

ALTELLA Findings

Laurene Christensen & Kristen Burton
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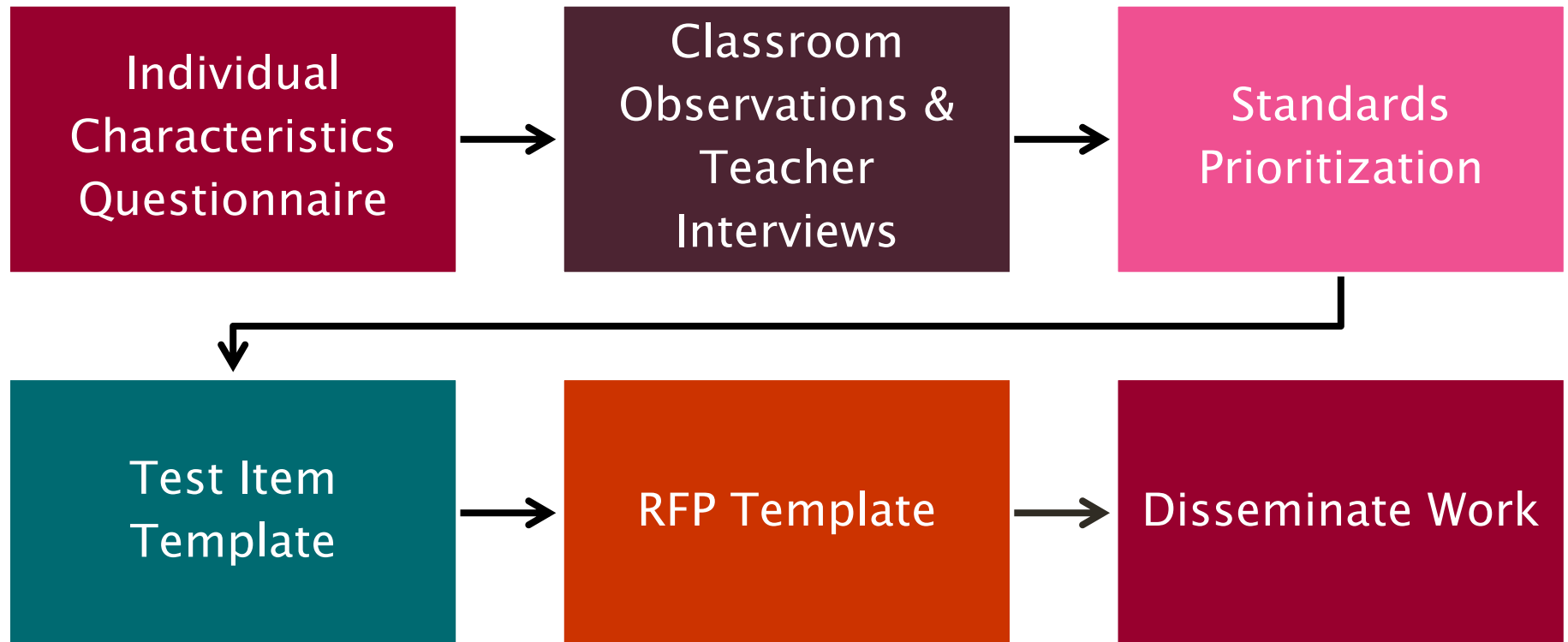
ALTERNATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
LEARNING ASSESSMENT PROJECT

ALTELLA Project Goal

The ALTELLA project researches instructional practices, accessibility features and accommodations, and assessment of English learners with significant cognitive disabilities to develop an evidence-centered design approach that informs our understanding of alternate English language proficiency assessment for these students.

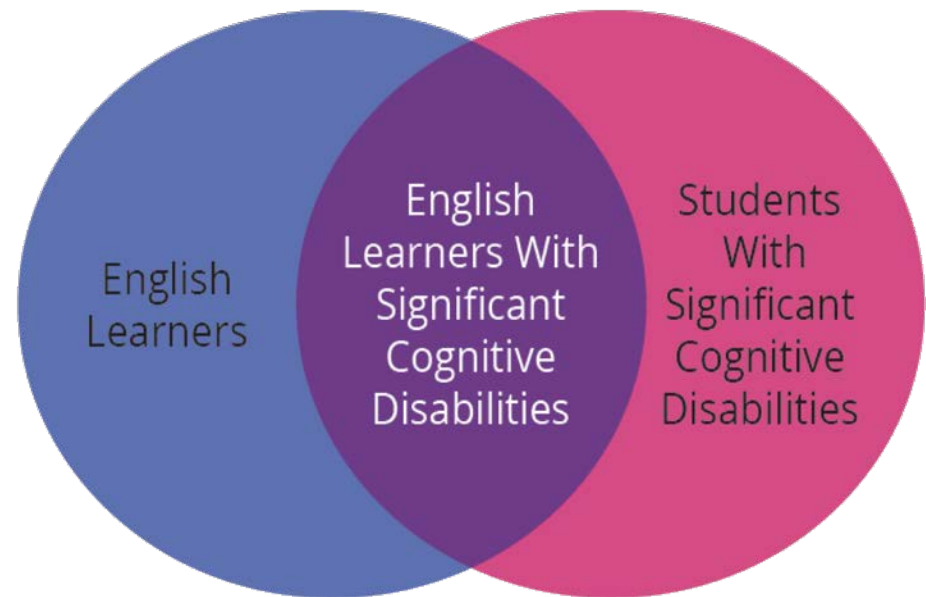


Project Activities



Who Are English Learners with Significant Cognitive Disabilities?

English learners with significant cognitive disabilities are individuals who have one or more disabilities that significantly limit their intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior as documented in their Individualized Education Programs (IEP), and who are progressing toward English language proficiency in speaking, reading, writing, and understanding the English language.





ALTELLA FINDINGS: INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS QUESTIONNAIRE (ICQ)

Individual Characteristics Questionnaire (ICQ)

- Purpose: To learn more about the characteristics of English learners with significant cognitive disabilities.
- The ICQ asks for information on students' use of language including English and other languages as well as students' needs related to their disabilities.
- The ICQ does not request any personally identifiable information.
- Most surveys were completed in under 15 minutes.



