ALTELLA

ALTERNATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING ASSESSMENT PROJECT

Characteristics of English Learners with Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Findings from the Individual Characteristics Questionnaire

ALTELLA Report

September 2018

Laurene L. Christensen, James D. Mitchell, Vitaliy V. Shyyan, and Sarah Ryan

Wisconsin Center for Education Research
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

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The Alternate English Language Learning Assessment (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.

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Contents

Executive Summary

English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities are an important subgroup of students; however, there is a dearth of knowledge about this population. The purpose of this report is to show pilot findings from the Individual Characteristics Questionnaire, a survey of educators conducted with the goal of creating a base of knowledge about English learners with significant cognitive disabilities. Educators of these students responded to one survey per student, resulting in 1,578 responses from 29 states.

Key findings about students who are English learners with significant cognitive disabilities include:

- Students have 71 primary home languages; the most common primary home languages include Spanish, English, and Arabic. Students use all languages in a variety of settings: in the home, at school, and in the community.
- The most common primary disabilities include intellectual disabilities, autism, multiple disabilities, and developmental delay. Two-fifths of these students had secondary disabilities.
- Over half of these students are in self-contained special education classrooms.
- Almost a quarter of students do not receive English language development instruction.
- Approximately three-quarters of students used speech or speaking to communicate. Many students used picture cards, augmentative and alternative communication devices, and communication boards.
- Generally, a majority of students scored at the lowest level in their state or consortium alternate academic content assessment and English language proficiency assessment. On most English language proficiency assessments, students scored better in the listening domain.

These results from the Individual Characteristics Questionnaire may have implications for developing and administering alternate English language proficiency assessments, as this population of students has a range of needs and academic skills, and uses a variety of accessibility supports and accommodations. Furthermore, the Individual Characteristics Questionnaire provides information that may be useful for states in developing accountability policies, alternate academic achievement standards, and other state policies and guidance materials.

Introduction

The Alternate English Language Learning Assessment (ALTELLA) project aims to learn more about students who are eligible for an alternate English language proficiency assessment focusing on the characteristics of these students. The Individual Characteristics Questionnaire is an instrument the ALTELLA project developed to support the development of foundational knowledge about the language, disability, and educational backgrounds of English learners with significant cognitive disabilities. The questionnaire also collected information about the nature of the instructional supports and services these students receive. This report describes results from the pilot administration of the Individual Characteristics Questionnaire, which was administered nationally.

English Learners with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

The U.S. Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015), requires state education agencies to annually assess English proficiency of all students identified as English learners, including those with the most significant cognitive disabilities (Section 3111(b)(2)(G)). The Every Student Succeeds Act requires states to provide an alternate English language proficiency assessment for English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities; these students are unable to participate in the general English language proficiency assessment even with appropriate accommodations.

English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities are an understudied population for a number of reasons. Identifying this population of students is a challenge, in part because an explicit definition of this population of students has not been established at the federal or the state level. As a result, understanding the educational experiences and outcomes of English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities remains daunting, in part because most states have not established processes for identifying and tracking the progress of this student population (Thurlow, Christensen, & Shyyan, 2016). In response, Christensen, Gholson, and Shyyan have defined English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities as “individuals who have one or more disabilities that significantly limit their intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior as documented in their Individualized Education Programs, and who are progressing toward English language proficiency in speaking, reading, writing, and understanding” (2018, p. 3).

To know the characteristics of English learners with significant cognitive disabilities is important for assessment and instruction. For example, in reference to the Learner Characteristics Inventory, Towles-Reeves, Kearns, Kleinert, and Kleinert (2009) state that students on alternate academic achievement standards ”are reportedly a highly diverse group, particularly with regard to learner characteristics, available response repertoires, and often competing complex medical conditions (Heward, 2006; Orelove, Sobsey, & Silberman, 2004). However, little empirical data exist to verify the extent to which students with these learning

characteristics are represented in the assessed population" (p. 5). This observation by Towles-Reeves and colleagues can be applied to English learners with significant cognitive disabilities as well. Knowing more about this small but diverse population of students can inform special education *and* English learning program models for English learners with significant cognitive disabilities and influence professional development for English language educators as well as special education teachers.

