Response to Intervention: What the research tells us about effective interventions for English Learners

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# Facts

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- In last few decades, from 1979-2006, the number of students in US schools whose home language was not English increased from 3.8 to 10.8 million (about 20% of the population). Of this groups of English Learners (ELs) about 72 percent spoke Spanish at home
  - 10 million ELs are in U.S. schools
  - Most are in California, Texas, and Florida, but also other states not typically associated with minority populations such as Kentucky, Indiana, and Tennessee have many ELs
- (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2008)

# More facts...

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- Most ELs are in K-3 grades--by upper elementary grades, many ELs no longer have EL designation to receive support services
- Most ELs are not foreign born, 24% in elementary and 44% in secondary (NCELA, 2005)
- In 2007, only 7% of 4th grade and 5% of 8<sup>th</sup> grade ELs scored at or above proficiency as compared to 35% and 33% of native English speakers (NAEP, 2007)
- Learning disabilities are identified in EL 2-3 years later than among English proficient students (Wagner Francis, & Morris, 2005).

# Research on Effective Instruction and Intervention for ELs

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- Early, explicit and intensive instruction in PA and phonics
- Opportunities to develop sophisticated vocabulary knowledge
- Strategies and knowledge to comprehend and analyze challenging text.
- Fluency instruction that focuses on vocabulary and increased exposure to print.
- Opportunities to engage in structured, academic talk
- Use independent reading only when it is structured and purposeful, and there is a good reader-text match

Center on Instruction (Francis et al., 2006)

# Research on Effective Instruction and Intervention for ELs

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- Screen for reading problems and monitor student progress
- Provide intense small group reading interventions
- Provide extensive and varied vocabulary instruction
- Develop academic English
- Schedule regular peer assisted learning opportunities

(IES practice guide, Gersten et al., 2007)

# RTI-The promise for English Learners

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- ◉ Reducing inappropriate referrals and overrepresentation
  - ◉ Appropriate instruction in Tier 1
  - ◉ Providing early intervention
  - ◉ Targeting interventions to meet individual student needs
  - ◉ Monitoring student progress
- (Klinger et al., 2007)

# RTI-Cautions for English Learners

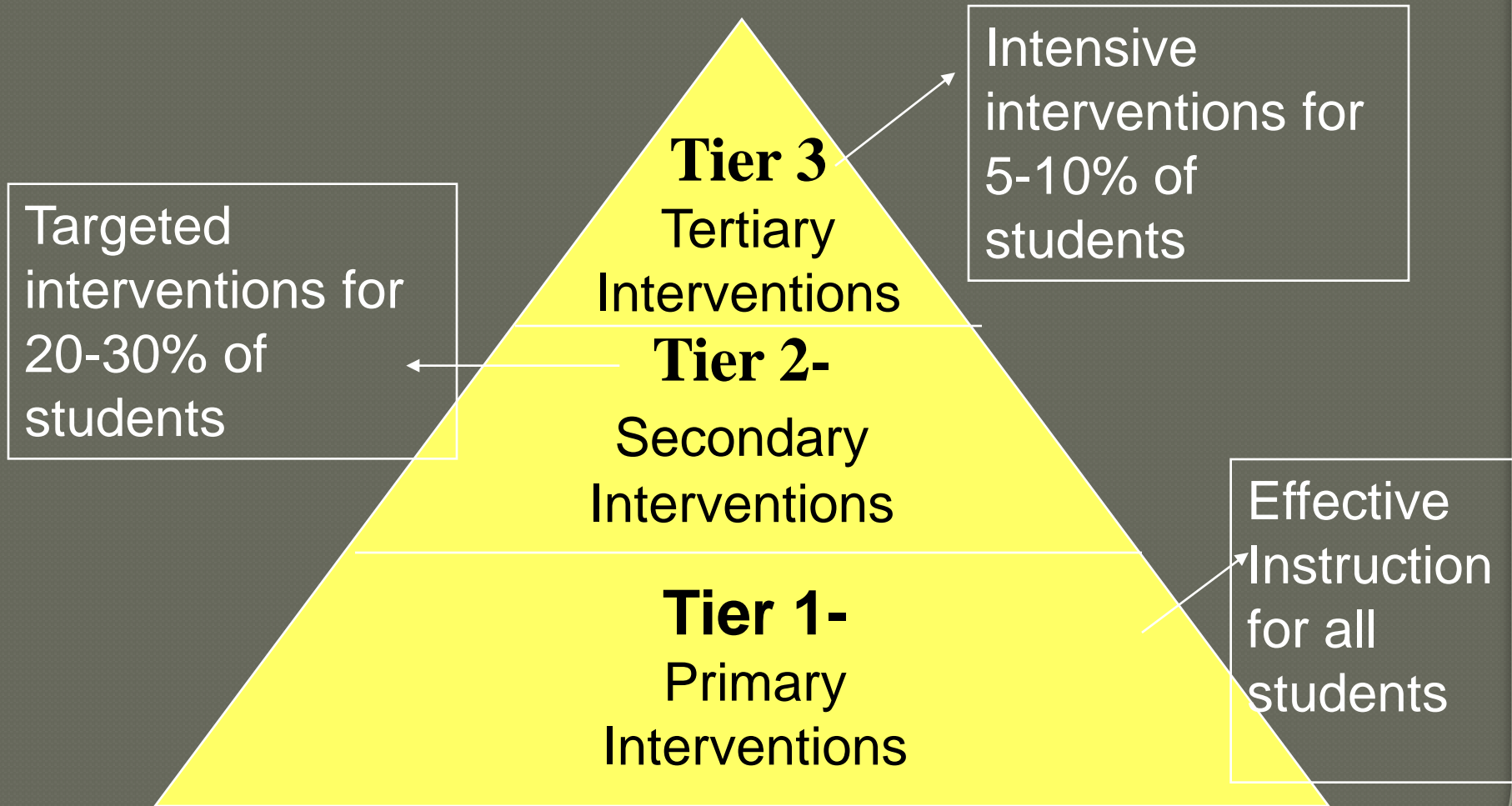
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○ Is the instruction/intervention appropriate...