Development of the ICQ

- Developed by ALTELLA staff with support from state partners
- Drew from Learner Characteristics Inventory (NAAC) and First Contact Survey (DLM)
- Built the survey into Qualtrics
- Survey was piloted internally
- Link was disseminated to states, CCSSO SCASS listserv, ELPA21, WIDA, DLM beginning on February 1, 2018
- Data collection ended on June 10, 2018
- ICQ Report finalized September 2018
- ICQ survey tool available on the ALTELLA website end of September



Types of Questions

- Demographic information, including languages across multiple settings
- Disability information
- Communication preferences including augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems
- Services received in school, type of classroom setting, and attendance
- Accommodations and accessibility resources during instruction and testing

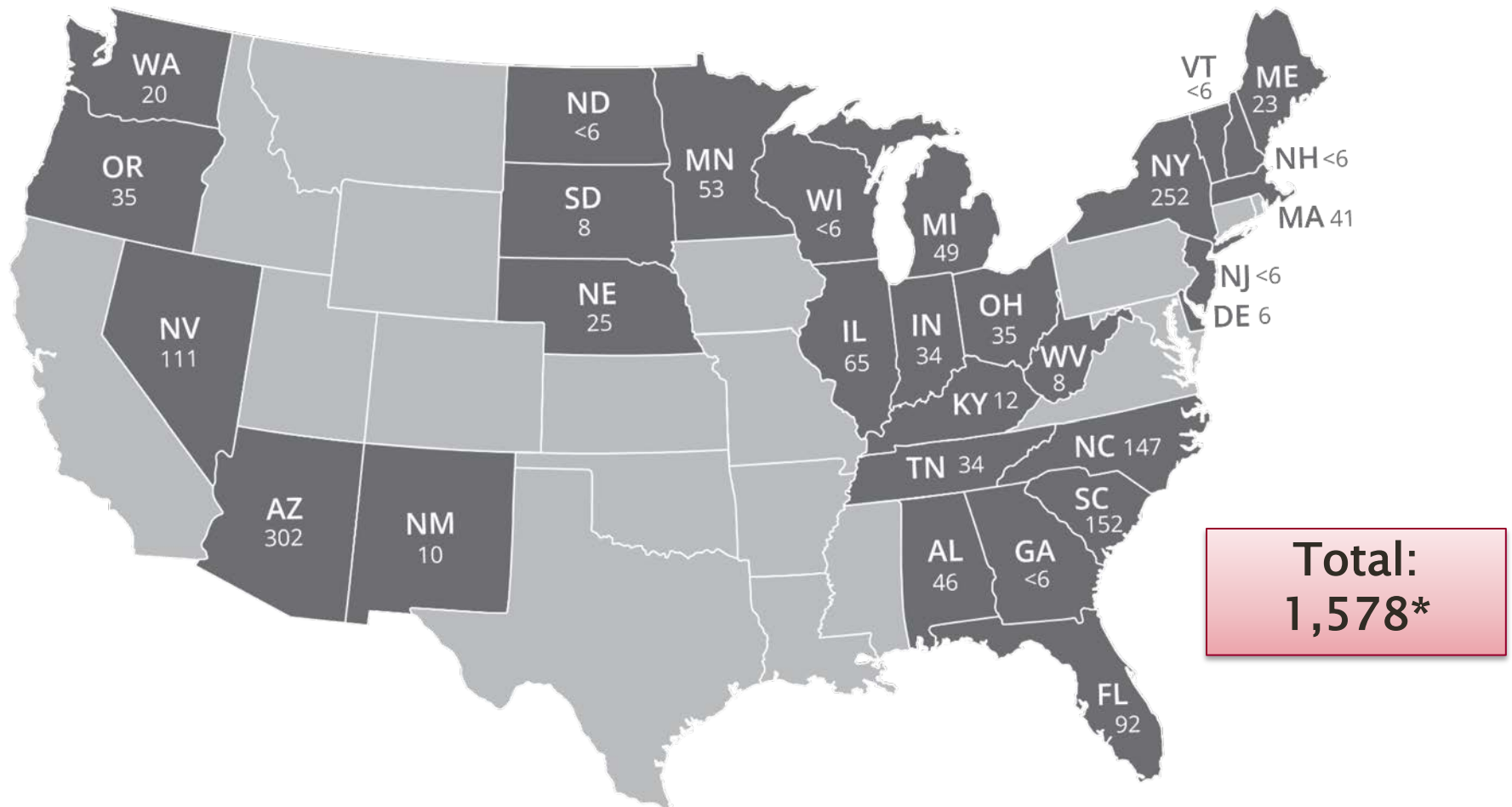


Types of Questions

- Participation and performance on alternate assessment in English language arts, math, or science (the AA AAS)
- Participation and performance on the English Language Proficiency assessment
- Receptive and expressive communication and engagement in English and/or languages other than English
- Observed performance in reading, writing, and mathematics in English and languages other than English