Furthermore, these findings may have implications for alternate English language proficiency assessment with regard to design, as this population of students has a range of needs and academic skills and uses a variety of accessibility tools and accommodations.

Methods

The Individual Characteristics Questionnaire collected a wide range of information from educators about their students who are English learners with significant cognitive disabilities (see Appendix A for the complete questionnaire). The Individual Characteristics Questionnaire was developed using an iterative process. Researchers at the National Center for Educational Outcomes drafted the first version of the questionnaire in 2016, and ALTELLA researchers developed it further from July 2017 to February 2018. The questionnaire draws upon two instruments, the Learner Characteristics Inventory (Kearns, Kleinert, Kleinert, & Towles-Reeves, 2006) and the First Contact Survey (Nash, Clark, & Karvonen, 2015), both of which are designed to gather more information on the characteristics of students who have significant cognitive disabilities. However, because these survey tools were designed to gather general information about all students with significant cognitive disabilities, the number of questions focusing explicitly on the needs of English learners is limited.

The ALTELLA team also developed new items addressing students' multilingual and multicultural backgrounds, including students' skills or abilities in English as well as in languages other than English. Finally, the ALTELLA team included survey items related to performance scores on state or consortium[1] alternate content assessments in English language arts, math, and science as well as state or consortium English language proficiency assessments. Throughout the development of the Individual Characteristics Questionnaire, the ALTELLA team conducted internal pilots with researchers and expert consultants to determine improvements in the Individual Characteristics Questionnaire.

The Individual Characteristics Questionnaire contains items that address the following:

- Demographic information, including languages across multiple settings
- Primary and secondary disability information

[1] Some alternate assessments are developed through multi-state consortia, including the Dynamic Learning Maps and the Multi-State Alternate Assessment.

- Communication preferences, including augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems
- Services received in school, type of classroom setting, and attendance
- Accessibility supports and accommodations during instruction and testing
- Participation and performance on alternate assessment in English language arts, math, or science
- Participation and performance on the English language proficiency assessment
- Receptive and expressive communication and engagement in English and/or languages other than English

After the development of the questionnaire, the ALTELLA team distributed the Individual Characteristics Questionnaire to educators serving English learners with significant cognitive disabilities through ALTELLA partner state education agencies and through additional organizations including the WIDA Consortium, English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century, the Dynamic Learning Maps, and the Council of Chief State School Officers. The ALTELLA team provided information about the project and the Individual Characteristics Questionnaire (see Appendix B), and instructed educators to fill out one survey for each English learner with a significant cognitive disability in their classroom. Educators were informed students met criteria if they had English learner status and participated in the state alternate content assessment. Furthermore, researchers on the ALTELLA team who conducted classroom observations and teacher interviews individually invited educators to complete the questionnaire.

The ALTELLA team built the Individual Characteristics Questionnaire in Qualtrics, a web-based survey administration platform. Although the full Individual Characteristics Questionnaire contains 106 questions, most educator participants did not see all 106 questions. Survey skip logic routed respondents through only questions applicable to the student about whom they were completing the questionnaire. For example, if an educator did not indicate that a student used braille, the educator did not see questions about the student's use of braille.

Although the Individual Characteristics Questionnaire collects information about English learners with significant cognitive disabilities, the ALTELLA team designed it to be completed by an educator or group of educators familiar with the students. The ALTELLA team encouraged special educators, English language learner specialists, and other educators to work as a group to complete each survey, and to complete only one Individual Characteristics Questionnaire per English learner with a significant cognitive disability.

