

# Working with english language learners essay sample

[Education](#)



Fulfilling the Appropriate Needs for English Language Learners The American classroom is ever changing because desks are being filled with students who have increasingly diverse backgrounds. Many of these students need to be taught the English Language while in school, these students are known as English-Language Learners or ELL's (Bursuck & Friend, 2012). " Culturally and linguistically different students can resemble a disability, but can also mask an unmet disability" (Collier, 2012). That being said, it's important for teachers to fully understand where an ELL is struggling. English-Language Learners can struggle from the process of learning a new language, cultural differences, or a disability. Disproportionality has been known to be an educational concern regarding ELL's; quick referrals to special education without appropriate reasoning has caused loss of academic ground in students (Haung, Clarke, Milczarski, & Raby, 2011). When working with English-Language Learner's many of their needs can go unmet; this guide provides implications to aid teachers and problem solving teams with the knowledge to recognize a culture difference from a disability to decrease disproportion. Cultural Differences and Behavior

If a teacher does not know how old the student's are, how does he or she know what curriculum to cover? Metaphorically, this represents the importance of understanding cultural diversity as a teacher. Dr. Catherine Collier, who is currently a director of Cross Cultural Developmental Education Services, defines culture as, " how we organize our behaviors, communication, values, and emotions" (Collier, 2012, p. 496). Culture reflects nature; in the nature vs. nurture debate. Educators should be aware of how much nature can impact a child's upbringing and behavior (Bursuck &

Friend, 2012). When a teacher encounters a student who comes from an increasingly diverse background, it is wise for the teacher to get as much background information about the student's culture before he or she enters the class. By obtaining this knowledge before hand, the chances of identifying an ELL with an emotional disturbance or a learning disability can be decreased. Nature is what a child cannot manipulate, but nurture is what educators and other role models can. Implications for Educators

If an ELL comes into a class and expresses a unique behavior that may be considered misbehaving, the teacher should first stay calm, cool, and collective! The student may not be conscious about how to act in the new school setting. Teachers should make instructional awareness about how to think, act, and participate in the classroom to help aid ELL's (Berg et al., 2011). If misbehaving continues after proper instruction the teacher may want to advance to talking privately with the student, reporting daily behavior, and use structural reward programs. It is important for the teacher with an ELL to document progress every other week. Interventions with functional assessments, family and student counseling, and other out side school programs can help aid the student who continues misbehaving. Instructional awareness has been reported to be highly effective by increasing social skills, and reducing inappropriate behavior in the classroom (Friend & Bursuck, 2012). Cultural Differences and Academics

Cultural adaptations can be overwhelming and stressful for English Language Learners. According to recent studies, it takes 7 years to become proficient in the English Language (Berg et. al, 2012). High expectations are set for

English Language Learners the students must adapt to the new cultural, acquire a new language and obtain new material in his or her grade. ELL's may not be proficient with the English language but their lack of proficiency does not enable them to be cognitively disabled (Berg et. al, 2012). Learning a new language is a process not a task that can be completed quickly. Frustrated should never be shown to an English Language Learner. The teacher should be aware of the stages an ELL will go through when acquiring a new language to avoid disproportionality. Implications for Educators

English-Language Learners will go through a few stages at their own academic pace when becoming familiar with the new language. Teachers can bypass frustration by being concise about the steps most English-Language Learners go through. The first step is called the " silent stage" when introduced to the new language (Berg, Petron& Greyback, 2012). During this stage, students may remain silent externally while the new information is being obtained internally. Outwardly signs of silence, nonverbal communication, and short answers are healthy. An ELL will speak when ready, there should be no pressure put on a student to speak. Secondly, students will begin the " comfort stage " where they begin to become comfortable communicating using short phrases rather than complete sentences (Berg, Petron& Greyback, 2012). Praise from the instructor should be done regularly when ELL's begin to speak. Thirdly, students will proceed with the " fluency stage" (Berg, Petron& Greyback, 2012). This stage is where ELL's recognize what they speak does not sound like other English speakers and strikes the interest to become fluent in the language (Berg, Petron & Greyback, 2012). These signs should not be

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leading factors that classify a student with a disability unless silence permits after proper instruction. Disabilities within English-Language Learners

There are fourteen specified categories that are exceptionally prescribed by the federal law that provides students with the right to receive academic help (Bursuck& Friend, 2012 p. 20). For a student to receive special education, a long legal process is to be completed which includes: “ identification, referral, evaluation, eligibility, IEP meetings and writings, and establishment of appropriate services” (Friend & Bursuck, 2012 p. 30).

Testing procedures are accurate when testing a student whose dominant language is English; unfortunately, the test can become problematic when an ELL is tested (Sullivan, 2012). Although there has not been any procedures set to enable a valid test for ELL’s; there has been several suggestions (Sullivan, 2011). Implications for Educators

There are no federal laws set for ELL’s, but there are suggestions that teachers may want to adapt to clarify a disability from a difference.

Reviewing an ELL’s past education in their native language has been reported as an effective way; this concept helps educators grasp what a student is capable of accomplishing (Berg et. al., 2012). Interpreters have been suggested to translate the standardized test for ELL students; unfortunately, interpreters can become expensive and will not guarantee complete accuracy (Sullivan, 2011). Monitoring a student’s behavior outside of school may help gather information about a behavior problem. According to Barrera, (as cited in Haung et. al, 2011),“ educators have seen effectiveness of the curriculum-based dynamic assessment (CDA), that is

used for ELL's with a questionable learning disability"(p. 736). CDA examines and evaluates the students learning abilities by allowing the student to demonstrate what they have learned after they learn it instead of testing the students knowledge at once. CDA is still being researched but may be the next step to provide valid classification and a brighter future for ELL's (Haug et. al, 2011).

Differentiating ELL's can become a stressful job for teachers with the pressure to avoid disproportionality. Professionalism and obtaining an open-mind can make identification less of a struggle for educators. Teachers who understand cultural differences in the classroom can help aid minor complications such as behavior problems. English Language Learner's are unique and bright students and educators should be proud to be their teacher not pressured. Classroom and school systems are becoming greatly diverse and proper classification should never be taken lightly from educators who are built on a firm foundation around equal education.

## References

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