- For whom? ( ELs)
- In what contexts?
- Under what circumstances?

(Klinger et al., 2007)

# The Tiered Model of Intervention



# Two Key Components

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- Assessment
  - Screening
  - Progress Monitoring
- Intervention

# Assessment- Considerations for ELs

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- ◉ Native language assessments
- ◉ Assessments that are normed on EL populations
- ◉ Curriculum based measures:
  - Oral Reading Fluency and Maze assessments (Graves et al., 2005; Wiley & Deno, 2005; Wayman et al., 2007;)
  - Early Reading Skill: Phoneme Segmentation and Nonsense Word Fluency (Richards et al., in progress)

# Tier 1

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“ High quality, research-based instruction and behavioral supports for all students in general education”

- National Association for School Psychologists  
(2003)

# Tier I - Primary Prevention

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- Class or school-wide interventions that are evidence based
- High quality instruction
- Flexible grouping strategies
- Universal screenings of student progress
- Provided by the classroom teacher

# Extensive research documents effective reading practices...

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- The National Academy of Sciences report on preventing reading failure (1998)
- The National Reading Panel Report (2000)
  - “Big Ideas” of reading
  - Explicit instruction across components
  - Strong foundation of phonemic awareness and decoding
  - Early assessment and intervention for struggling readers

# ...BUT, what practices are validated for ELLs?

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- *“The research does suggest, however, that one kind of accommodation-- developing English oral proficiency in the context of literacy instruction-- would help... the teaching of component skills is likely to be necessary, but insufficient, for improving literacy achievement among the English-language learners, and the research... indicates that second-language oral language proficiency influences text-level skills.”*

*Snow, 2006*

*National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority  
Children and Youth*

# The SIOP Model: Sheltered Instruction for Academic Achievement (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2000)

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- **Preparation**
- **Building Background**
- **Comprehensible Input**
- **Strategies**
- **Interaction**
- **Practice & Application**
- **Lesson Delivery**
- **Review & Assessment**

# Definition of Sheltered Instruction

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- A means for making grade-level academic content (e.g., science, social studies, math) more accessible for English language learners while at the same time promoting their English language development.

# Impact of SIOP

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- In quasi-experimental study (gr. 6-8), effect sizes for SIOP group on expository writing was .833 (Echevarria et al., 2006)
- Teachers who implement SIOP to greater fidelity had higher levels of student achievement (Echevarria et al., 2006; Echevarria et al., in progress)

# Your Tier 1

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- What is your primary Tier 1 instruction?  
Is it appropriate for ELs?
- What assessments do you use to monitor student progress at Tier 1? Are those assessments appropriate for ELs?