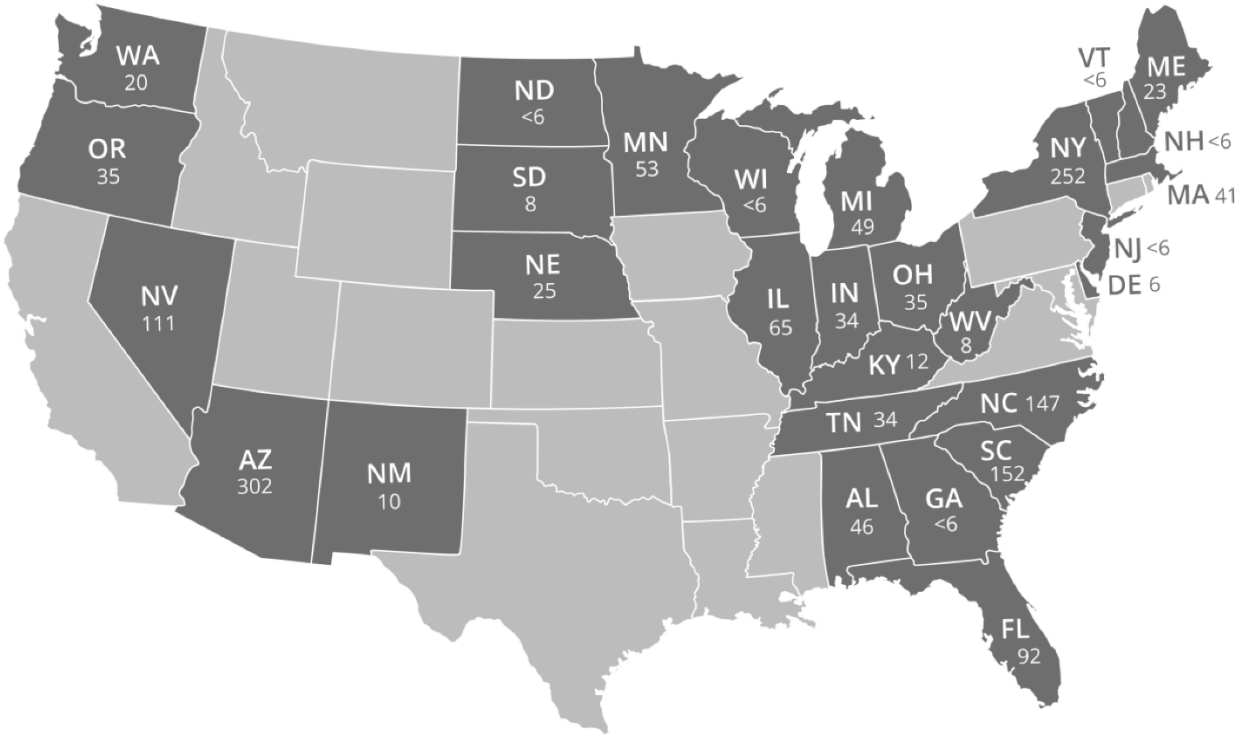
Instructions at the beginning of the survey advised educators to consult the student's home language survey, English language proficiency assessment scores, and alternate content assessment scores when completing the Individual Characteristics Questionnaire.

Instructions also asked educators to indicate "unknown/not sure" as their responses to questions for which they did not have adequate information.

Educators in 29 states completed the survey (Figure 1). In the rest of this report, the term "student sample," or simply "students," refers to the English learners with significant cognitive disabilities about whom educators reported. The 1,197 students in the data generated complete responses (75.9% of the full student sample), meaning the educators completing the Individual Characteristics Questionnaire responded to most questions, including the final item. Findings on the remaining 381 students represent incomplete responses (24.1%), meaning that educators stopped completing the questionnaire without responding to all student-related questions. Throughout this report, those instances where response counts do not sum to 1,578 for a particular item indicate incomplete responses.

Out of the 29 states that participated in the Individual Characteristics Questionnaire, the five with the largest shares of students in the sample were: Arizona (19.1%), New York (16%), South Carolina (9.6%), North Carolina (9.3%), and Nevada (7%).