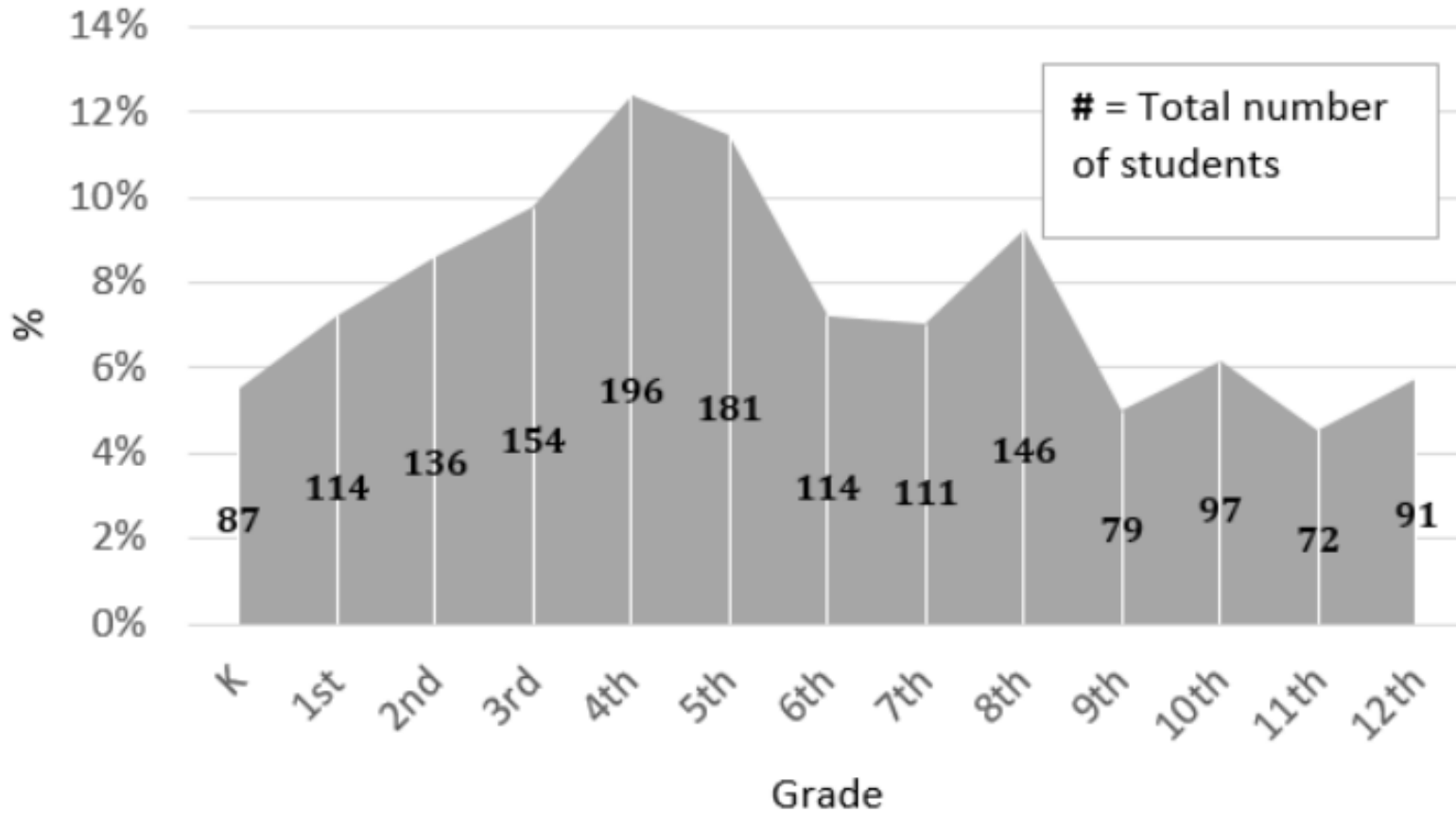
ICQ Responses



ICQ Survey: Student Background Information

- More male students (n=1025, 65%) than female students (n=549, 34.8%).
- Students' home language is primarily Spanish (n=819; 53.8%). Most common other primary home languages include English (n=424, 27.8%), Arabic (n = 40; 2.6%).
- Most of the students were between the ages of 8 and 13 (57.0%).

Responses by Grade



Student Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	#	%
American Indian or Alaska Native	37	2.3
Asian	141	8.9
Black or African American	139	8.8
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	17	1.1
White	190	12.0
Hispanic	893	56.6
Latino	219	13.9
Other	94	6.0
No Response	36	2.3
Total	1,766*	100.0

Students' Length of Time in the U.S.

Length of Time	#	%
Less than 1 year	44	12.2
More than 1 year, less than 2 years	48	13.3
More than 2 years, less than 3 years	48	13.3
More than 3 years, less than 4 years	42	11.7
More than 4 years, less than 5 years	36	10
More than 5 years	134	37.2
Other	8	2.2
Total	360	99.9*

N=1,578. *Totals do not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Student Migrant Status

Migrant Status	#	%
Yes	102	6.5
No	1133	71.8
Not sure	343	21.7
Total	1,578	100.00

N=1,578.

Student Attendance

Student Attendance	#	%
Attends at least 90% of school days	1,235	81
Attends approximately 75% of school days	220	14.4
Attends approximately 50% or less of school days	36	2.4
Receives Homebound instruction	13	0.9
Unknown/Not sure	21	1.4
Total	1,525	100.1*

N=1,525. *Totals do not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

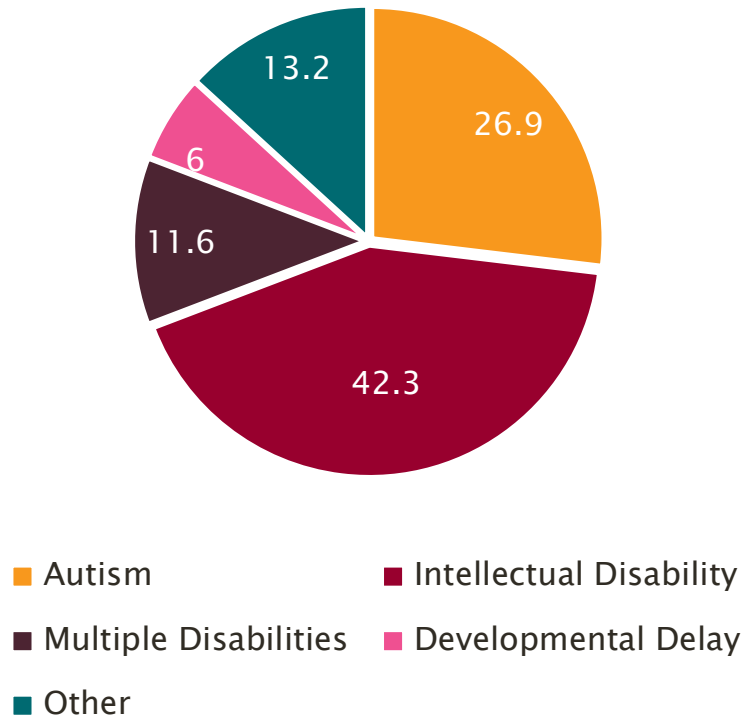
Reason for Absences	#	%
Health issues	799	52.4
Transportation issues	46	3.0
Unknown/Not sure	514	33.7
Other	166	10.9
Total	1,525	100.0

N=1,525



Disability Categories

Primary Disability Category



- Most students have an intellectual disability as their primary disability.
- Out of the 646 students who have a secondary disability, 186 (45.7%) have a speech/language impairment. 53 (14.9%) have an intellectual disability.