## Tier 2

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- ◉ Secondary interventions for 20-30% of students
- ◉ In addition to tier 1 instruction-supplemental to core program
- ◉ Small groups 3-5 students
- ◉ 20-30 minutes a day
- ◉ Progress monitoring at least 2x each month

(Vaughn et al., 2007)

# Tier 2 Interventions

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- ◉ Enhanced Proactive Reading (Vaughn et al., 2006)
- ◉ Read Well (Denton et al., 2004)
- ◉ PALS (Saenz et al., 2005)
- ◉ Core Intervention Model (Gerber et al., 2004; Leafstedt et al., 2004; Richards et al., 2006; Solari & Gerber, 2008)
- ◉ Vocabulary interventions

# Enhanced Proactive Reading

## INTERVENTION

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- Designed for 1<sup>st</sup> grade
- 120 daily lessons
- Delivered to small groups of students
- 50 minutes
- Focuses on five areas of reading: phonemic awareness, letter knowledge, word recognition, text fluency, and comprehension strategies

## EFFECTS

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- Moderate to large effect sizes on reading measures including vocabulary in both Spanish and English

# Read Well

## INTERVENTION

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- Designed for K and 1
- 30 minutes (15 min decoding, 15 min story reading)
- Small groups
- Focuses on PA, phonics, fluency and vocabulary, and comprehension

## EFFECTS

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- Moderate effects on word reading
- Moderately low effect on decoding

# PALS

## INTERVENTION

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- K-high school (ELs 3-6)
- 35 minutes, 3 days each week
- 3 activities: Partner reading and retell, paragraph shrinking, prediction relay
- Focuses on fluency and comprehension strategies

## EFFECTS

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- Significant differences between treatment and control on comprehension but not reading fluency
- Effect size for words correct was .6 and 1.02 for comprehension questions

# Core Intervention Model

## INTERVENTION

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- Designed for K-2
- PA, decoding, listening comprehension
- Six principles that guide intervention: small group, setting objectives, appropriate materials, skills are taught explicitly and at a rapid pace, many opportunities to respond, and corrective feedback using the “staircase” approach

## EFFECTS

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- Effect sizes for Early PA were very large 2.0
- Moderate effect sizes for word reading and decoding



# Corrective Feedback- Question Staircase

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- Step 1: Original question- “What word rhymes with *frog*?”
- Step 2: Yes or no questions- “Does *log* rhyme with *frog*?”
- Step 3: Telling the answer- “*Log* rhymes with *frog*; What rhymes with *frog*?”
- Step 4: Say and have child repeat- “*Log*”  
“Good *log* rhymes with *frog*”  
(Gerber et al., 2004)

# Decoding example

- **Step 1: Original question-** “Read this sentence.” *The boys run fast to get away.*
- **Step 2: Prompt for a reread-** “Put your finger on the word that begins with f. Read the word again.”
- **Step 3: Prompt for specific part decoding incorrectly** “What sound does this letter make (a)?”
- **Step 4: Telling the answer-** “-a makes the sound a”
- **Step 5: Say and have student repeat-** “The word is *fast*. Read it.”

# Your Tier 2

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- What is or are your Tier 2 interventions?  
Are they appropriate for ELs?
- What assessments do you use to monitor student progress at Tier 2? Are those assessments appropriate for ELs?

# Tier 3

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- More intensive intervention for about 5-10% of students
- 45-60 minutes of interventions daily
- Weekly progress monitoring
- Small group interventions (1:3 ratio)
- Lots of opportunities for response and feedback
- Intervention delivered by trained bilingual, special education teacher or reading specialist  
(Vaughn & Alba, 2008; Vaughn et al., 2007)

# Conclusions

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- Although we are beginning to develop a research base on interventions for ELs
  - We definitely need much more research in this area
  - We need more research on the impact of RtI models on ELs-how do we define response, what is the model of response that best identifies ELs
  - We need more research at the secondary levels and in other areas, such as math and behavior

# List of Resources

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- ◉ Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts

<http://www.texasreading.org/utcrla/>

- ◉ Center on Instruction

<http://www.centeroninstruction.org>

- ◉ RTI Action Network

<http://www.rtinetwork.org/>

- ◉ National Center on RTI

<http://www.rti4success.org/>

- ◉ CREATE <http://www.cal.org/create/>

# List of Readings

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