Figure 1: Students' Locations



N=1,578

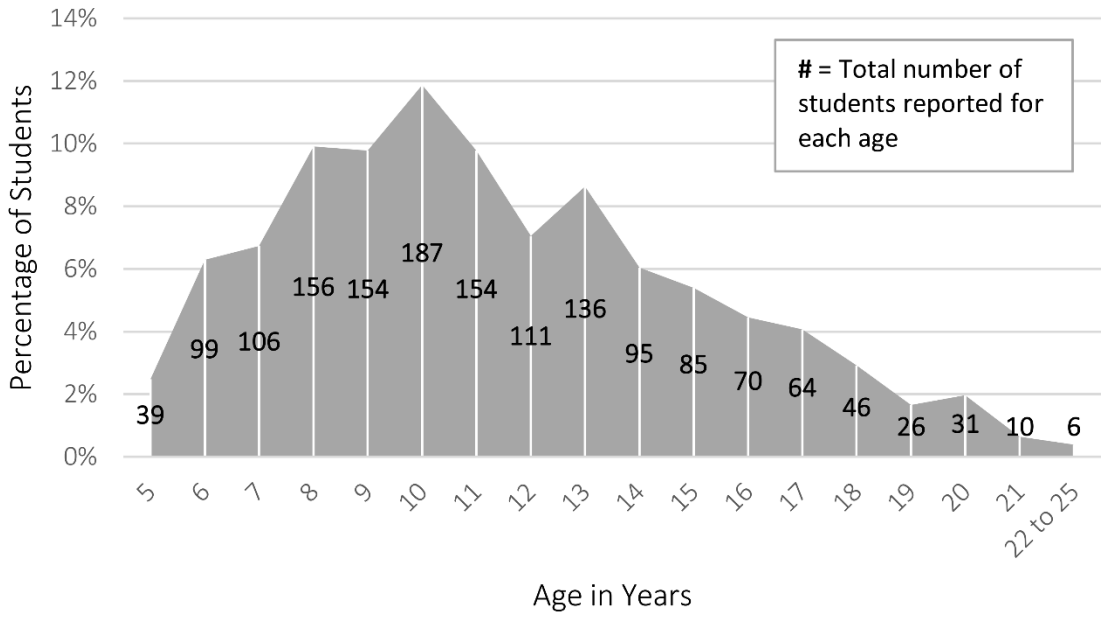
Characteristics of the Student Sample

The following section describes the demographic characteristics of the English learners with significant cognitive disabilities.

Students in the sample range in age from 5 to 25 (refer to Figure 2 for more details). While

most states serve students with disabilities in preK-12 public schools until age 21, a small number of states do so through age 25. Thus, a small proportion of the students was over the age of 21. Most of the students (57.0%) were 8 to 13 years old. Three educators did not provide information about student age.

