Toward a “Common Definition of English Learner”:

Key Lessons from a National Dialogue

National Conference on Student Assessment
June 23, 2015 San Diego, CA
Presentation Purposes

- Provide context for national working sessions
- Recap activities and learnings to date
- Highlight efforts in ELP consortia and stand-alone states
- Describe next steps
Consortia members required to adopt common definition of English learner

Each consortium “must define the term in a manner that is uniform across member states and consistent with section 9101(25) of the ESEA” (USED, 2010, p. 20)
Federal Definition of LEP
ESEA, 9101(25)

The term limited English proficient...means an individual —

A. who is aged 3 through 21;

B. who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school;

C. (i) who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English; (ii)(I) who is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas; and (II) who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; or (iii) who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and...
Federal Definition of LEP
ESEA, 9101(25), cont’d.

D. whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny [them]:

– the ability to meet the State's proficient level of achievement on State assessments;
– the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or
– the opportunity to participate fully in society.
Permutations of Consortia

PARTICIPATION CHANGES CONTINUALLY
Current as of 6/17/15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic / ELP</th>
<th>WIDA ASSETS</th>
<th>CCSSO ELPA-21</th>
<th>Stand-Alone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smarter Balanced</td>
<td>DE, HI, ID*, ME, MI, MO, MT, NC, ND, NH, NV, SD, VT, WI, WY*</td>
<td>IA, OR, WA, WV</td>
<td>CA, CT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARCC</td>
<td>AK, CO, DC, IL, LA MA, MD, MS, NJ, NM, RI</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>NY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stand-Alone</td>
<td>AL, FL*, GA, IN, KY, MN, OK, PA, TN, UT, VA</td>
<td>AR, KS, LA, NE, SC</td>
<td>AZ, TX</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Transitioning to WIDA
Key Policy/Process Tasks

1. Identify potential English learners
   – Home language surveys (HLS)
2. Establish initial EL classification
   – ELP classification instruments & process
3. Define “English proficient”
   – ELP assessment performance standard
4. Reclassify English learners
   – Potential “exit” criteria & process

(Linquanti & Cook, 2013)
4-Stage Framework to Move Toward More Common EL Definition

1. Identify Potential EL
   - Administer Home Language Survey (HLS) at entry
   - Do HLS criteria indicate a potential EL?
     - YES
     - Administer initial ELP screener / assessment
     - NO
     - ELP not tested (False Negative?)

2. Classify as EL
   - Initial fluent English proficient (No LIEP provided)
   - Meet initial English proficient criterion?
     - YES
     - Meet EL exit criteria (ELP perf.std, other criteria & evidence)
     - NO
     - Assess/monitor each reclass criterion at least annually

3. Define ELP Performance Standard
   - Determine placement & appropriate instr. svc.

4. Reclassify
   - Monitor academic progress for two (2) years to ensure no further specialized services are needed
   - Exited & reclassified fluent English proficient

(Linquanti & Cook, 2013; adapted from NRC, 2011)
CCSSO-Sponsored National Activities to Date

• Working session on Stages 1 & 3 (Sept. 2013)
  – Paper published on Home Language Survey
  – Paper published on Reference ELP PLDs

• Working session on Stage 2 (May 2014)
  – Paper published on initial EL classification

• Working session on Stage 4 (Sept. 2014)
  – Paper on EL reclassification *in press*
Home Language Survey Guidance

- Explicitly state purposes & uses
- Clarify the construct
- Develop questions – e.g.,
  - Which language(s) does your child currently understand and speak?
  - Which language(s) does your child most often use at home, in school, outside school?
  - Which language does your child most often hear at home, in school, outside school?
- Set administrative procedures, interpretation rules

(Linquanti & Bailey, 2014)
## HLS relation to ELP “Screener”

### Stage 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HLS Result (Stage 1)</th>
<th>Initial ELP Assessment Result (Stage 2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potential EL</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I-FEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Potential EL</td>
<td>Not Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[“EO”]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Discovered”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:**
- HLS: Home Language Screener
- ELP: English Language Proficiency
Example from CA:
Initial CELDT Examinees (2012-13)

### Potential ELs: ~300,000

"False Positives": 52,000+ (17%) False Negatives: ??
Current CA HLS Questions

1. Which language did your child learn when he/she first began to talk?

2. Which language does your child most frequently speak at home?

3. Which language do you (the parents or guardians) most frequently use when speaking with your child?

4. Which language is most often spoken by adults in the home? (Parents, guardians, grandparents, or any other adults)
Stage 1.

