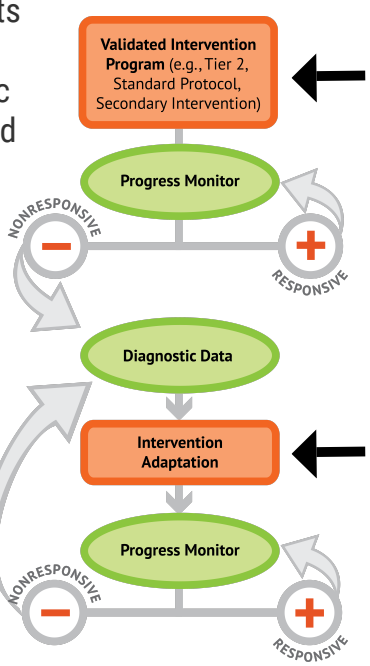
How Do I Use the Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity To Support Students Who Are English Learners?

The seven dimensions of the Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity can help educators make informed, systematic decisions in the context of the data-based individualization (DBI) process to support students who are English learners (ELs). DBI is a research-based process for individualizing and intensifying interventions through the systematic use of assessment data, validated interventions, and research-based adaptation strategies. When intensifying, consider ways to address content and language development simultaneously. The Taxonomy can help educators:

DBI Process



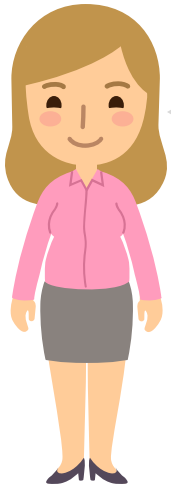
Taxonomy Dimensions

1. Strength
2. Dosage
3. Alignment
4. Attention to Transfer
5. Comprehensiveness
6. Behavioral or Academic Support
7. Individualization

Evaluate current interventions being provided to ELs

Already **have an intervention**? Use the dimensions of the Taxonomy to evaluate its strengths and cultural and linguistic appropriateness for your target population of students who are ELs.

Select a new intervention to meet the needs of ELs



Looking for a **new intervention**? Rating the dimensions of potential interventions can help educators compare their strengths and determine cultural and linguistic appropriateness to support selection for students who are ELs.

Intensify the intervention

Even the best intervention is not effective for every student. When a student who is an EL needs more support, combine the Taxonomy dimensions, student data, and teacher expertise in culturally and linguistically responsive instruction to help guide the adaptation or intensification of intervention.

Interested in learning more about what NCII has to offer? Connect with us!

National Center on INTENSIVE INTERVENTION at American Institutes for Research

Visit www.intensiveintervention.org to learn more

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Defining the Dimensions of the Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity and Considerations for English Learners (ELs)

Dimension*	Definition	Considerations for English Learners

Strength	How well the intervention works for students with intensive intervention needs (students below the 20th percentile), typically expressed in terms of effect sizes.	• Look for this information on the NCII Tools Chart, What Works Clearinghouse, and/or Best Evidence Encyclopedia to determine if there is evidence that the program works with ELs.
		  • Have there been separate studies for ELs?
		  • Are there disaggregated data on effect sizes for ELs within the larger study?

Dosage	The number of opportunities a student has to respond and receive corrective feedback. It refers to the size of the instructional group, the number of minutes each session lasts, and the number of sessions provided per week.	• Determine the appropriate dosage based on first and second-language proficiency levels relative to students with similar language and cultural backgrounds.
Alignment	How well the program (a) addresses the target student's full set of academic skill deficits, (b) does not address skills the target student has already mastered (extraneous skills for that student), and (c) incorporates a meaningful focus on grade-appropriate curricular standards.	• Consider the extent to which the program takes into account the student's language qualities, strengths, and developmental needs aligned with the stages of language acquisition. • Provide scaffolds and strategies for language acquisition (e.g., key vocabulary, comprehension strategies, required wait time, background knowledge). • Teach to content as well as language objectives.
Attention to Transfer	The extent to which an intervention is designed to help students (a) transfer the skills they learn to other formats and contexts and (b) realize connections between mastered and related skills.	• Examine the extent to which the intervention supports the transfer of the first-language supports to the acquisition of a second language. • Provide students with integrated learning experiences that facilitate the transfer of language skills across instructional settings. • Provide translanguaging (i.e., use of first and second languages together) supports.
Comprehensiveness	The number of explicit instruction principles the intervention incorporates.	• Build background knowledge. • Consider that learning differences may reflect culturally diverse norms and assets that reflect varied life experiences. • Deliver explicit language development and instruction while simultaneously implementing the intervention. • Scaffold to support academic language demands and expectations. • Facilitate understanding of authentic and connected discourse.
Behavior Support	The extent to which the program incorporates self-regulation, executive function components, and behavioral principles to minimize nonproductive behavior.	• Provide behavior supports consistent with a learner's cultural norms.
Individualization	A validated, data-based process for individualizing intervention in which the educator systematically adjusts the intervention over time, in response to ongoing progress monitoring data, to address the student's complex learning needs.	• Select and implement instructional adjustments that reflect culturally and linguistically responsive practices teaching to content as well as language objectives.

*Fuchs, L.S, Fuchs, D., & Malone, A.S. (2017). The Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity. *TEACHING Exceptional Children, 50*(1), 35–43.