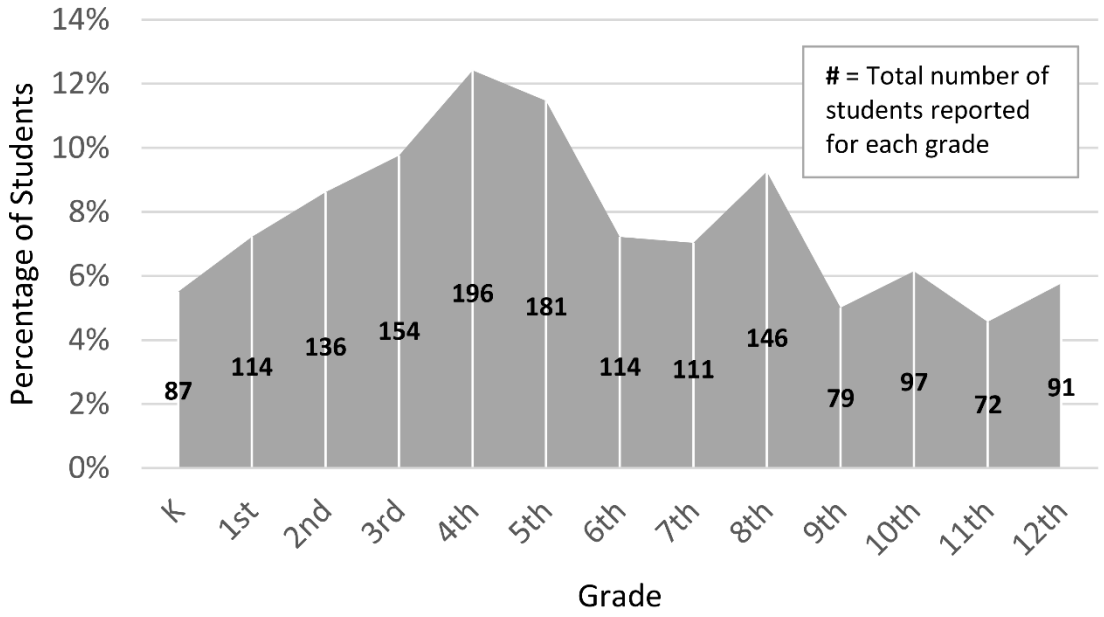
Figure 2: Age of Students



N=1,578

Students from Kindergarten through grade 12 are represented in the sample (refer to Figure 3 for more details). The most frequently reported grades were grades 3–5 (33.7%).

Figure 3: Students' Grades



N=1,578

Students were from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds. Some educators selected more than one race/ethnicity for their student. Hispanic students made up just over half of the sample students (56.6%), followed by Latino (13.9%) and White (12.0%) students (refer to Table 1 for more details).

Table 1: Race and Ethnicity of Students

Race/Ethnicity	Number	Percent
American Indian or Alaska Native	37	2.3
Asian American	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***	**NA**

N=1,578. *Multiple response question.

Life and Education in the United States

The Individual Characteristics Questionnaire collected information about students' nationalities and time they spent in the United States, including in U.S. schools. From among 1,578 students in the sample, 1,218 students were born in the United States (77.2%). Among the 29.8% born outside of the U.S., more than a third (37.2%) had spent 5 or more years in the United States (refer to Table 2 for details). Close to three-quarters of students (71.8%) did not have documented migrant status (refer to Table 3 for details); in some instances, educators were not sure of some students' migrant status (21.7%).

Table 2: Non-U.S Born Students' Length of Time in the United States

Length of Time	Number	Percent
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	10.0
More than 5 years	134	37.2
Other	8	2.2
Total	**360**	**99.9***

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

Table 3: Students' Migrant Status

Migrant Status	Number	Percent
Yes	102	6.5
No	1,133	71.8
Not sure	343	21.7
Total	**1,578**	**100.0**

N=1,578.

Almost one in five students in the sample (19.8%) had limited or interrupted formal education, meaning they "are English language learners who have experienced interrupted education due to war, civil unrest, migration, or other factors; who have never had the opportunity to participate in any type of schooling before entering school in the United States; or who have experienced limited education in their home countries due to lack of resources or trained teachers, the type of schooling they participated in, or other circumstances" (DeCapua & Marshall, 2010).

The vast majority of sample students (81%) attended at least 90% of school days (Table 4). The most common reason students missed school was a health issue (52.4%). For about a third of students (33.7%), educators were not sure why the student missed school. For

students in the "Other" category, educators stated that students did not attend school due to doctor's appointments, therapy, behavioral issues, vacations, and family emergencies or indicated that absences are not an issue for the student (refer to Table 5 for more details).

Table 4: Student Attendance

Attendance	Number	Percent
Attends at least 90% of school days	1,235	81.0
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% due to rounding.

Table 5: Reason for Student Absences

Reason	Number	Percent
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

The most frequently reported disability for sample students (42.3%) was an intellectual disability, which could be mild, moderate, or profound (Table 6). The other most common primary disabilities included autism (26.9%), multiple disabilities (11.6%), and developmental delay (6.0%).

Table 6: Primary Disabilities of Students

Disability	Number	Percent
Autism	424	26.9
Deafness	18	1.1
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 (includes blindness)	8	<1.0
Other	43	2.7
Total	**1,578***	**100**

N=1,578.