1. Which language(s) does your child currently...
   a. understand?
   b. speak\(^1\)?
   c. read [for Grades 1 and higher]?
   d. write [for Grades 1 and higher]?

2. Which language does your child usually use...
   a. at home with parent(s)/guardian(s)?
   b. at home with brothers and sisters (if applicable)?
   c. at home with other family members (if applicable)?
   d. in school, including preschool if enrolling kinder (if applicable)-highlighted area?
   e. in other places, with friends and others (if applicable)?

3. Which language does your child usually hear\(^2\)...
   a. at home with parent(s)/guardian(s)?
   b. at home with brothers and sisters (if applicable)?
   c. at home with other family members (if applicable)?
   d. in school, including preschool if enrolling kinder (if applicable)?
   e. in other places, with friends and others (if applicable)?

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\(^1\) For American Sign Language (ASL) users, to “speak” means to sign using ASL.
\(^2\) For ASL users, to “hear” means to view ASL being signed.
Language Survey (Home and Other Contexts)

Student Name: ___________________________ School: ___________________________

Date of Birth: ___________________________ Grade Entering: _______________________

Directions: Please answer all questions. If a question is not applicable to your child, please check the “Not applicable” box for that question. For questions 2.a-e and 3.a-e, if your child uses (or hears) more than one language with equal frequency in a situation, please list all languages that apply.

1.a. Which language or languages does your child currently understand?

1.b. Which language or languages does your child currently speak?

1.c. Which language or languages does your child currently read?

1.d. Which language or languages does your child currently write?

2.a. Which language does your child most frequently use at home with parent(s)/guardian(s)?

2.b. Which language does your child most frequently use at home with brothers and sisters?

2.c. Which language does your child most frequently use at home with other family members/caregivers?

2.d. Which language does your child most frequently use in school or preschool?

2.e. Which language does your child most frequently use outside of home and school with friends and others?

3.a. Which language does your child most frequently hear at home with parent(s)/guardians?

3.b. Which language does your child most frequently hear at home with brothers and sisters?

3.c. Which language does your child most frequently hear at home with other family members/caregivers?

3.d. Which language does your child most frequently hear in school or preschool?

3.e. Which language does your child most frequently hear outside of home and school with friends and others?
Stage 1.

State/Consortium Activity with HLS

- CA: Pilot validation study of proposed HLS underway *(REL-West, CA CC, UCLA)*
- WIDA ASSETS: Common EL Def. Committee piloting HLS process in volunteer states
- NYS’s new regulations regarding HLS administration in place
- Continued x-state/consortium communication
Stage 2.

Initial EL Classification Guidance

1. Guidelines for initial EL classification
2. Strategies to address EL misclassification
3. Approaches to support comparability of criteria and procedures within and across states and consortia

(Cook & Linquanti, 2015)
Initial EL Classification Issues

- Variability in how ELs initially classified
- No provisions to identify & correct misclassifications

Table 1. State EL Classification Assessments and Locus of Authority (as of May 2014, includes District of Columbia)\(^5\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial EL Classification ELP Assessment (Type and Number)</th>
<th>Authority for Defining EL Classification Process</th>
<th>LEA Alone</th>
<th>LEA, with SEA Guidelines</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Summative ELP Test</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single State-developed Screener</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Commercial Screener</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Commercial Screeners</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Consortium Screener</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Consortium Screeners</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>51</td>
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(Cook & Linquanti, 2015)
### Where Misclassifications Can Occur

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(Cook & Linquanti, 2015)
How Students Can Be Classified/Misclassified

Table 2. Permutations of language classification and special education status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Classification</th>
<th>Not Special Ed-identified</th>
<th>Special Ed-identified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English Learner</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-EL linguistic-minority</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Initially English fluent / native bilingual)</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monolingual English (“English Only”)</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>VI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Cook & Linquanti, 2015)
Initial EL Classification Model

Stage 2.

“Pre-classification Period”
Identify potential ELs

Stage 1

Student identified as a “Potential English Learner”

Classification Instrument & Procedure

Stage 2

How Long?

