1. Build a Comprehensive Screening System

- Select and administer appropriate early literacy screening assessment tools, considering whether the assessment:
  - Provides guidance on interpreting scores for MLLs.
  - Includes MLLs in the norming process.
  - Offers some or all subtests in a language(s) other than English.
  - Uses measures that are culturally and linguistically authentic rather than direct translations from English.
  - Provides guidance regarding when and how to present students with directions in their home language.
- Use bilingual or native language assessments, when possible, and provide testing supports and accommodations, as appropriate.
- Gather and use data from other data sources.

OTHER SOURCES
- Classroom observations
- Interviews with students and families
- Informal assessments
- Home Language Surveys
- Parent-teacher meetings
- Student work and performance samples

OTHER INFORMATION
- Family history of dyslexia/reading difficulty
- Students' language skills in reading both their native language and English
- Students' exposure and experiences with both their native language and English
- Students' educational history
- Student work and performance samples

Questions to Consider During Screening

- What level of English proficiency has the student achieved in each of the four language domains (listening, speaking, reading, writing)?
- Are reading difficulties present in both the native language and English?
- Did the student experience delay in learning to talk?
- Did the student experience limited or interrupted formal education?
- Have educators provided structured reading instruction and interventions?
- Have cognitive functions, such as rapid automatized naming, phonological memory, and phonemic awareness, been assessed? What were the results of such assessments?

Terms to Know

Multilingual Learner (MLL)
A student that is developing proficiency in two or more languages.

Bidialectal Learner
A student who uses two dialects of the same language.

English Learner (EL)
A student who has qualified for English learner services under criteria of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), also used when students with EL status are cited or studied within research.

True Peers
Students who are similar in their native language proficiency, English language proficiency, country of origin, and/or time in the current school or program.

Translanguaging
The use of multiple languages together in a single situation or task.

Newcomer
A preK-12 student born outside the United States who has arrived in the country in the last three years . Depending on the country of origin, a newcomer student may also be learning English.

Immigrant Children and Youth
A student status defined under ESSA (Title III) as individuals aged 3 through 21 who were not born in the United States and have attended less than three full academic years in a U.S. school(s).

Migratory Children and Youth
A student who has moved to a new school district on his/her own or with a parent, spouse, or guardian who is a migratory worker (i.e., has moved within the past 36 months to engage in qualifying seasonal or temporary work in agriculture or fishing).

isbe.net

CCNETWORK
Comprehensive Center Network

REGION 9
Illinois
Iowa

ILLINOIS
STATE BOARD OF
EDUCATION

September 2024

2. Consider Student Data in Relation to "True Peers"

To determine whether a student's at-risk reading performance is due to typical language development or instead perhaps due to an underlying disability, it is important to ask if the student is making similar progress when compared to multilingual learners with similar backgrounds. Such students are sometimes labeled "true peers." (Brown & Sandford, 2011) To select true peers to use as a comparison group, use a minimum of three to five students (when available). Consider the following qualities when identifying a true peer, seeking to identify students similar across these areas:

- Native language proficiency. (When students who speak the same language are not available, consider students who speak languages within the same language family.)
- English language proficiency level.
- Time in the current school or academic program.

3. Leveraging Students' Language Assets

Specific practices that can value students' languages and dialects while also leveraging those funds of knowledge to support ongoing development include the following:

- Explicitly teach similarities between English and other known languages to support positive transfer among languages. For example:
  - Common phoneme (sound) and grapheme (spelling) correspondences.
  - Cognates (words with the same or similar spellings and meaning).
- Explicitly teach differences between languages and dialect variants to limit negative transfer, or interference.
  - Some examples of common differences between languages might include:
    - Differing sounds for similar spellings or different spelling patterns for similar sounds.
    - Morphology differences in how words are formed.
    - Syntax differences in word order or sentence structures.
    - Not all languages have the same phonemes or sounds.
  - Some examples of common differences between dialects of a language might include:
    - Words that rhyme in General American English may not rhyme under pronunciation norms of a different language variety.
    - Differences between spoken dialect and written text (e.g., Bostonians pronouncing car as /kǎ/).
    - Differences in pronunciation between different dialects (e.g., some language varieties do not vocalize some consonants, such as pronouncing the word told as /tōl/ in African American English [AAE]).
- Enable and support translanguaging within classrooms across the school day. Translanguaging is the use of multiple languages together in a single situation or task. It encourages use of all of a students' linguistic assets by removing the commonly held expectation that students work and think in a single language at a time.

To foster multilingualism and sustain students' native language, schools should value all varieties of dialects and languages equally and recognize that language practices vary among speakers.