Some sample students (40.9%) had secondary disabilities. The most commonly reported secondary disability (45.7%) was a speech/language impairment, followed by intellectual disability (14.9%), autism (6.3%), orthopedic disability (4.3%), and visual impairment including blindness (4.3%). A small number of educators (1.9%) did not specify the student's secondary disability.

Table 7: Secondary Disabilities of Students

Disability	Number	Percent
Autism	41	6.3
Deaf/Blind	9	1.4
Deafness	9	1.4
Developmental Delay	24	3.7
Emotional Disability	12	1.9
Hearing Impairment	12	1.9
Intellectual Disability (includes mild, moderate, and profound)	96	14.9
Multiple Disabilities	22	3.4
Other Health Impaired	27	4.2
Orthopedic Disability	28	4.3
Speech/language Impairment	295	45.7
Visual Impairment (includes blindness)	28	4.3
Other	31	4.8
No Response	12	1.9
Total	**1,578***	**100**

N=646. *Totals do not equal 100% due to rounding.

Sensory Abilities

The Individual Characteristics Questionnaire collected information about students' sensory skills, including vision, hearing, and motor skills. Impairments in any of these areas may have implications for participation in assessment in certain language domains. For example, a student with low- or no functional use of vision may have difficulty completing the reading domain of an English language proficiency assessment without accessibility supports or accommodations.

Vision for the majority of sample students (65.4%) was within normal limits (Table 8). For students with a vision impairment who used corrective lenses (20.5%), vision was within normal limits. A small share of students had low vision abilities (4.7%) or no functional use of vision for activities of daily living (2.6%). Some educators reported not knowing the student's vision abilities (6.8%).

Table 8: Students' Vision

Visual Ability	Number	Percent
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**

N=1,525.

For most of the sample (86.4%), hearing was within normal limits. Smaller numbers of students had some hearing loss within normal limits with use of corrective aids (2.2%), or had significant (2.3%) or profound hearing loss (1.4%) even with aids (Table 9). Hearing loss was undetermined (1.6%) or unknown (6.2%) for the remaining students.

Table 9: Students' Hearing

Hearing Ability	Number	Percent
Hearing within Normal Limits	1,318	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.

With respect to students' motor skills, 75.5% had no significant motor dysfunction requiring adaptations. About one in five students (21.3%) required at least some adaptions or assistance to support motor functioning (refer to Table 10 for specific details).

Table 10: Students' Motor Skills

Motor Skills	Number	Percent
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***

Students' Language Backgrounds

The Individual Characteristics Questionnaire asked educators to provide information about the student's language background, including (a) the primary home language of the student, (b) other languages that the student is exposed to, and (c) the settings where the student uses each language. The list of languages provided to educators was based on the top five languages in each of the five project states as reported in the Consolidated State Performance Reports turned into the U.S. Department of Education to fulfill the requirement of the Every Student Succeeds Act.

Primary home language

Students in the sample represent 71 primary home languages; those used by 10 or more students are listed in Table 11. The majority of students use Spanish (53.8%). The other most common primary home languages are English (27.8%) and Arabic (2.6%). A full list of students' primary home languages can be found in Appendix C.

Table 11: Primary Home Languages

Language	Number	Percent
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**

N=1,523.

Other languages

Among sample students, 21.7% were exposed to at least one language other than their primary home language and/or English (Table 12). The most commonly reported other languages included Spanish (46.1%), followed by French (6.1%), American Sign Language (4.6%), and Cantonese (2.9%). These data indicate that 88 students (5.8%) were navigating three or more languages, including English. Table 12 reports other languages in cases where at least 10 students were exposed to the language; a full list is in Appendix D.

Table 12: Most Common Other Languages

Language	Number	Percent
American Sign Language (ASL)	16	4.6
Cantonese	10	2.9
French	21	6.1
Spanish	159	46.1
Other	139	40.3
Total	**345**	**100**

N=345.

Languages across settings

Students used English and other languages across a variety of settings. For example, among students who use English, 95.1% used it at school, 44.0% used it at home, and 55.4% used it in the community. Refer to Table 13 for details.