Primary Disability Category

Disability	#	%
Autism	424	26.9
Deafness	18	1.2
Developmental Delay	95	6.0
Emotional Disability	11	<1.0
Hearing Impairment	9	<1.0
Intellectual Disability (includes Mild, Moderate, and Profound)	668	42.3
Multiple Disabilities	183	11.6
Other Health Impaired	60	3.8
Orthopedic Disability	15	1.0
Speech/Language Impairment	31	2.0
Traumatic Brain Injury	13	<1.0
Visual Impairment including Blindness	8	<1.0
Other	42	2.7
Total	1,578	100.0

N=1,578.



Student Vision

Vision	#	%
Vision within normal limits	998	65.4
Corrected vision within normal limits	313	20.5
Low vision; uses vision for some activities of daily living	71	4.7
No functional use of vision for activities of daily living, or unable to determine	40	2.6
Unknown/Not sure	103	6.8
Total	1,525	100.0

N=1,525.

Student Hearing

Hearing	#	%
Hearing within normal limits	1318	86.4
Corrected hearing loss within normal limits	33	2.2
Hearing loss aided, but still with a significant loss	35	2.3
Profound loss, even with aids	21	1.4
Unable to determine functional use of hearing	24	1.6
Unknown/Not sure	94	6.2
Total	1,525	100.1*

N=1,525. * Totals do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Student Motor Skills

Motor Skills	#	%
No significant motor dysfunction that requires adaptations	1,152	75.5
Requires adaptations to support motor functioning (e.g., walker, adapted utensils, and/or keyboard)	132	8.7
Uses wheelchair, positioning equipment, and/or assistive devices for most activities	74	4.9
Needs personal assistance for most/all motor activities	117	7.7
Unknown/Not sure	50	3.3
Total	1,525	100.1*

* Totals do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Student Primary Home Language

Table 11: Primary Home Languages

Language	#	%
Arabic	40	2.6
English	424	27.8
French	10	0.7
Haitian Creole	14	0.9
Mandarin	19	1.2
Russian	15	1.0
Somali	14	0.9
Spanish	819	53.8
Vietnamese	10	0.7
Other	158	10.4
Total	1,523	100.0

N=1,523

Setting and Language Use

Language	School		Home		Community		Total Students
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
American Sign Language (ASL)	18	100	17	94.4	13	72.2	18
Arabic	8	14.8	50	92.6	23	42.6	54
Cantonese	<6	-	16	88.9	9	50	18
English	1,442	95.1	666	44	841	55.4	1,517*
French	<6	-	28	93.3	11	36.7	30
Haitian Creole	6	37.5	16	100.0	12	75	16
Mandarin	<6	-	25	89.3	14	50	28
Portuguese	<6	-	9	90	<6	-	10
Russian	<6	-	21	87.5	7	29.2	24
Somali	<6	-	16	94.1	10	58.8	17
Spanish	223	23.3	944	98.5	446	46.6	958
Vietnamese	<6	-	13	92.9	<6	-	14
Other	40	12.2	227	69.4	92	28.1	327

N=1,517. *64 educators indicated that the students do not use English.



Ways Students Communicate

Ways Students Communicate	#	%
Augmentative and alternate communication (AAC) device	264	17.5
Communication board	188	12.5
Eye gaze	211	14.0
Picture cards	299	19.8
Sign	148	9.8
Speech or speaking	1,134	75.2
Other	138	9.2
Total	2,382*	100.0

N=1,508. * Multiple response question.

Receptive Communication

Receptive Communication Abilities	English		Language Other than English	
	#	%	#	%
Can point to, look at, or touch things in the immediate vicinity when asked (e.g., pictures, objects, body parts)	796	65.3	454	37.2
Can perform simple actions, movements, or activities when asked (e.g., comes to teacher's location, gives an object to teacher or peer, locates or retrieves an object)	741	60.8	415	34.0
Responds appropriately in any modality (speech, sign, gestures, facial expressions) when offered a favored item that is not present or visible (e.g., "Do you want some ice cream?")	593	48.6	332	27.2
Responds appropriately in any modality (speech, sign, gestures, facial expressions) to single words that are spoken or signed	575	47.2	309	25.3
Responds appropriately in any modality (speech, sign, gestures, facial expressions) to phrases and sentences that are spoken or signed	571	46.8	328	26.9
Follows 2-step directions presented verbally or through sign (e.g., gets a worksheet or journal and begins to work, distributes items needed by peers for a lesson or activity, looks at requested or desired item and then looks at location where it should go)	512	42	270	22.1
Unknown/Not sure	75	6.2	541	44.4
Total	3,863*	-	2,649*	-

N=1,219. *Multiple response question.



Expressive Communication (Speech)

Expressive Communication Abilities with Speech	English		Language Other than English	
	#	%	#	%
Regularly combines 3 or more spoken words according to grammatical rules to accomplish a variety of communicative purposes (e.g., sharing complex information, asking/answering longer questions, giving directions to another person)	433	35.8	251	20.7
Usually uses 2 spoken words at a time to meet a variety of more complex communicative purposes (e.g., obtaining things including absent objects, social expressions beyond greetings, sharing information, directing another person's attention, asking/answering questions, and commenting)	242	20.0	126	10.4
Usually uses only 1 spoken word at a time to meet a limited number of simple communicative purposes (e.g., refusing/rejecting things, making choices, requesting attention, greeting, and labeling)	259	21.4	151	12.5
Student does not use spoken language	239	19.8	252	20.8
Unknown/Not sure	37	3.1	430	35.5
Total	1,210	100.1*	1,210	99.9*

N=1,210. *Totals do not equal 100 percent due to rounding.



