



Considerations for Screening English Learners in Mathematics Using *i-Ready*

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Mathematics screening offers invaluable data to identify student strengths and opportunities to grow, but there are multiple considerations that must be factored into the mathematics screening process for English Learners.

This document offers educators guidance through all stages of mathematics screening in English of English Learners, providing a comprehensive list of answers to frequently asked questions and considerations for support in this process. It is important to clarify that the recommendations in this document apply specifically to the screening for risk of mathematics difficulties, and not to assessments intended to collect data for instructional purposes. This guidance aims to address common concerns and affirm the unique linguistic and cultural strengths of English Learners are recognized and supported in achieving academic success.

Importance of Serving English Learners

English Learners currently represent more than 10 percent of the Grade K–12 student population in the US and represent one of the fastest-growing segments of this population. English Learners come from many different linguistic backgrounds, with the majority (75 percent) speaking Spanish at home. However, they also include students whose families speak languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Vietnamese, Somali, Russian, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, and Hmong, among many others (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021). The prevalence of these home languages varies significantly across different regions, states, districts, and even individual schools. Ensuring English Learners achieve academic success with rigorous, grade-level content is a priority at Curriculum Associates. Mathematics screening can offer invaluable data to identify students who may display mathematics difficulties. However, there are multiple considerations that must be factored into the mathematics screening process for English Learners. Recognizing that numerous questions often arise during this screening process, this document aims to provide guidance for educators administering mathematics screening in English to the students within this growing English Learner population.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2024). *English learners in public schools. Condition of Education*. US Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cgf>.

Before Screening

How do I determine if an English Learner is ready to be screened in English?

While the purpose of the *i-Ready Diagnostic* for Mathematics is to gauge students' knowledge of mathematics concepts, students still need a certain degree of English language proficiency to engage with the assessment. Educators should use all information available to them when determining if an assessment in English is an appropriate screening tool for an English Learner.

One way to assess readiness is by evaluating a student's WIDA ACCESS score. Curriculum Associates has not conducted research into the statistical relationship between screening in English using *i-Ready* and WIDA ACCESS but has reviewed WIDA's Proficiency-Level Descriptors for each of WIDA ACCESS's performance levels. The following table provides recommendations for WIDA Performance Levels by grade and the associated English language proficiency skills associated with these levels.

| | Grades K–1* | Grades 2 and Above |
|--|---|---|
| Recommended WIDA Performance Level for Mathematics Screening in <i>i-Ready</i> | Level 3: Developing | Level 4: Expanding |
| Associated English Language Proficiency Skills: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discourse with a series of extended sentences.• Related ideas specific to particular content areas.• Compound and some complex grammatical constructions• Sentence patterns across content areas• Specific content-area language and expressions• Words and expressions with common collocations and idioms across content areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connected discourse with a variety of sentences• Expanded related ideas characteristic of particular content areas• Complex grammatical structures• A broad range of sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas• Specific and some technical content-area language• Words or expressions with multiple meanings across content areas |

*Audio supports are available for all items available to students in Grades K–1. This contains a mix of items that are automatically read to students and others where audio supports are available after pressing a corresponding audio button.

Considerations for Grades 5 and Above

While students demonstrating the English proficiency skills associated with Level 4 should be able to access items on the *i-Ready Diagnostic* for Mathematics, educators should ensure that students are familiar with the academic vocabulary that is associated with concepts covered in these grades. Additionally, for Grade 5, both question stems and answers choices are read aloud on demand. For Grades 6 and above, designated audio support can be turned on via a student setting titled "Math Diagnostic: Read Aloud" in the educator dashboard; however, note that this support is primarily intended for students who have this accommodation explicitly noted on their IEP, 504 Plan, or English Learner Plan.

For more information on WIDA Performance Levels, see [WIDA Performance Definitions—Listening and Reading Grades K–12](#)

What other factors should I consider when deciding whether to screen English Learners for Mathematics in English?

When deciding to screen an English Learner in English, educators should factor in:

- State or district requirements for reporting and/or tracking growth
- District and school goals/priorities
- Existing assessments and data already available for each student (e.g., WIDA), including if the data they have provides sufficient instructional recommendations for educators

Which *i-Ready* tools should I use to screen English Learners in Mathematics?

The *i-Ready Assessment* suite has multiple tools that educators can use for screening purposes. The *i-Ready* mathematics screening approach entails the use of the *i-Ready Diagnostic* for Mathematics, which provides educators with a comprehensive snapshot of a student's overall mathematics performance.