Table 13: Settings where Students Use Language

Language	School #	School %	Home #	Home %	Community #	Community %	Total Students
ASL	18	100	17	94.4	13	72.2	**18**
Arabic	8	14.8	50	92.6	23	42.6	**54**
Cantonese	<6	NA	16	88.9	9	50.0	**18**
English	1,442	95.1	666	44.0	841	55.4	**1,517***
French	<6	NA	28	93.3	11	36.7	**30**
Haitian Creole	6	37.5	16	100.0	12	75.0	**16**
Mandarin	<6	NA	25	89.3	14	50.0	**28**
Portuguese	<6	NA	9	90.0	<6	NA	**10**
Russian	<6	NA	21	87.5	7	29.2	**24**
Somali	<6	NA	16	94.1	10	58.8	**17**
Spanish	223	23.3	944	98.5	446	46.6	**958**
Vietnamese	<6	NA	13	92.9	<6	NA	**14**
Other	40	12.2	227	69.4	92	28.1	**327**

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

Communication

English learner students with the most significant cognitive disabilities communicate in a variety of ways. The Individual Characteristics Questionnaire sought to gather information about the diverse ways in which this population of students communicates. Some students used several methods (refer to Table 14 and Table 15 for details).

Approximately three-quarters (75.2%) of students used speech or speaking to communicate. Many students used picture cards (19.8%), AAC devices (17.5%), and communication boards (12.5%). Other ways that the students communicate include body language, including facial expressions, eye movements, and muscle tone shifts as well as word approximations. A number of educators indicated that students are nonverbal.

Table 14: Ways in which Students Communicate

Means of Communication	Number	Percent
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/Speaking	1,134	75.2
Other	138	9.2
Total	**2,382***	**NA**

N=1,508. * Multiple response question.

Among students who used AAC devices and/or communication boards, 35.1% used low-tech communication boards with eight or fewer symbols, while 27.9% used voice output devices or computers/tablets with dynamic display software. Approximately one-quarter (25.1%) used symbols only offered in groups of one or two (refer to Table 15).

Table 15: AAC Systems

AAC System	Number	Percent
Symbols Offered in Groups of 1 or 2	90	25.1
Low-tech Communication Board(s) with 8 or fewer Symbols	126	25.1
Low-tech Communication Board(s) with 9 or more Symbols	40	11.1
Low-tech Communication Book with Multiple Pages Each Containing 8 or fewer Symbols	29	8.1
Low-tech Communication Book with Multiple Pages Each Containing 9 or more Symbols	22	6.1
Eye Gaze Board (eye gaze communication) with 4 or fewer Symbols	30	8.4
Eye Gaze Board (eye gaze communication) with 5 or more Symbols	10	2.8
Simple Voice Output Device (e.g., BIGmack, Step by Step, Cheap Talk, Voice-in-a-Box, Talking Picture Frame) with 9 or fewer Messages Or Multiple Messages in Sequence	66	18.4
Simple Voice Output Device with 10 to 40 Messages	17	4.7
Voice Output Device with Levels (e.g., 6-level Voice-in-a-Box, Macaw, Digivox, DAC)	11	3.1
Voice Output Device or Computer/Tablet with Dynamic Display Software (e.g., DynaVox, Mytobii, Proloquo2Go, Speaking Dynamically Pro, Vantage)	100	27.9
Voice Output Device with Icon Sequencing (e.g., ECO, ECO2, Springboard Lite, Vanguard)	8	2.2
Other	38	10.6
Total	**587***	**NA**

N=359. *Multiple response question.

The Individual Characteristics Questionnaire also asked what types of signing the students used. Of the 148 students who used signing, 73.6% used American Sign Language. Smaller shares of students used Cued Speech (8.8%) and Pidgin (5.4%). Other types of sign that the students use include an approximation of American Sign Language, gestures, or the students have their own version of signing (refer to Table 16 for more details).