Expressive Communication (Signing)

Expressive Communication Abilities Using Signing	English		Language Other than English	
	#	%	#	%
Regularly combines 2 or more signed words according to grammatical rules to accomplish a variety of communicative purposes (e.g., obtaining things including absent objects, social expressions beyond greetings, sharing information, directing another person's attention, asking/answering questions, and commenting, sharing complex information, asking/answering longer questions, giving directions to another person)	20	16.5	10	8.3
Usually uses only 1 signed word at a time to meet a limited number of simple communicative purposes (e.g., refusing/rejecting things, making choices, requesting attention, greeting, and labeling)	84	69.4	38	31.4
Unknown/Not sure	17	14	73	60.3
Total	121	99.9*	121	100.0

N=121. *Totals do not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Expressive Communication (AAC)

Expressive Communication Abilities With an AAC Device	English		Language Other than English	
	#	%	#	%
Regularly combines 3 or more symbols according to grammatical rules to accomplish a variety of communicative purposes (e.g., sharing complex information, asking/answering longer questions, giving directions to another person)	44	8.2	19	3.6
Usually uses 2 symbols at a time to meet a variety of more complex communicative purposes (e.g., obtaining things including absent objects, social expressions beyond greetings, sharing information, directing another person's attention, asking/answering questions, and commenting)	75	14.0	20	3.7
Usually uses only 1 symbol at a time to meet a limited number of simple communicative purposes (e.g., refusing/rejecting things, making choices, requesting attention, greeting, and labeling)	215	40.2	134	25.0
Unknown/Not sure	201	37.6	362	67.7
Total	535	99.8*	535	100.0

N=535. *Totals do not equal 100 percent due to rounding.



Accessibility Features and Accommodations

Assessment

75.3% - Extended Time

66.1% - Read Aloud

65.5% - Directions
Repeated

22.9% - Scribe

18.3% - Text to Speech

7.3% - Do not receive

Instructional

79.2% - Extended Time

74.7% - Directions
Repeated

73.4% - Read Aloud

24.1% - Scribe

19.2% - Text to Speech

5.4% - Do not receive



Time in EL Services

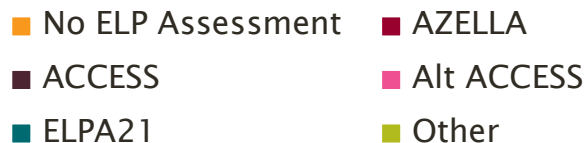
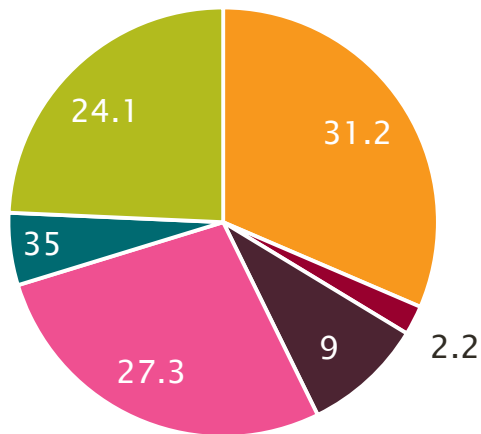
Length of Time Services Received	#	%
Less than a year	120	8.0
1-2 years	265	17.7
3-4 years	284	19.0
5-6 years	221	14.8
7-8 years	113	7.6
9-10 years	62	4.1
11-12 years	41	2.7
13-14 years	24	1.6
15-21 years or more	14	<1.0
Never received English language services	351	23.5
Total	1,495	100.0

N=1,495.



English Language Proficiency

ELP Assessment



- A great deal of students have not taken an ELP assessment (31.2%)
- Many students do not have an English language acquisition specialist on their IEP team (38.8%).

Alternate Content Assessment Performance - ELA

MSAA		DLM		SC-Alt		MI-Access		MTAS	
L	Students	L	Students	L	Students	L	Students	L	Students
1	100 (36.9%)	1	75 (36.8%)	1	68 (60.2%)	1	11 (44.0%)	1	12 (40.0%)
2	37 (13.7%)	2	56 (27.4%)	2	19 (16.8%)	2	<6	2	<6
3	33 (12.2%)	3	36 (17.6%)	3	<6	3	<6	3	8 (26.7%)
4	6 (2.2%)	4	9 (4.4%)	N	21 (18.6%)	N	7 (28.0%)	4	<6
N	95 (35.1%)	N	28 (13.7%)	T	114	T	25	N	<6
T	271	T	204					T	30



Alternate Content Assessment Performance - Math

MSAA		DLM		SC-Alt		MI-Access		MTAS	
L	Students	L	Students	L	Students	L	Students	L	Students
1	87 (32.3%)	1	85 (41.7%)	1	69 (60.5%)	1	10 (40.0%)	1	10 (35.7%)
2	38 (14.1%)	2	48 (23.5%)	2	12 (10.5%)	2	<6	2	<6
3	42 (15.6%)	3	36 (17.6%)	3	10 (8.8%)	3	<6	3	10 (35.7%)
4	9 (3.3%)	4	7 (3.4%)	N	23 (20.2%)	N	9 (36.0%)	4	<6
N	93 (34.6%)	N	28 (13.7%)	T	114	T	25	N	<6
T	269	T	204					T	28

Alternate Content Assessment Performance - Science

AIMS		DLM		SC-Alt		MI-Access		MTAS	
L	Students	L	Students	L	Students	L	Students	L	Students
1	68 (28.7%)	1	72 (42.9%)	1	56 (51.4%)	1	<6	1	9 (32.1%)
2	15 (6.3%)	2	36 (21.4%)	2	14 (12.8%)	2	<6	2	0
3/4	26 (11.0%)	3	25 (14.8%)	3	<6	3	<6	3	<6
N	128 (54.0%)	4	7 (4.2%)	N	34 (31.2%)	N	15 (60.0%)	4	<6
T	237	N	28 (16.7%)	T	109	T	25	N	14 (50.0%)
		T	168					T	28

