



Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Decision-Making

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*“Effective Educational Decision-Making for Diverse
Learners with Communication Disorders”*

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Meet the Presenters



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Presentation Theme

Culturally and linguistically responsive (CLR) decision making is essential to providing students with diverse abilities sufficient and appropriate opportunities to learn, including students with communication disorders



What is Culturally and Linguistically Responsive (CLR) Decision Making?

CLR decision-making occurs when educators value the strengths, qualities, and funds of knowledge that diverse learners and their families bring to the teaching and learning environment.

CLR decision-making attends specifically to distinguishing learning differences and language acquisition from a language or learning disability

CLR decision-making draws upon key *Learner, Classroom, and Home/Community* factors to provide effective instruction and special education eligibility for culturally/linguistically diverse learners.



What Features Shape CLR Decision-Making?

Decisions that are culturally and linguistically responsive include attention to three interrelated elements

Learner Qualities

Background knowledge, strengths, and ways of learning that diverse learners with disabilities bring to the teaching and learning environment

Classroom Factors

Instructional practices that provide diverse learners who are struggling, or those with disabilities sufficient and appropriate opportunities to learn

Home/Community Factors

Family and community teachings, perspectives, and views toward education that shape learners' qualities and preferred ways of learning to meet both learning challenges and diversity strengths



What are Essential Learner Factors?

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>1. Language Competence</i>	Learner's language proficiency level(s) identified and used to best meet the academic and language needs
<i>2. Acculturation</i>	Learners' behaviors associated with adjusting to a new environment such as a community or school
<i>3. Experiential Background</i>	Learner's current level of background knowledge and prerequisite skills, abilities, and experiences relative to meeting academic or social expectations



Learner Factors Continued

Factor	Description
4. <i>Cultural Values/Norms</i>	Diverse cultural values/norms incorporated into classroom instruction and expectations
5. <i>Higher Order Thinking Abilities</i>	Higher-level thinking skills are emphasized in the curriculum and presented in within a culturally responsive context
6. <i>Teaching/Learning Preferences/Experiences</i>	Compatibility between teaching style and the student's cultural and linguistic background, values
7. <i>Health/Medical Consideration</i>	Student's medical conditions and needs are addressed in responsive ways to accommodate learning needs



What are Essential Classroom Factors?

Factor

Description

1. Linguistic Competence

Classroom instruction facilitates use of both native and English languages as resources in teaching and learning

2. Contextualized Learning

Implementation of curriculum delivered in a relevant cultural and linguistic context for the student

3. Joint Productivity

Curriculum engages diverse students and their teachers through cooperative learning facilitating ongoing and joint productive classroom work



Classroom Factors Continued

Factor

Description

4. Instructional Conversation

Instruction facilitates productive classroom talk between teacher and students, and among students through strategic use of language

5. Challenging/Rigorous Curriculum

Curriculum is rigorous being validated with diverse learners that incorporates relevant scaffolds and critical thinking through use of appropriate interventions

6. Differentiation

Instruction is differentiated to address unique learning needs using individual, paired, or small group settings



What are Essential Home/Community Factors?

Factor	Description
<i>1. Primary Home Language(s)</i>	Oral and written language abilities in the primary home language are determined and accounted for in the decision-making
<i>2. Adjustment to New Community</i>	Classroom facilitates the learner making new friends and adjusting to the new environments
<i>3. Educational History</i>	Learner's previous school and community challenges, attendance, successes and experiences in bilingual or ESL programs are known and applied in the decision-making
<i>4. Family Structure/Heritage</i>	Home, family, and community values and norms are reflected in teaching and learning activities, outcomes, and expectations



Six Essential CLR Decision-Making Skill Sets

1. Ability to deliver pre and post assessment conferences with diverse families and students, using translators if necessary
2. Ability to analyze assessment devices for required vocabulary for students to be successful using the device
3. Ability to incorporate students' and families cultural heritages and teachings and into instructional and/or eligibility decision-making
4. Ability to account for features that influence second language development and acquisition, including expected behaviors, motivation and attitude, concept, development, and the first language skills
5. Knowledge of the appropriate instruments and procedures to assess a learner's English language AND academic proficiencies
6. Use of assessments that are commensurate with the English learner's current academic language proficiency level to best understand the concepts and tasks found in assessments



Culturally/Linguistically Responsive Decision-Making Checklist

Check each item when it is addressed during instructional or special education eligibility decision-making process

Decision-making discussions and process attend to ...

