



ENGLISH LEARNERS AND GIFTED PROGRAMMING: IDENTIFYING AND NURTURING PROMISE

*CDE: Gifted Education State Directors'
Meeting*

February 2016

*Natasha Straayer - Douglas County
School District*

*Heather Baskin - Mesa valley School
District #51*

Douglas County School District



“The real voyage of discovery consists
not in seeking new landscapes,
but in having new eyes.”

~ *Marcel Proust*

CONTEXT



It is well documented that gifted programs traditionally reflect an underrepresentation of English Learners and students from minority and low socioeconomic backgrounds ...

(Burns, Jacob, & Wagner, 2008; Fletcher, Coulter, Reschly, & Vaughn, 2004, Delcourt, Cornell, & Goldberg, 2007; Bermudez & Marquez, 1998; Passow & Frasier, 1996)

So... what are we waiting for?

OBJECTIVES

Participants will leave the session with

- research-based frameworks for identifying gifted English Learners (ELs), including their unique educational and socio-cultural needs.
- practical guidelines for designing professional learning opportunities, systems, and structures to ensure gifted ELs' achievement and growth.
- applicable strategies to nurture the promise and potential of English Learners using English Language Development standards.

WHO IS AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER?



English Learners may be...

- Immigrants
- Refugees
- Migrant families
- Corporate Exchanges and Transfers
- Born in the USA
- International Adoptees





“...everything has a past.

Everything –

a person, an object, a word, everything.

If you don't know the past, you can't

understand the present and plan

properly for the future.”

~ *Chaim Potok*


IDENTIFY



Why identify?



CHARACTERISTICS



In the process of identifying English Learners for gifted programming several unique characteristics emerged:

- acquires a second language rapidly,
- shows high ability in mathematics,
- displays a mature sense of diverse cultures and languages,
- code switches easily (thinks in both languages),
- demonstrates an advanced awareness of American expressions,
- translates at an advanced level (oral), and
- navigates appropriate behaviors successfully within both cultures.

(p. 12, Identifying Gifted and Talented English Language Learners, Iowa Department of Education; Belin and Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development)

BODY OF EVIDENCE COMPONENTS



- Portfolio of exceptional student work
- Language Proficiency data (W-APT, ACCESS)
- Achievement
- Aptitude (Nonverbal and Quantitative)
 - Verbal: compare to “like” ELs
- Creativity
- Leadership
- Observation
 - Home
 - School
 - Community

IDENTIFICATION PROCESS



- 1) Language Proficiency assessments
(W-APT, ACCESS)
- 2) Parent/Student interview
- 3) Share data with classroom and specials teachers
- 4) Teacher observations
- 5) Cognitive Testing
(CogAT)
- 6) Consider creativity and leadership characteristics
- 7) Gather data from prior educational setting
- 8) Gather student portfolio of work
- 9) Convene team to review body of evidence and
determine programming

CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS



It is critical to understand the cultures you serve and apply this to the “exceptions” you will find...

What “goes against” the typical gifted identification process?

- Parental input and advocacy
- Cultural Norms
- Educational expectations



HERE'S WHAT, SO WHAT, NOW WHAT?



“Here’s What” - the data

“So What” - interpretation or meaning of the data and implications it may have

“Now What” - a prediction, question for further study, or an action

PLAN



“A goal without a plan
is just a wish.”

~ Antoine de Saint-Exupery

PLAN

Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) and English Language Learner Plan (ELLP) Components/Considerations

- Be sure that the ALP/ELLP goals address area(s) of strength so that MPI's consider depth, complexity, rapid acquisition.
- When highlighting the Can-Do descriptors for classroom teachers, 'call out' the area(s) where the high potential EL may demonstrate strength. In other words, particular skills the classroom teacher should be sure to observe and document as possible indicators of giftedness.

PLAN

Planning for Gifted English Learners must include:

- Relevant background information and data
- Assessment of present needs
- Projection for future needs (long term planning)
- Documentation of previous gifted and talented services
- Nature and extent of present services
- Collaboration practices to better address the student's needs
 - identify roles and processes
- Evidence of familial beliefs, values, attitudes and opinions

(p. 31 Identifying Gifted and Talented English Language Learners, Iowa Department of Education; Belin and Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development)

Programming options

- A curriculum that is inclusive of the students' interests and allows them to make choices in what they want to learn, including a focus on cultural themes;
- Expansion beyond addressing intellectual talent, by including leadership, creativity, and art;
- Hands-on units that address the needs of high potential/gifted English Language Learners;
- Classes in heritage culture, as well as AP language classes in the English Language Learner's heritage language;

SERVE

Programming options, continued...

- Translation of written class assignment instructions into the heritage language and more time to complete the assignments;
- Collaboration of ELD specialists and classroom teachers to help English Language Learners express their ideas verbally and in writing in their heritage language; and
- Bilingual activities that involve English Language Learners and native-English speakers.

(p. 35, Identifying Gifted and Talented English Language Learners, Iowa Department of Education; Belin and Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development)



EXAMPLES

Model Performance Indicators (MPI) that contain rigor at any language level:

Analyze the use of three-dimensional shapes in real-world situations using labeled models.

Analyze cause/effect in oral discourse from narrative or expository material supported by illustrations.

Verbally evaluate social and political implications of policy using sentence frames and vocabulary support.

NOW WHAT?



SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT THE PROCESS

How can you leverage systems that are currently in place in your schools?

Response to Intervention Framework/Multi Tiered Systems of Support (your site-based problem solving team)

Universal Screening Process

Professional Learning Communities (professional learning opportunities)

Building wide

Interdepartmental collaboration

Professional Development



Designing professional learning opportunities for

- English Language Development specialists to recognize characteristics of gifted learners;
- gifted education specialists to understand English learners and English Language Development (ELD);
and
- classroom teachers, administrators, and parents regarding gifted learners, English learners, and gifted English learners.

Educator Effectiveness



The best teachers are
those who show you
where to look, but
don't tell you
what to see.

Alexandra K. Trexler

www.dcsd.net



“ . . . all students deserve to see themselves reflected in what they learn in school.”

~ Adams & Boswell

CONTACT INFORMATION



Natasha Straayer

Director, Personalized Learning

Douglas County School District

Natasha.straayer@dcsdk12.org

Heather Baskin

Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Programming

Mesa County Valley School District #51

Heather.Baskin@d51schools.org