ELP Assessment Performance

Alt ACCESS

Level	Students
A1	142 (39.2%)
A2	55 (15.2%)
A3	62 (17.1%)
P1	55 (15.2%)
P2	43 (11.9%)
P3	<6
T	362

ACCESS

Level	Students
P1	63 (52.5%)
P2	31 (25.8%)
P3	21 (17.5%)
P4	<6
P5	<6
P6	<6
T	120

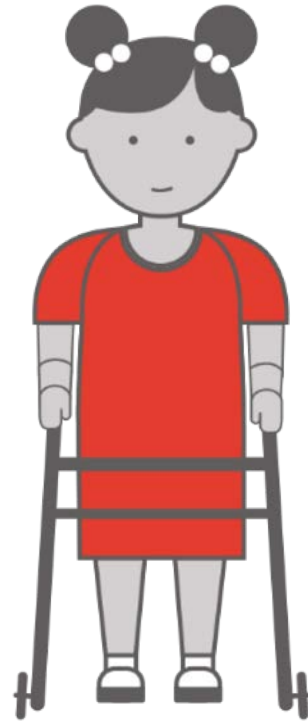
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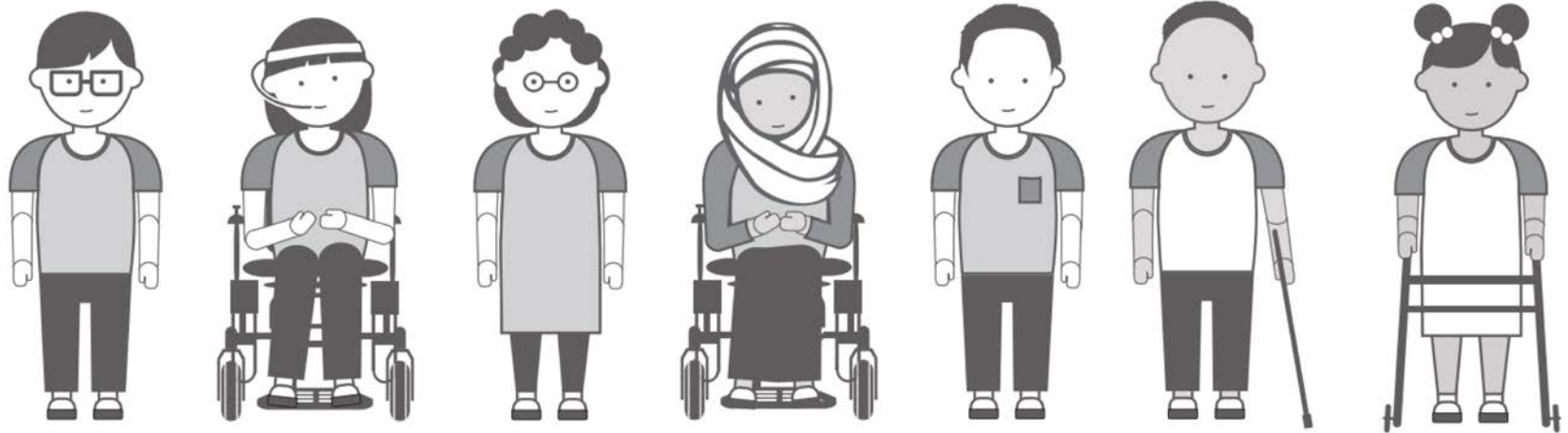
Level	Students
1	22 (73.3%)
2	<6
3	<6
4	0
5	<6
T	30



ICQ Next Steps

- ICQ Report available
 - Print
 - Electronic on ALTELLA website
- ICQ questions/tool will also be available





ALTELLA FINDINGS: OBSERVATIONS AND INTERVIEWS



ALTERNATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
LEARNING ASSESSMENT PROJECT

Teacher Observation & Interviews

- Purpose: To learn more about the classroom-based practices and approaches teachers use in working with ELLs with significant cognitive disabilities
- Focus on strategies used to support English language development
- Inform the development of the assessment and future targeted professional development



Educator Recruitment

- Worked closely with partner SEAs
 - Teachers with at least one EL with a significant cognitive disability
- Goal of 100 observations and interviews
- Expanded beyond project states
 - Information disseminated through CCSSO, ELPA21, and WIDA
 - Direct contact with educators at conferences and professional development workshops



Data Collection Procedures

- Observations in teams of two (or more)
- Interviews
 - One person asked the questions
 - One person took detailed notes (no audio recordings)
- Observations are “reconciled” at the end of the day
- All materials are returned to WCER
 - Scanned
 - Transcribed and reviewed for accuracy

Location

State	Observations	Interviews
AZ	20	20
MI	12	12
MN	8	8
NE	6	9
NY	11	11
OH	4	4
OR	1	1
SC	10	11
WA	6	7
WI	2	2
WV	8	9
TOTAL	88	94

Instructional Setting

Instructional Setting	Number
General Education Class	1
English Language Development Class	6
Special Education Class with Non-disabled Peers	1
Special Education Class with Students with Disabilities Only	81
Related Services	2

Instructional Group Setting	Number
Large Group Instruction	57
Small Group Instruction	21
Independent Work	8
1:1 Instruction	22
Other	5

Grade Levels

Content Area	Number
Elementary	39
Middle	21
High	28
TOTAL	88

Content Area Observed

Content Area	Number
English Language Arts	31
Math	26
Science	6
English Language Development	12
Other	41

Instructional Delivery

Instructional Delivery	Number	#
General Education Teacher	2	2.3
Special Education Teacher	70	79.5
ESL/Bilingual Education Teacher	15	17.0
Paraprofessional	27	30.7
Related Service Provider	2	2.3

Gender of Primary Instructor

Gender of Primary Educator	Number of Classrooms Observed
Female	78
Male	10
TOTAL	88

Instructional Level

Instructional Level	#
English Language Development	8
Instruction is on the grade level general curriculum (i.e., the same curriculum as other typical students of that age and grade level)	7
Instruction is linked to the grade level general curriculum but may be at a lower grade level	54
Instruction is delivered in the context of the grade level general curriculum but on different, non-academic skills (i.e., student uses the same materials in the same activities as other students but the expectations for learning are about something else – social, motor, etc.)	6
Instruction is not linked to or delivered in the context of grade level general curriculum	9
Instruction rationale was not clear.	4

