

Multi-Tiered Support Systems for Multilingual Learners: Structures that Inform Reading

Instruction and Intervention

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INTRODUCTION

Project Summary

Research Question

My capstone explored the following question: *How does the research recommend designing a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework for Multilingual Learners (MLLs) to inform reading instruction?* This question I found had a much bigger answer than I originally thought and there were major themes in the research that emerged. In order to fully develop the project, I had to select the foundational pieces that would best address the research found as well as not overwhelm this project in scope or size. My project was made to help other educators know how to approach providing instruction for MLLs in their classrooms.

Description of the Project

After researching MTSS and the specific needs of MLLs, I determined it would be valuable to create a professional development series to help staff grow their understanding of MTSS for MLLs. A large portion of this professional learning series was focused on assessment practices specific to literacy. The way teachers use data for instructional decisions is foundational to the way an MTSS functions. Data is used to determine instructional content decisions for students at each tier of support. To develop a clear framework of support, staff needed to establish a strong foundation for how data is analyzed, reflected upon, and interpreted to best make decisions for student groupings to impact academic achievement. In the first session, staff learned about the foundational pieces to MTSS and language and literacy. Culturally responsive pedagogy was a big part of the research and so staff completed an activity to get to know the linguistic assets that

students bring to their literary learning. Teachers walked away with a better understanding of the foundations of literacy and how this tied into MTSS for all of their students. They created a map of the linguistic needs within their classrooms with student overall composite score data from the WIDA ACCESS test that they take annually.

In the second session, staff explored an overview of data and its uses, and they made initial decisions with universal screening data. They explored language difference versus learning disability and case studies specific to hypothetical students. They then used the hypothetical student English Language Proficiency (ELP) data to make decisions for student needs focusing on student strength areas. They used the ACCESS data for listening, speaking, reading, and writing and mapped out their class with the WIDA Can-Do descriptor form for each domain. This helped them to have a clear picture of the student's English proficiency in their classroom and their linguistic needs. Staff cross-compared this ELP data to the universal screening data for literacy to make informed decisions on classwide intervention needs. They learned about various types of diagnostic data. Following this, they made decisions for future data gathering needs based on diagnostic data that is needed to target support.

In the last session, staff explored decisions for targeted intervention. They worked as teams to look at the varied literacy support needs in first understanding the stages of literacy development. Then staff reviewed with a Kahoot online game the language difference versus learning disability from the second session. Staff analyzed diagnostic screening data that was gathered to figure out the specific intervention needs and then grouped students according to those needs. This session was the shortest session of the three, with staff walking away with a targeted area for intervention or extension based on

all the data. They formulated a plan for progress monitoring and set check-in points to meet to discuss student progress.

Format of the Project

The project was a set of three professional development sessions over three days in the fall of the school year (teacher workshop week, mid-September, and early October). The first two sessions were four hours in length. The last session was only two hours in length. The sessions were timed specifically for the data collection that is needed for analysis. Each session was critical to the time listed above due to when district data will be gathered. Data was used to make informed instructional decisions in each session. The project included interactive elements for teachers to participate in learning, and it incorporated adult learning theory to make the learning engaging, applicable, and transformative. The group activities adults participated in involved collaboration with teachers on grade-level teams and specialists with data from their own classrooms.

Audience

This project was designed for staff at a kindergarten to fifth-grade elementary school in the upper midwest of the United States. The project was designed for administrators, coordinators, teachers (general education, English language development, reading specialists, and special education), and culture specialists (paraprofessionals). The specific audience was approximately 60 staff members.

Conclusion

This professional development was developed to help staff understand MTSS and the way it is tied intricately to data and instructional decisions in the classroom and how best to provide support for MLLs.

SESSION ONE

Session One: Foundations - Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

Session Objectives:

- Introduce MTSS
- Explore foundational language and literacy beliefs when working with multilingual learners (MLLs)
- Explore Culturally Responsive Pedagogy
- Compare and contrast literacy instruction to language instruction
- Collaboratively define MTSS
- Explore languages spoken in your classroom
- Plot students in your grade level by their English Language Proficiency data
- Use the WIDA “Can-Do Descriptors” to examine what a student can do at each English Language Proficiency range for reading, writing, listening, and speaking

Agenda:

8:00 - 8:10	Introduction and Session Objectives
8:10 - 8:25	Overview of MTSS
8:25 - 8:35	Language Belief Poll (embedded in slides)
8:35 - 8:45	Explore Language Beliefs, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, and Strategies for Engaging MLLs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mirror and Window Literature Video (1:33)
8:45 - 9:10	Literacy and Language Instruction Alignment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Simple View of Reading Video (11:05)
9:10 - 9:40	Activity: Define MTSS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Focused Conversation Discussion Guide Activity 1
9:40 - 10:00	Share out and Gallery Walk
10:00 - 10:10	Break
10:10 - 10:20	Review Session Objectives (Part Two)
10:20 - 11:00	Plot English Language Proficiency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Know Your Student Activity 2
11:00 - 11:45	Activity: WIDA Can-Do Descriptors Discussion