Provisional Classification Period

Not English Proficient

Initial classification as English Learner

Initially classified as English Learner

ELP Support Program & Content Classes

Classify EL

Struggling with Academic English

Clearly Misclassified

Successfully managing Academic English

Annual ELP Summative Assessment

Clearly English Proficient / Reclassify

2-year Monitoring

No ELP Support Services Provided

National Working Session Idea

(Cook & Linquanti, 2015)
Initial EL Classification Guidance (1 of 2)

States and districts should:

1. provide common guidance on purposes, policies, and practices
2. ensure initial classification process appropriately and consistently implemented
3. consider "provisional classification" period to allow for correction of misclassifications
4. differentiate procedures and tools for K-1, yet ensure optimal decisions
5. align initial classification assessment to state ELP standards

(Cook & Linquanti, 2015)
Initial EL Classification

Guidance (2 of 2)

6. examine validity of instruments and procedures used
7. identify and share policies, practices, and tools that reduce misclassifications
8. **Districts within state/states within consortia should use single initial class. assessment; allow multiple assessments only w/ evidence of comparability**

**ELP assessment consortia should:**
9. provide guidance on instrument(s), data collection/analysis protocols, admin. policies & procedures
10. conduct studies of instruments, procedures, and practices to assure comparability of initial classification outcomes

(Cook & Linquanti, 2015)
Defining “English Proficient”

- Should be consistent with Federal “LEP” definition
- ELP consortia should explore common English proficient performance descriptors
- Empirical approaches should be used to identify English proficient range

(See Cook, Linquanti, Chinen, & Jung, 2012)
What Does English Proficient Mean?

- Goal – Determine English language proficiency level range that reflects “English proficient”

Relate ELP to content assessment performance without requiring a minimum content test performance

- **Key Assumptions**
  - A meaningful relationship exists between ELP and content assessment performance
  - ELP level becomes less related to content achievement as students approach English language proficiency

(Cook, Linquanti, Chinen, & Jung, 2012)
Multiple Methods to Identify English-Proficient “Sweet Spot”

- **Decision Consistency** – ELP Level & content achievement categorizations
- **Logistic Regression** – Likelihood that ELs at given ELP level will score proficient on content assessment
- **Descriptive Box Plots** – Graphically represents ELP and content assessment relationships
- **Equivalent Distribution** – Identifies ELP score/level where content test performance distribution of comparably-situated ELs and non-ELs is equivalent

(See Linquanti & Cook, 2013; Cook, Linquanti, Chinen, & Jung, 2012)
(See Linquanti & Cook, 2013; Cook, Linquanti, Chinen, & Jung, 2012)
Coming to a CCR assessment near you...

Grade 3 ELA Assessment CDFs by ACCESS CompSS Ranges (CPL 6.0 = CSS 369)

Cumulative Frequency

ElA Scale Score

PLOT
- NonEL
- EL CSS LE 300
- EL CSS LE 325
- EL CSS LE 350
- EL CSS LE 375
- EL CSS LE 400
- EL CSS LE 425
- Non ELs
- Level 5.0
- Level 6.0
- Proficient Cut Score
- HOSS
Logistic regression of the likelihood of being proficient on 3rd grade ELA test based on ACCESS overall composite scale score.
Stage 3.

Reference Performance Level Descriptors

- Examines common descriptions of ELP performance across states and consortia
- Support cross-state & consortia comparisons of ELP

(Cook & MacDonald, 2014)
Stage 3 (English proficient) to Stage 4 (Exit)

Reclassification criteria based on Federal definition: English Learner no longer denied...

9101(25)

1. ability to meet State's proficient level of achievement on State assessments
2. ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English
3. opportunity to participate fully in society in English

Empirical Analysis of ELP & Content Assessment results
- Determine English Language Proficient Criterion
- Establish AMAO 2 Criterion

Evidence of receptive & productive language uses to accomplish tasks appropriate to grade level, content areas
- Assessment tools supporting and standardizing local criteria & evidence

Evidence of receptive & productive language uses to accomplish social and occupational goals within & beyond school
- Assessment tools supporting and standardizing local criteria & evidence

Multiple Evidence Sources of ELP (Linquanti & Cook, 2013)
Stage 4.

National EL Reclassification Working Session (Sept. 2014)

• Discussed stress points in current regs, guidance, interpretations, enforcement
• Examined leverage points to strengthen reliability, validity, comparability while maintaining local decision-making
• Explored group ideas for consensus on “required” vs. “permitted” exit criteria
National EL Reclassification Working Session Takeaways

- EL Reclassification Criteria
  - Support setting “English proficient” ELP standard taking account of academic content proficiency
    - Caveat: Corrective criterion option
  - Support classroom language use criterion
    - Caveats: Comparability, incentives
  - No consensus on examining language use for societal/career participation:
    - Seen as too distant, result of other criteria
    - Use for accountability, not reclassification
National EL Reclassification Working Session Takeaways

• EL Reclassification Process
  – Pursue common criteria/process within states
  – Accept variability with transparency across states

• Training & Monitoring
  – Pilot online calibration, team approach for observational criteria
  – Monitor evidence of consistent process

• States/Consortia
  – Study comparability across districts (states in consortia)