

## **Special Education and English Language Learning: A Study of Issues and Challenges**

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**Abstract:** A nationally required program of educational assistance for some students is special education. According to both federal and local standards, students with disabilities are eligible for special education. Specially tailored teaching, related services, and supplemental aids and services are offered to qualified students as the three primary services. Any form of lesson plan that is specifically tailored to the requirements of a student and created by the student's teachers and other educators is known as specially designed teaching. Any form of lesson plan that is specifically tailored to the requirements of a student and created by the student's teachers and other educators is known as specially designed teaching. The American educational system repeatedly fails English-language learners (ELLs) with special requirements. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which included ELLs as a minority group and required schools to be held responsible for closing the performance disparity between ELLs and their white classmates, did not give educators any particular guidance on how to assist these students in the setting of the classroom. In order to gather knowledge on the important problems and difficulties ELLs with special needs face as well as practical advice for assessment and instruction, a conceptual review was conducted. Assessment and identification, instructor training and professional growth, and legal and policy concerns are among the crucial problems and difficulties.

**Keywords:** *Lesson Plan, English-language learners, Assessment, Identification*

### **Introduction:**

English-language learners (ELLs) have a wide range of complex instructional requirements. Due to their diverse language and cultural backgrounds, ELLs encounter numerous challenges. ELLs with special needs, however, face added challenges that affect their schooling in addition to cultural and linguistic disparities. As a result, key issues such as identity and evaluation, teacher training and professional growth, as well as law and policy issues, will be covered. After that, practical instructional advice for instructors of ELLs with special needs will be provided, including advice on evaluation procedures, Response to Intervention (RTI), and the part that each stakeholder should play. ELLs with special needs have a variety of traits, such as language and societal differences, as well as physical and mental impairments. As a result, providing ELLs with impairments with a quality education is difficult for instructors. It is therefore advantageous for instructors who have ELLs in their classes to be aware of the kinds of problems they should take into account in order to deliver suitable educational services.

### **ELLs with Special Needs: Problems and Difficulties**

The important topics covered in this part include identity and evaluation, individualization, teacher training and professional development, as well as law and policy concerns:

**Professional Growth and Teacher Preparation Problems:** Teachers who deal with ELLs with special needs must be knowledgeable about linguistic, cultural, and disability-related requirements. As a result, there are problems with identification and evaluation as well as teacher preparation and professional development. When instructors struggle to provide the right services because they lack the knowledge to identify and educate ELLs with special needs in their classes, problems arise. Though little is known about second language acquisition, the impact of a child's native tongue on their intellectual and cognitive growth, the interaction between a child's native tongue and English language proficiency, and the effects of cultural differences on students' performance, among other topics, among educators.

Unfortunately, most instructors in general and special education lack the necessary training or experience to effectively educate pupils from ethnically and linguistically diverse environments. Because there is a severe shortage of teachers with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, ELLs with and without

disabilities are frequently taught by those with insufficient experience and credentials due to a lack of teacher education programmes designed for this population of students, a lack of appropriate endorsements for teacher certification in this field, and these factors. Therefore, it should be stated that both ELLs with and without disabilities will struggle to reach demanding academic standards unless they receive sufficient instruction and top-notch support from their schools and instructors.

**Problems of Law and Politics:** To guarantee that ELLs, both those with and without impairments, receive suitable educational services, a number of policies have been set in place. For instance, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA, 2004) requires surveillance and regulation to address both the overrepresentation of blacks being identified for special education and their placement in excessively limiting educational settings. In order to guarantee conformance, policies, methods, and practises used in such identification and placement must be revised. Despite these legislative advancements, research indicates that they have not had a significant effect on educational results. Sadly, these rules are unknown to educators, have not been properly implemented, or have simply been disregarded. A number of school districts find it challenging to evaluate ELLs' academic abilities for AYP calculations because it may not be possible to provide a culturally and linguistically neutral assessment for every ELL, despite the fact that NCLB has provided options for including a student labeled LEP as a subgroup.

In conclusion, there are significant problems that add to the confusion surrounding the assessment and instruction of ELLs with special needs as well as the improper referral of ELLs with special needs to special education. There are numerous problems with identification and evaluation, a dearth of special education teacher certification, a lack of teacher training and professional development for teaching to children from culturally and linguistically varied environments.

**Identification and Assessment Issues:** ELLs with disabilities are often overrepresented in the learning disabilities (LD) category and referred to special education. There are issues with identification and assessment due to variation in definitions and criteria used to identify students who are eligible for special education support. Samson and Lesaux investigated proportional representation, identification rates, and predictors of ELLs in special education using a nationally representative sample of kindergarten, first grade, and third grade students. They found ELLs were underrepresented in special education in kindergarten and first grade but were overrepresented in third grade across all disability categories. Assessment used in special education and high-stakes testing may not benefit ELLs with special needs since it often includes unreliable and invalid measures of academic performance.

