



Like-Peer Comparison

Linguistically Responsive Data-Based Instructional Decision-Making for K-12 Multilingual Learners

What is Like-Peer Comparison?

A Like-Peer Comparison is the process of identifying a Multilingual Learner (ML) who seems to exhibit an area of academic need or talent and tracking their progress in relation to that of their demographically similar peers.

The process involves identifying a **Case Student** and comparing their progress to that of a group of **demographically similar peers**. This enables educators to make **data-informed decisions** about how best to support that student.

The Like-Peer Comparative Data process provides meaningful insights to support educators in analyzing data for MLs. Comparing MLs to similar peers leads to **more accurate conclusions** about MLs' academic progress, and it enables educators to make **informed, student-centered decisions** that support MLs in reaching their full potential (Cárdenas Hagan, 2023).

What are the criteria for a student to be a Like-Peer?

A variety of definitions of a Like-Peer exist. Like-Peers are students who share a set of similar demographic characteristics. For Multilingual Learners, **six essential criteria** should be included when identifying Like-Peers. Teams should also consider additional Like-Peer criteria to determine the similarity of demographic characteristics and appropriateness of comparison.

Six Essential Like-Peer Criteria

- Similar Age,
- Grade Level,
- ACCESS for ELLs® Overall Scale Score,
- Non-disabled,
- and Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP)
- Relative native language proficiency, whenever possible (Rinaldi, 2018).

Additional Like-Peer Criteria

- Home or preferred languages(s),
- National origin,
- Race/ethnicity,
- Attendance record,
- Mobility,
- Time in district,
- Sequential vs. simultaneous,
- Prior educational experience,
- Length of time in the country,
- and cultural background (Brown & Doolittle, 2008).

What are the steps for gathering and using Like-Peer Comparative data?

Schools, Districts, and Administrative Units should collaborate to compile and share student data through secure data management systems (DMS). They can develop systems and processes for periodic review of the data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and Multilingual Learner status. They can also develop procedures for making data available to school-based multidisciplinary teams.

Process Overview: 9 Steps for Using Like-Peer Comparative Data

STEP 1: Identify the Case Student

Select an ML that demonstrates talents or difficulties in an area of academics.

STEP 2: Collect Essential Criteria

Gather and review all existing data for the **Case Student** using the **six essential Like-Peer criteria**.

STEP 3: Identify Like-Peers

Use the collected criteria to find similar students within the same school/district. If 5–10 peers are unavailable, use as many as possible while maintaining similar characteristics.

STEP 4: Gather Data for the Case Student and Like Peers

Identify the **specific area of concern or area of talent** (e.g., math fluency, reading comprehension).

- Progress monitor the Case Student and 5 to 10 Like-Peers.
- Track data consistently over time (e.g., weekly for 6 weeks).
- Use the **same measures** for both the Case Student and Like-Peers.

STEP 5: Calculate Rate of Growth (RoG)

After the data collection period:

- **Calculate the Case Student Rate of Growth:**
Formula: $(\text{Final Score} - \text{Baseline Score}) \div \text{Number of Weeks}$
- **Calculate the Rate of Growth for each Like-Peer:**
Formula: $(\text{Final Score} - \text{Baseline Score}) \div \text{Number of Weeks}$
- **Average the Rate of Growth of the Like-Peers:**
Formula: $\text{Add all of the Like-Peers RoG} \div \text{Total number of Like-Peers}$

STEP 6: Plot Data on Graphs

- **RoG Graph:** Side-by-side comparison of the Case Student's RoG and the Like-Peer average RoG.
- Include **systems-level Local Normative Data** if available to provide broader context.

STEP 7: Compare the Case Student to those of their Like-Peers

- Compare how the Case Student performs relative to these expectations and the Like-Peer group.

STEP 8: Conduct a Collaborative Analysis

Bring together a multidisciplinary team:

- Teachers
- English Language Development specialists
- Special Service Providers
- Family members
- Family liaisons

Use guiding questions like those in “Questions to Facilitate Deeper Understanding Using Like-Peer Comparative Data” to:

- Interpret trends
- Explore contextual factors
- Rule out assumptions

STEP 9: Make Data-Driven Statements

Use the data to make **clear, evidence-based statements** such as:

- "The Case Student is progressing at a rate significantly below that of 5 Like-Peers who share the same grade, age, English proficiency level, and racial/ethnic background."
- "While the Case Student started with lower scores, their RoG exceeds that of their Like-Peers, indicating a strong response to current interventions."

When fewer Like-Peers are available, supplement analysis with **qualitative information** from observations, family interviews, and instructional artifacts.

Additional Resources

- [Like-Peer Data Tracker Template](#)
- [Self-Reflection Questions](#)
- [ML Family Interview Questions / Entrevista con familias de los MLs](#)
- [Questions to Facilitate Deeper Understanding Using Like-Peer Comparative Data](#)
- [Data-driven statements](#)
- [Linguistically Responsive Data-Based Instructional Decision-Making](#)