Additionally, for Spanish-speaking students, the *i-Ready Diagnostic* for Mathematics in Spanish is also available for administration. The Diagnostic for Mathematics in Spanish allows educators to better understand the mathematics content knowledge and skills of their Spanish-speaking English Learners, independent of their English language proficiency. This assessment matches the content and rigor of the Diagnostic for Mathematics in English and provides the same testing experience. For more information on this assessment, see [Educator Guide: Diagnostic for Mathematics in Spanish](#).

NOTE: It is important to understand whether your state has specific recommendations or requirements for conducting mathematics screening with students. Curriculum Associates has created guidance documents and resources to help educators in many states understand these requirements and how *i-Ready* for Mathematics screening helps meet them. To find guidance for your state, see the [State Use Library](#).

When should English Learners be screened during the year?

Some states have screening window requirements, in which case all students (English Learner or not) must be screened within the required screening windows. In states where there are no screening window requirements, educators may choose to hold off on formal assessment or progress monitoring for English Learners until they have had some time to receive formal instruction in mathematics skills in English. Curriculum Associates recommends that educators use their best judgement and any existing data pieces to determine the most appropriate time to screen English Learners.

During Screening

What can I do to support English Learners before administering mathematics screening in English?

For Students

Before a Diagnostic is administered for the first time in a school year, educators can use the **Preparing Students for the Diagnostic presentation**, available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#), to help provide expectations and directions around the assessment. This presentation is also available for subsequent Diagnostic administrations in [English](#) and [Spanish](#). If needed, these presentations can be translated to provide information in a student's home language.

Pledge Sheets are also provided in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#). These resources are designed to promote student engagement and self-reflection when it comes to the Diagnostic and can be translated into a student's home language if needed.

For Educators

Before administering the Diagnostic to English Learners, educators are encouraged to use the [Get Good Data Action Plan: English Learner Support Reference](#). This resource provides key questions to consider and helpful links to support English Learners throughout the administration of the Diagnostic.

For tips and suggested supports across *i-Ready*, see [Using i-Ready with Multilingual Learners](#). This comprehensive document provides tips and resources to support English Learners before, during, and after the administration of the *i-Ready Diagnostic* for Mathematics.

Within the *i-Ready Diagnostic*, is translating directions from English to an English Learner's home language allowed?

Translating directions, such as "Enter your answer in the box," into an English Learner's home language, as well as the use of non-embedded supports, such as a word-for-word bilingual dictionary, are permitted. Additionally, for students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan who receive translation support from someone fluent in their home language, the translation of items on the Diagnostic in real time is permitted. However, it should be noted that the *i-Ready Diagnostic* is an adaptive assessment and there is not an equivalent paper form that can be translated ahead of time. If the individual providing translation support is unable to translate items as they appear in a student's test flow, another assessment may be better suited for this purpose.

Complete translation of the questions (e.g., the word problem a student is being asked to solve) using tools such as Google Chrome's translation function **is not permitted**, as it would impact the validity of screening results.

What should I do if an English Learner is unable to interact with an *i-Ready Diagnostic* for Mathematics item during screening?

When a student cannot engage with an item during the *i-Ready Diagnostic* for Mathematics, educators are to encourage students to take their best guess and move to the next question. Since the *i-Ready Diagnostic* for Mathematics is an adaptive assessment, every student will receive a challenging test that is designed for students to get about 50 percent of questions incorrect. If a student answers a question incorrectly, the test adapts down and provides easier questions.

Additionally, educators screening English Learners are encouraged to provide non-embedded supports such as word-for-word bilingual dictionaries to help students access the questions presented on the *Diagnostic*.

After Screening

What should I do after a student is screened to support them?

After screening, educators should continue to monitor student progress to informally screen students in between screening windows. Educators can do so by regularly collecting formative classroom data and by administering progress monitoring assessments.

To support student growth after screening, *i-Ready Personalized Instruction* (in English or in Spanish) can be used to help students meet their grade-level goals with tailored online instruction. Within *i-Ready* reports, *i-Ready Tools for Instruction* lessons (in English or in Spanish) can also be used to support off-grade level skills or preview upcoming grade-level content.

If an English Learner is identified as at risk for a mathematics difficulty after being screened in English, how do you determine if it is because of language acquisition reasons or if the cause is a reading difficulty?