Artiles and Ortiz suggest that ELLs are often excluded from high-stakes testing due to a negative presumption that test scores will be mismanaged and the question of whether assessment should occur in a student's native language or English. Translated tests have valid and reliable psychometric properties, but they may still be biased due to the values, beliefs, and cultural heritage of the dominant American culture. Additionally, there are validity concerns about testing students who do not speak English due to the disruptive impact of second language acquisition or bilingualism.

**Effective Instructional Strategies:**

There are many factors why students don't succeed in education. It is possible that deficiencies in the teaching and learning environment are the primary cause of some of their scholastic problems. For instance, pupils who have difficulty with the English language may struggle because they lack access to efficient bilingual or English as a second language (ESL) teaching. If teaching is based on lessons from the middle class, students from lower socioeconomic situations may struggle. Other pupils might experience learning challenges as a result of language or cultural disparities. If instruction is not adjusted to meet the requirements of the individual pupils, these issues could get worse over time. If these kids don't get the right help, they'll keep having problems, and the achievement gap between them and their classmates will get bigger over time. Others require specialized guidance due to particular cognitive disabilities. Because English language learners are overrepresented in special education courses, it is possible that teachers find it challenging to differentiate between students who are struggling academically and those who are doing so for other reasons, like limited English proficiency. Lack of suitable evaluation tools and people with the necessary training to perform educational tests that are

linguistically and culturally pertinent disadvantages students learning. The lack of special educators qualified to handle the requirements of English language learners with disabilities who require special education services further disadvantages them.

Two key components are necessary to prevent failure among English language learners: creating an atmosphere in the classroom that supports their scholastic success and implementing teaching methods that have been proven successful with this group of students. The first step in preventing school failure is to establish school environments that support scholastic achievement and give students agency. These settings demonstrate the belief that all students can learn and that it is the job of instructors to facilitate that learning. Positive school environments are characterised by strong administrative leadership, high expectations for student achievement, challenging, appropriate curricula and instruction, a safe and orderly environment, ongoing, systematic evaluation of student progress, and shared decision-making between ESL teachers, general education teachers, administrators, and parents. The following are some additional elements that are essential for the success of English language learners: (1) A base of knowledge among educators about how to work effectively with students learning English; (2) An appreciation of the significance of the students' native language; (3) Collaborative relationships between schools and the community;

(4) Academically rich programmes that integrate the teaching of basic skills with the teaching of higher order skills in both the native language and English; and (5) Effective instruction.

The education of students learning English requires that teachers have a common philosophy and knowledge base in this area. Teachers must also be knowledgeable about second language acquisition, the relationship between native language proficiency and the development of English, the assessment of native language and English proficiency, sociocultural influences on learning, effective first and second language instruction, informal assessment strategies, recognition of the students' native language, and co-teaching. Academic achievement can be enhanced and the number of unwarranted special education requests can be decreased by early assistance for struggling learners. Clinical teaching, peer and expert advice, teacher aid teams, and substitute programmes like tutorial or remedial instruction are a few examples of early intervention. Teaching skills, subjects, or concepts in a clinical setting also entails reteaching material using various methods and performing curriculum-based evaluation. Working together with general education instructors to handle students' learning issues and put intervention suggestions into practice is peer or professional consultation.

By showing methods for integrating English language learners in regular classes, ESL instructors can assist general education teachers. The teachers at schools with a good climate work together as a team with the common aim of supporting the students and one another. The teacher who seeks aid forms a team with four to six other general education instructors to create solutions for difficult students. They attempt to agree on the specifics of a student's issue, decide on the most important areas for intervention, assist the classroom teacher in choosing strategies or methods to address the issue, assign accountability for putting the advice into practice, and create a follow-up plan to track progress. When preventative measures and early intervention techniques are ineffective at resolving learning problems, referral to special education is justified.

Principals, special education instructors, and assessment staff are just a few of the experts who make up special education referral panels. The recommendation that a student undergo a thorough individual assessment to determine whether special education services are required shows that the student is in a supportive learning environment, the teacher has used instructional techniques proven to be successful for English language learners, neither clinical teaching nor the interventions suggested by the TAT were successful in resolving the issue, and other general education alternatives also failed.

**Conclusion:** Interventions that focus solely on remediating students' learning and behavior problems will have limited results. Recommendations to improve the education of ELLs with special needs include assessment and identification, teacher preparation and professional development, and legal and policy issues. Teachers should be careful in identifying whether students' academic problems derive from second language acquisition or cognitive skills. Special education assessment personnel should explore new avenues for working with children with unique cultural and linguistic characteristics. To improve

programs and services, general and special educators, policy makers, and researchers need to overcome barriers embedded in general and special education settings. All educators and parents of ELL students should work collaboratively to help ELLs get better outcomes in schools.

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