Use of Technology

Technology	Numbers
Computer	22
Chromebook	1
iPad	14
Smartboard	43
Other	22
N/A	1
No Technology	22

Student Response Modes

Adapted keyboards	2
Bilingual resources	1
Custom overlays	4
Dictation	3
Drawing	12
Eye gaze	25
Picture cards	41
Pointing	73
Switches	16
Verbal response	66
Word prediction	4

Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive Strategies	Number
Bilingual Support Materials	4
Classification	13
Goal Setting	3
Learning Styles	23
Listening/repeat	78
Making Inferences	8
Note taking, highlighting	7
Other Mnemonic Strategies	8

Cognitive Strategies	Number
Pronunciation/phonetic Strategies	29
Self-evaluation	10
Use of Graphic Organizers	32
Use of Imagery	45
Use of Real Objects/Role Play	22
Visuals to Imagery	8
Other	10
Not observed	1

Access Strategies

Instruction provides various options for the student to have access to the instruction	Number
Concrete objects	30
Bilingual resources	3
Picture cards	53
Simplified syntax	45
Symbol based text	16
Tactile cues	23
Text reader	11
Other	66
None	3

Interactive Tasks

Interactive Tasks	Number of Classes
Cloze	11
Cooperative Learning	9
Drills/Repetition	62
Experiential Learning	11
Guessing Game	27
Information Gap Activities	5
Interviews	0
Jigsaw Tasks	0
Negotiating Meaning	29

Interactive Tasks	Number of Classes
Problem Solving	16
Read Aloud	34
Retelling a Story/Event	9
Role-Play	0
Simulations	4
TPR	34
Other	43
None	1

Social/Affective Strategies

Social/Affective Strategies	Number of Classrooms Observed
Asking questions	85
Encouragement, lowering affective filter	83
Social-mediating activities, empathizing	28
Overcoming limitations in speaking through circumlocution, gestures, coining words, etc.	29
Not observed	2

Informal Assessment

Informal Assessment	Number
Recall/routine task (recall fact, information, or procedure)	84
Discriminate similarities/differences (simple analysis of presented concepts)	32
Application (use of conceptual knowledge in new and concrete situations)	20
Strategic (requires reasoning, developing a plan or a sequence of steps)	4
Extended (requires an investigation, time to think and process multiple conditions of the problem)	1
None	1
Not available	1

Language Use in the Classroom

Student responds to opportunities to demonstrate language skills	Number of Classrooms Observed
Expressive Language	86
Receptive Language	88
TOTAL	88

Home Language Use in the Classroom

	Instruction provides the student opportunities to use English and his or her home language	Student utilizes both English and his or her home language in the classroom
	Number of Classrooms Observed	Number of Classrooms Observed
Yes	14	19
No	74	69
TOTAL	88	88

Domains Observed

Domain	Number of Classrooms Observed
Listening	83
Speaking	83
Reading	74
Writing	43

Types of Language/Communication

Adaptive equipment (AAC)	25
Head nods	69
Picture exchange cards (PECS)	16
Pointing	77
Signing	25
Verbal levels	4
Verbalization	31
Vocalizations	34

Professional Development

Types of Professional Development Received	Number of Educators
Formal professional development activities	27
School based activities	27
Teacher to teacher activities	29
Technical assistance	18
Receive no support	29
Other	16
Not available	13
TOTAL	159

Professional Development

Types of Professional Development Most Helpful	Number of Educators
Face to face	31
Virtual (e.g. online, videos, virtual reality)	18
Hybrid	3
Meeting with other teachers	6
Teacher observations	10
Classes	2
Hands on activities	6
Not sure	2
TOTAL	78

Overall Impression: It's complicated!

- No formal definitions for identification of English learners with significant cognitive disabilities
- Policy and guidance lack clarity
- Few guidance documents to support LEAs, for example the state participation guidelines
- State reporting systems can not identify these students easily within the data
- Participation criteria and who should take the assessment

Findings: Observations

- Students with significant cognitive disabilities who are English learners are primarily served in self-contained classrooms with special education teachers
- Even in the best academic classrooms there is little attention to strategies that support language development or an awareness of existing native language development
- Disabilities focus—more disability strategies used than language strategies
- The EL specialist while part of the formal IEP team, rarely provides any EL service or interacts in any meaningful or consistent way with students
- Limited understanding or considerations for native language and culture