Educators should use all existing pieces of data in combination with an English Learner's at-risk identification to determine if the true cause of an at-risk identification after screening in English is a mathematics difficulty or language acquisition. One potential next step in making this distinction is to administer a second, parallel screening assessment in the student's home language and compare the results of both screeners (English screener and home language screener) to collect additional data to identify the source of an English Learner's at-risk identification.

Additionally, Ellevation Education provides a toolkit on [Strategies for identifying and supporting dually identified learners](#). This is designed to support educators in avoiding a misidentification of English Learners with learning difficulties and provides considerations when evaluating screening data.

How can I use *i-Ready* reports from screening to identify an English Learner's instructional priorities and promote high expectations?

Educators can use data from *i-Ready* reports to establish an asset-based instructional approach. Create report groups for your English Learners (e.g., All English Learners, Newcomers, Exited and Being Monitored, Long-Term English Learners) to facilitate data analysis and assignment of assessments and instruction in *i-Ready*, ensure your assessment plan matches your instructional priorities, and look for areas of strength when analyzing data that you can build from to inform instruction. Use the [Data Analysis Guide](#) and [Data Reflection Worksheet: English Learners Support Reference](#) for additional considerations when completing data reflections.

How can I use *i-Ready Personalized Instruction* most strategically to support English Learners in my classroom after screening?

Educators can support English Learners by leveraging online and teacher-led lessons that integrate strategic scaffolds, use corrective feedback to promote productive struggle, and feature culturally diverse topics so students see themselves reflected in their learning. Educators can strategically use *i-Ready Personalized Instruction* by monitoring student performance using the [Actively Monitor and Respond Kit](#), leveraging [Teacher-Assigned Lessons](#) in English or Spanish to complement teacher-led instruction, and model online lessons with students to help familiarize them with the embedded supports. Before administering Personalized Instruction, educators can also use our [Getting Students Ready for Personalized Instruction Presentation](#) in Spanish to help prepare them for their lessons.

For districts interested in ensuring Spanish-speaking students have access to Spanish Personalized Instruction lessons, My Path for Mathematics in Spanish can be used. This feature is targeted toward Spanish-speaking English Learners with beginning English proficiency and allows them to see lessons based on their Diagnostic performance in Spanish. For more information on this feature, please contact your Partner Success Manager.

After screening, how can I ensure that English Learner students understand their goals and are motivated to achieve them?

It's important that English Learners set both language-development and content-specific goals for themselves. Involve students in the process using our [Goal-Setting Guide](#) and teach them how to track data on their progress. Revisit and update goals regularly throughout the school year so students get into the habit of recognizing their own growth and moving their goals forward as they do so. Once students start reaching their benchmarks and goals, consider using our [Student Certificates in English or Spanish](#) to celebrate, nurture, and motivate their growth.

After screening is complete and an instruction plan has been established, how can I continue to support my English Learner students in their literacy development in the classroom?

Plan for Identity-Affirming Experiences and Incorporate Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Students are empowered when they see themselves in the material they're studying and when they feel connected to their learning environment. Facilitate activities in which students make personal connections to the content, acknowledge different means of expression (such as drawings and verbal explanations), and create a classroom environment where student differences are understood and celebrated.

Support Academic Vocabulary Development

Providing English Learners with targeted vocabulary instruction is essential to ensuring their access to instructional content. Define high-utility words in context as they appear in lessons, encourage students to make their own meaning of words through visual representations and analogies, and have students practice using vocabulary words in discussion and written form. Consider creating an interactive word wall in which unit vocabulary is displayed and students are incentivized to use those words on a regular basis. Maintaining a language journal also helps students track vocabulary, reading, writing, and discussion strategies they can use across classes. Within *i-Ready Personalized Instruction* lessons, strategic scaffolds are incorporated to support English Learners. A pop-up glossary provides information on context words, math vocabulary, as well as general academic vocabulary to help students access the content within lessons.

Provide Visual Supports

English Learners benefit a great deal from visual cues and supports during instruction. Pairing visual aids with written and spoken instruction helps make content comprehensible for students who are still acquiring English. Consider incorporating photos, videos, cartoons, and pictures to help illustrate meaning.

Allow Multiple Opportunities for Discussion

Incorporating discussion opportunities into instruction benefits all students. It encourages higher-order thinking and reasoning as students work to explain themselves. English Learners need to hear and practice the English language in authentic ways. It is important to provide models and structures for their language practice to ensure it is purposeful and correct. Provide students with sentence frames and sentence starters, plan cooperative activities, and help students organize their thinking with graphic organizers. Also consider defining what good conversation looks and sounds like, along with your behavior expectations for whole class and partner discussions.