



# ***What Makes for Quality Education for English Learners in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?***

What Needs To Be Included and What Actions Can We Take:  
Lessons Learned from the Past and New Ideas for Today

## **Open Space Report: New York City**

As a convener, we would like you to put together a short report from your group describing the following. When you're finished, please type in this report in one of the laptops and hand in this sheet. Thanks!

**1. Names of group members**

Alexia Rodriguez Thompson	<a href="mailto:athomps2@mail.nysed.gov">athomps2@mail.nysed.gov</a>
Lillian Garcia	<a href="mailto:aligarcia@fordham.edu">aligarcia@fordham.edu</a>
Mildred Tamarez	<a href="mailto:mstamarez@yahoo.com">mstamarez@yahoo.com</a>
Cheryl Green-Foster	<a href="mailto:cgreen@schools.nyc.gov">cgreen@schools.nyc.gov</a>
Wanda Santiago-Huertas	<a href="mailto:Rija@optonline.net">Rija@optonline.net</a>
Larisa Kabbaj	<a href="mailto:lkabbaj@schools.nyc.gov">lkabbaj@schools.nyc.gov</a>
Narda Morossini	<a href="mailto:nmorosinyc@yahoo.com">nmorosinyc@yahoo.com</a>
Marcia Gonzalez	<a href="mailto:mgonzalez@fordham.edu">mgonzalez@fordham.edu</a>
Miriam Yeung	<a href="mailto:myeung@crec.org">myeung@crec.org</a>
Dinoniso Rodriguez	<a href="mailto:drodrigio@schools.nyc.gov">drodrigio@schools.nyc.gov</a>
Rose Colon	<a href="mailto:rcolon-cisneros@buffaloschools.org">rcolon-cisneros@buffaloschools.org</a>
Ann-Marie Morris	<a href="mailto:amorris@K1schools.org">amorris@K1schools.org</a>
Lillian Hernandez	<a href="mailto:lillian.hernandez1@gmail.com">lillian.hernandez1@gmail.com</a>

**2. Issue/Topic/Activity**

Valid, reliable assessment tools and practices for the placement and instruction of bilingual students with disabilities.

**3. Highlights of Discussion/Recommendations/Next Action Steps**

Most states ELP assessments (e.g., the NYSESLAT) are not valid for ELLs with severe disabilities. They give a "level" of English proficiency, but do not

- provide useful information on these students' progress in learning to listen, speak, read and write English;
- provide valid, useful information for planning instruction; or
- provide valid information as to whether a student continues to need bilingual and/or ESL instruction to access the curriculum and receive a free appropriate public education.

There should be alternate assessments or processes, such as bilingual multidisciplinary evaluations, available to measure the English language proficiency of bilingual students with disabilities, and determine whether they need bilingual special education services or monolingual English special education services (e.g. specialized reading instruction in the native language or English).

Are there criteria for determining the need for bilingual/ESL instruction for students with disabilities? This seems to be too complicated for a simple checklist. It requires more expertise, but how can we ensure decisions are not “subjective”?

How can we ensure that the tools and processes are valid and reliable and that the results are interpreted and reported by individuals with the necessary/appropriate skills and credentials? If a monolingual English speaking professional is conducting the assessment, he or she should be trained in normal second language acquisition and the impacts of bilingualism and biculturalism on development and the validity of assessments. Translators and interpreters should be trained. There should be qualifications and standards for educational interpreting.

Parent consent should be part of the assessment process. Parents of ELLs often do not “argue” for specific classifications and services.

How can we assess students who are no longer “bilingual” or speakers of a language other than English because their parents were told to stop using the native language at home? Although testing in the native language may not yield much information about their skills, these students should still be assessed by personnel with bilingual expertise/credentials.

State ELP assessments are not sufficiently differentiated for progress monitoring with ELLs with severe disabilities. Need a variety of assessments, observations in settings where both Ls are used to determine if they continue to need bilingual/ESL instruction (even after 6 years).

#### 4. Available Resources

NYS Speech-Language Personnel Development TAC  
NYS RtI TAC  
Regional SpEd Technical Assistance Centers  
NYSTESOL  
NYSABE  
CAPELL  
ConnTESOL  
NABE

#### 5. Follow-up requests

Regional events on bilingual assessment for ELLs with suspected or identified disabilities  
Continue to explore the possibility of using telepractice (e.g., Skype) to provide bilingual evaluations and SpEd services to students in districts/regions where there are no professionals who speak their native languages. (Teachers College Speech-Language clinic is conducting research.)

Has there been a rise in referrals to special education and in the number of ELLs identified as having disabilities since NCLB’s accountability provisions focusing on English acquisition came into effect? (Is there a correlation between ESL-only and referral to special education?)