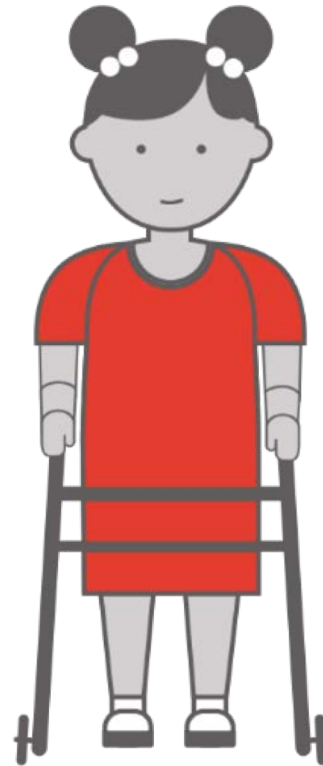
Findings: Interviews

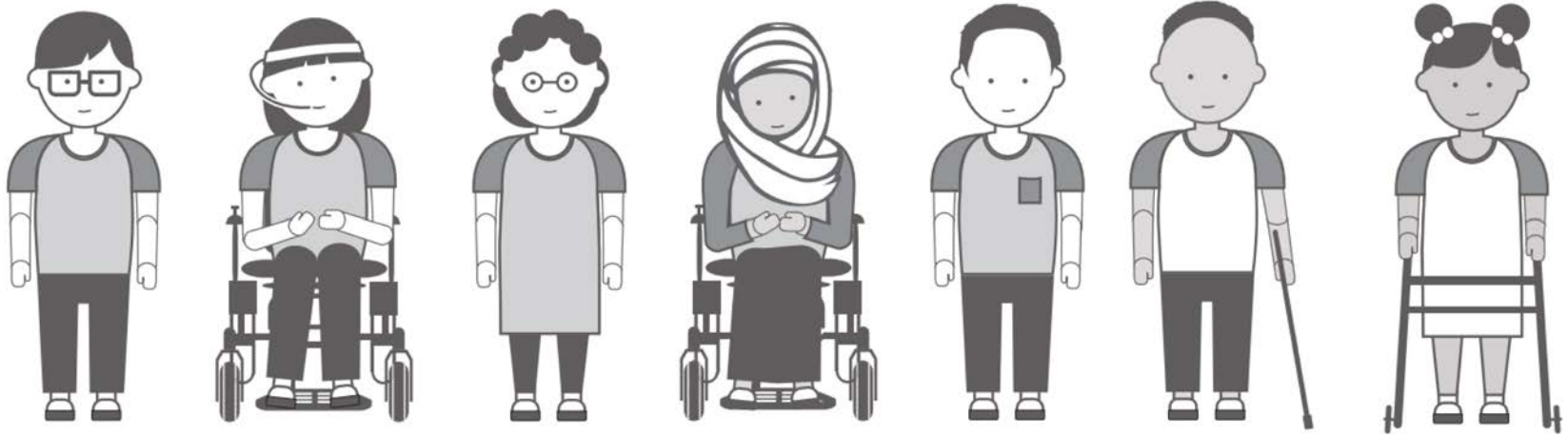
- Belief that the focus is on communication, not language or opportunity to learn (“All of my students are English language learners.”)
- Greater awareness of the need to support language if the student is recently arrived or is a refugee
- Limited awareness that native language and culture bring anything different to the academic table (“You’re SPED, you can handle this.”)
- Limited understanding or consideration of how to assess or support language or how measure student progress in English language acquisition (“I don’t even know the correct wordage.”)
- Students rarely receive EL service and language development needs are not typically written into IEPs
- Lack of awareness of how to think about whether students need to take the general or alternate ELP assessment



Observations and Interviews: Next Steps

- Report available on ALTELLA website
- Observation tool
- Interview tool





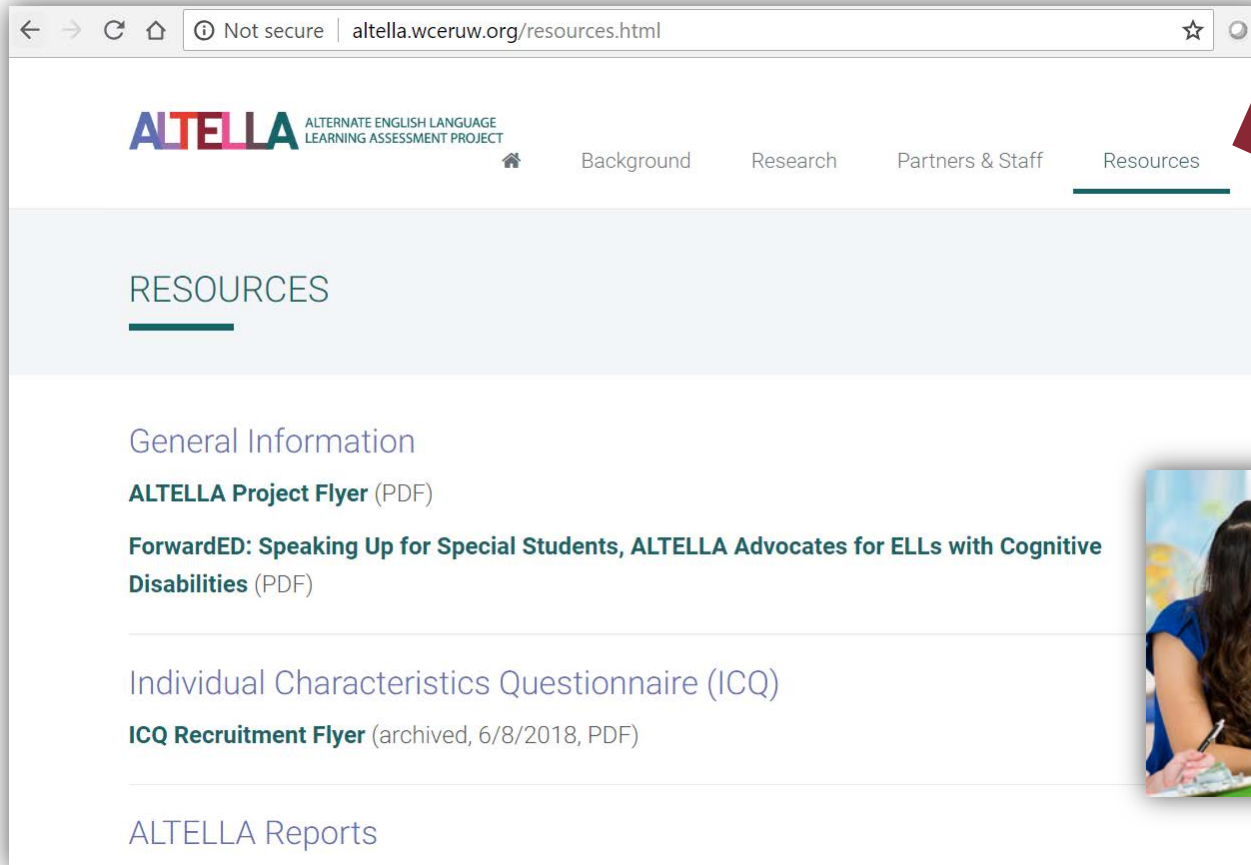
DISSEMINATION

Reports & Briefs

- ALTELLA Reports
 - ICQ Report
 - Observations and Interviews Report
 - Standards Prioritization Report
 - Item Templates Report
 - RFP Report
- ALTELLA Briefs
- Electronic copies available
- Printed copies available upon request



ALTELLA Website



ALTERNATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
LEARNING ASSESSMENT PROJECT



THANK YOU!
CONTACT:

LAURENE.CHRISTENSEN@WISC.EDU