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WIDA Can-Do Descriptors
11:45 - 11:55	Self-Reflection
11:55 - 12:00	Ending Notes
<p>Required Materials (for the participants to bring):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● English Language Proficiency Data for students in the classroom (note in some districts this is accessible to teachers, and in some, it is accessible from the English Language Development Teachers) ● Computer ● Paper and writing tool to take notes 	
<p>Required Materials (for the presenter to bring):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Session One Slideshow ● Session One Script Notes ● Focused Conversation Activity (Define MTSS) - Discussion guide (p. 3) copies for tables ● Poster paper (Similar to this example.) ● Markers ● English Language Proficiency Data from the previous school year (if teachers do not already have this data accessible to them) ● WIDA Can-Do Descriptors (printed by grade bands (Kindergarten, Grades 2-3, Grades 4-5, Grades 6-8) - 1 per teacher per grade level and several extras per grade level bands) ● Know Your Students Activity - 1 per classroom teacher ● Videos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mirror, Window, and Sliding Glass Door ○ Simple View of Reading <p>Send at the end of the session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Session One Feedback Survey 	

SESSION TWO

Session Two: MTSS - Data-Based Decision Making: Initial Decisions

Session Objectives:

- Learn about types of data and purposes for different kinds of data
- Determine decisions for students based on universal screening data for literacy
- Explore the complexity of language learning versus learning disability
- Explore the types of diagnostic assessments used to gather learning needs before interventions
- Create a diagnostic data plan for groups of students based on universal screening measures
- Look at each domain of English Language Proficiency for listening, speaking, reading, and writing and analyze what a student at each level of proficiency can do, explore strength areas
- Plan next steps for data collection and analysis

Agenda:

8:00 - 8:10	Introduction and Session Objectives
8:10 - 8:20	Poll on data types and purposes
8:20 - 8:35	Review Data Kinds and Purposes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assessment Video (2:35)
8:35 - 8:50	Language Difference vs. Learning Disability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Language vs. disability: Why are students struggling? Video (3:06) ● Comparisons ● Some clues to the difference between “Difference” and “Disability” Video (2:54)
8:50 - 9:00	Table Discussions about Language vs. Learning Disability
9:00 - 9:20	Universal Screening Data & Decisions
9:20 - 9:30	Diagnostic Assessments: Kinds & Uses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Handout Slides 23-24
9:30 - 10:05	Receptive & Expressive Language ELP Case Study Examples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Handout Slides 26-29
10:05 - 10:15	Break

10:15 - 11:00	Deeper Analysis of ELP Levels Activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can Do Descriptors digital copies
11:00 - 11:45	Universal Screening Data Activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Analysis Discussion Guide • ELP Can Do Descriptors
11:45 - 11:55	Now What & Self-Reflection
11:55 - 12:00	Ending Notes
<p>Required Materials (for the participants to bring):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students English Language Proficiency (ELP) data for all domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) • Universal Screening Data • Computer • Paper and writing tool to take notes 	
<p>Required Materials (for the presenter to bring):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Session Two Slideshow • Session Two Script Notes • Data Analysis Discussion Guide (1 copy per participant) • Can Do Descriptors (share digital copies with participants) • Depending on districts or schools- bring ELP data or Universal Screening data • Handout Slides 23-24 (1 copy per participant) • ELP Case Study Examples Slides 26-29 (1 copy per participant) • A packet with slides 20-22 and slide 35 and 36 together by grade levels (1 packet per participant at the grade level bands appropriate for each grade level) • Videos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assessment ○ Language vs. disability: Why are students struggling? ○ Some clues to the difference between “Difference” and “Disability” <p>Send at the end of the session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Session Two Feedback Survey 	

SESSION THREE

Session Three: MTSS - Data-Based Decision Making: Decisions for Intervention

Session Objectives:

- Explore the array of intervention needs across stages of reading development
- Revisit reading theory and language difference versus learning disability
- Look at stages of reading development and intervention needs at each level
- Determine interventions using decision tree handouts
- Group students by learning needs
- Determine progress monitoring data to gather for interventions and set check-in points for data analysis

Agenda:

8:00 - 8:10	Introduction and Session Objectives
8:10 - 8:20	Review structural support for MTSS from Session 2
8:20 - 8:40	Review reading and language development Review Language Difference versus Learning Disability from Session 2
8:40 - 9:00	Overview of stages of reading development alongside intervention needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stages of Reading Development Handout
9:00 - 9:45	Activity - Analyze Diagnostic Screening Data to make decisions for instructional groupings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Decision Tree Handouts ● Diagnostic Data Analysis Discussion Guide
9:45 - 9:55	Self-Reflection
9:55 - 10:00	Ending Notes

Required Materials (for the participants to bring):

- Diagnostic Screening data organized for analysis across a grade-level classroom
- Computer
- Paper and writing tool to take notes
- [Can Do Descriptors](#) for class (completed from before in Session 2)

Required Materials (for the presenter to bring):

- [Session Three Slideshow](#)

- [Session Three Script Notes](#)
- [Diagnostic Data Analysis Discussion Guide](#) (1 per participant)
- [Grade K - 1 Decision Tree](#) (1 handout for all participants in grades K - 1)
- [Grade 2 - 5 Decision Tree](#) (1 handout for all participants in grades 2 - 5)
- [Stages of Reading Development](#) (1 handout for all participants)

Send at the end of the session:

- [Session Three Feedback Survey](#)

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