

***Special Education Considerations for English Language Learners: Delivering a Continuum of Services (2nd ed.)***

Else Hamayan, Barbara Marler,  
Cristina Sanchez-Lopez, and Jack Damico  
Philadelphia: Caslon, 2013. 285 pp.

Joya Carter-Hicks

Kennesaw State University, University System of Georgia

“RTI approaches can benefit all students by providing timely support in the classroom as identified. If employed appropriately and carefully in a culturally and linguistically responsive manner, RTI can also introduce high-quality instruction into general education classrooms across the grades” (Hamayan, Marler, Sanchez-Lopez, & Damico, 2013, p. 69).

**In their book** *Special Education Considerations for English Language Learners: Delivering a Continuum of Services*, Hamayan, Marler, Sanchez-Lopez, and Damico offer Response to Intervention (RTI) as a comprehensive framework for providing effective academic support for English language learners (ELLs), while establishing the use of innovative methods for gathering data on students within contextualized environments. This book guides educators in how to establish appropriate scientific, evidence-based interventions, progress monitoring, and ongoing assessment for instruction.

The effectiveness of this book is evident in how it transcends the dialogue of disproportionality as it applies to culturally and linguistically diverse students in special education programs and the complexities teachers face in determining if ELLs have disabilities or evidence typical characteristics inherent in language acquisition. Concomitantly, the authors facilitate a comprehensive approach to equitable education by addressing students’ individual academic and behavioral needs within an RTI framework that blends evidence-based practices in special education and English language learning. Considerable focus is given to the cultural impact on literacy and language development of all students, and RTI is presented within the theoretical tenets of native language instruction.

As a teacher educator for nearly 20 years, I recommend this book as an informative resource for TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) and TESE (Teacher Education Special Education) programs at undergraduate and graduate levels, particularly for higher education institutions engaged in dual certification philosophies and practices. The book is practical in that readers learn to deliver research-based, culturally responsive interventions appropriate for all learners, and yet theoretical in its critical analyses of disparate school structures.

The organization of the book allows the reader to easily understand the RTI framework for meeting the needs of English language Learners. The book is organized into twelve chapters: A Framework for Considering the Special Education Needs of English Language Learners, A Collaborative Model of Information Gathering and Service Provision, Describing Before Diagnosing, Delivering a Continuum of Services, The Learning Environment Created for ELLs, Personal and Family Factors, Physical and Psychological Factors, Previous Schooling Factors, Oral Language and Literacy, Academic Achievement, Cross-cultural Factors, and Putting It All Together: How Do We Know That What We Are Doing Works? Each chapter provides several defining sections that are encompassed within the RTI continuum of services, and typically include key concepts, suggestions for systematic interventions, suggestions for specific interventions, Chronicles, and questions for study groups.

The end-of-chapter questions are designed to be used as a catalyst for collaborative team-based decisions on RTI—namely, collecting and analyzing student data, developing interventions, and monitoring progress of those interventions. In fact, the authors provide steps for developing multidisciplinary teams, which they define as ECOS (ensuring a continuum of services) and hold expertise in general education, special education, and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). Furthermore, the book includes Chronicles sections that provide lived experiences shared by professionals who are engaged in key decision-making concepts and activities identified within the book; these stories serve as practical examples of professional learning communities meaningfully engaged in RTI. The book concludes with appendices that include samples of instructional templates and assessment rubrics, as well as a glossary of terminology, an extensive bibliography, and an index.

*Special Education Considerations for English Language Learners: Delivering a Continuum of Services* offers a much-needed resource to the field of teacher education, particularly where there are limited materials that emphasize the evidenced-based intersections between English language learners and students with disabilities. While I wish the book had given a great deal more attention to delineating the multi-layered tiers within RTI, I recommend the overall effectiveness of this book and how it informs teachers in delivering a continuum of services.



---

\*Corresponding author: [jcarterh@kennesaw.edu](mailto:jcarterh@kennesaw.edu)