- ☐ Connections made to learner's cultural/linguistic environments
- ☐ Student's preferred ways of learning
- ☐ Curriculum incorporating learner's diverse cultural values
- ☐ Acculturation needs (i.e., adjusting to new school/community environment)

- ☐ Confirmation that strategic, purposeful classroom dialogue exists
- ☐ Learner's background knowledge and prior experiences
- ☐ Confirmation that scaffolded instruction is provided
- ☐ Student's home norms/teachings being evident in classroom instruction

- ☐ Strategic use of student and teacher verbal interactions
- ☐ Confirming that cognitively challenging curricula/learning experiences exist
- ☐ Use of cooperative, joint productivity occurring for all students
- ☐ Academic language of instruction being commensurate with English proficiency



Application:

CLR Decision Making

We conclude our presentation with a vignette providing select material from a body of evidence for an English learner in second grade being considered for special education for a communication disorder.

The vignette is for illustrative purposes. The material presented does not include all the evidence provided in the student's case study which allows the user to examine the material from a culturally/linguistically perspective.

Application: Review the vignette material and apply the above checklist to clarify the level of cultural and linguistic responsiveness of the evidence provided.



Vignette

The MTSS team at Stout Elementary School includes the MTSS coordinator, principal, special education teacher, ELD coach, classroom teacher and two other classroom teachers. Javier's case was brought to the team by the classroom teacher due to low performance in the areas of reading and speech.

Javier is in 2nd grade, identified as an English learner (NEP), attends a biliteracy classroom this year, and was in an English only classroom in grades K and 1. He's attended Stout Elementary since kindergarten.

His low performance was previously discussed at an MTSS meeting in October of second grade, and the decision was made to not refer for special education. Recommended interventions included providing small group intensive intervention on the alphabet in Spanish for 30 min. daily as well as guided reading by the classroom teacher. Javier's parents were contacted by the classroom teacher about concerns related to speech and reading. Parents stated that they noticed that Javier's home language was not developing similar to his older brother.

Areas of Concern: Reading in both languages (phonics and phonemic awareness); Communication/Speech in both languages (articulation, infrequently spoke during first grade). Javier is functioning significantly below grade level in reading based on Spanish reading test (IDEL – Spanish version of DIBELS).



Vignette Continued

Classroom Teacher Input

Javier's 2nd grade teacher has been monitoring his progress in Spanish reading using IDEL (Spanish version of DIBELS) once a month; Javier has continued to score significantly below grade level and hasn't shown much progress.

In February this year, 2nd grade classroom teacher reported to have been providing small group instruction using Estrellita (letter sounds and alphabet in Spanish) daily for 30 minutes as well as small guided reading group in Spanish (differentiated and scaffolded reading instruction), also daily for 30 minutes. At the MTSS meeting, teacher reported that Javier doesn't seem to grasp basic concepts of reading.

Special education worked with Javier and a group of students in special education throughout first grade on phonics in English for 20 minutes daily. She reported that by the end of first grade, Javier knew 10/21 consonants and all vowels in English (*Core Phonics*). She reported that Javier was not progressing commensurate with other students identified with LD in the group.



Vignette Continued

Student Strengths/Teacher Concerns

Learner Strengths

Good listener
Improved attendance
Very respectful
Follows routines and is usually on-task
Completes and submits homework 90% of the time
Strong family engagement
Primary home language is Spanish
Very strong in math

Teacher Concerns

Very quiet
Infrequently speaks in class
When speaking doesn't speak in complete sentences
Appears to want to speak more in English than in Spanish
English proficiency is at the beginning stage (has been in ELD program since kindergarten)



Vignette Process and Debriefing

Process

1. Based on the information provided in the vignette, check each item in the CLR Decision-Making Checklist addressed by the MTSS team.
2. With a partner or in small groups, share your checklist.
3. With a partner/small group, talk about the areas that do and do not adhere to the components in the checklist.
4. Identify next steps, prioritizing components of the decision-making process that should be improved or put in place in order to ensure that the special education eligibility decision culturally and linguistically responsive.

Debriefing

1. What did you notice as you checked the items being addressed in the decision-making process described in the vignette?
2. What connections do you make to your decision-making in your school or district?
3. How would you rate the decision-making process in your school or district relative to incorporating the 12 items on the CLR Checklist?
4. What might you suggest to make your school or district decision-making process more culturally and linguistically responsive?



Summary: *Four Keys to CLR Decision-Making*

1. Successful education for culturally and linguistically diverse learners requires responsive decision-making that incorporates *Learner, Classroom, and Home/Community* qualities and factors
2. Completion of the *CLR Decision-making Checklist* assists educators to self-monitor the cultural and linguistic responsiveness of their instructional and special education eligibility decision-making process
3. Teachers, family members, and administrators contribute to effective instructional and special education eligibility decision-making by recognizing the significance of *learner, classroom, and home/community* factors
4. Sufficient and appropriate opportunities *may only occur* for diverse learners when instructional and assessment decisions are grounded within a cultural and linguistic context



References

Presentation was developed from material found in the following sources

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Additional Information

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