Table 16: Types of Signing

Language	Number	Percent
American Sign Language (ASL)	109	73.6
Conceptually Accurate Signed English and Manually Coded English, Including Signed Exact English	8	5.4
Cued Speech	13	8.8
Pidgin	8	5.4
Other	15	10.1
Total	**153***	**NA**

N=148. *Multiple response question.

Receptive Communication

Students have different ways of demonstrating receptive communication, or showing that they have received and understood spoken or signed language from an interlocutor. The Individual Characteristics Questionnaire asked educators to provide information about students' receptive communication in English and in a language other than English. In English, the majority of students could point to, look at, or touch things in the immediate vicinity when asked (65.1%), compared to 37.2% in a language other than English. A large percentage of students (60.8%) could perform simple actions, movements, or activities when asked in English, while 34% of students could perform simple actions, movements, or activities in a language other than English. While educators were unsure about students' receptive communication in English for only 6.2% of sample students, a much greater share of educators (44.4%) could not respond about students' receptive communication in a language other than English (for more information, refer to Table 17 and Table 18).

Table 17: Receptive Communication

Receptive Communication Abilities	English #	English %	Language Other Than 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***	**NA**	**2,649***	**NA**

N=1,219. *Multiple response question.

Expressive Communication

The Individual Characteristics Questionnaire gathered information about students' expressive communication with speech, sign, and AAC devices. Using speech, 433 students were able to combine three or more spoken words according to grammatical rules to accomplish a variety of communicative purposes in English (35.8%). One fifth of students (21.4%) were only able to use one spoken word at a time to meet a limited number of simple communicative purposes in English with speech. The percentage of students who

could regularly combine three or more spoken words in a language other than English (20.7%) was similar to the number of students who did not use spoken language in a language other than English (20.8%). This number is similar to the percentage of students who did not use spoken language in English (19.8%). A striking difference in numbers exists between students marked as "unknown" for expressive communication in English and students who were marked as "unknown" in a language other than English (refer to Table 18) for more details about students' expressive communication with speech.

Table 18: Expressive Communication with Speech

Expressive Communication Abilities With Speech	English #	English %	Language Other Than English #	Language Other Than English %
Regularly combines three 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 two 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 one 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% due to rounding.

For students who used signing as a communication method, educators were asked to give information about those students' use of signing. In English, the majority of students who communicated with signing (69.4%) were only able to sign one word at a time to meet a limited number of simple communicative purposes. Much smaller shares of students were

able to regularly combine three or more signed words according to grammatical rules (7%). For varieties of signing not related to English, 31.4% of students were able to use only one signed word at a time. Educators were not sure of many students' (60.3%) expressive communication abilities in varieties of signing outside of English.

Table 19: Expressive Communication Using Signing

Expressive Communication Using Signing	English #	English %	Language Other Than English #	Language Other Than English %
Regularly combines two 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 one 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	14.0	73	60.3
Total	**121**	**99.9***	**121**	**100**

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

For students who used AAC devices or communication boards, educators were asked to give information about the student's expressive communication using these devices (refer to Table 20 for details). From among the 535 students for whom responses were provided, a majority of students (40.2%) could only use one symbol at a time to meet a limited number of simple communicative purposes. A smaller share of students was able to combine two symbols at a time to meet a variety of more complex communicative purposes (14.0%). In a language other than English, 25.0% of students were only able to use one symbol. Most educators (67.7%) reported not knowing students' expressive communication abilities with these devices in a language other than English.

Table 20: Expressive Communication with an AAC Device

Expressive Communication with an AAC Device	English #	English %	Language Other Than English #	Language Other Than English %
Regularly combines three 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 two 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 one symbol at a time to meet a limited numbers 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**	**100.0**	**535**	**100.0**

N=535.

Services

English learners with significant cognitive disabilities receive a range of different services at their schools for students and parents to support English language development and acclimation into the United States. The Individual Characteristics Questionnaire asked educators if students received instructional services such as newcomer services, interpretive services, and English language services. This section details those results.

Almost one-quarter of sample students had never received English language services (23.5%) (refer to Table 21 for more details).

Table 21: English Language Services

Length of Time Services Received	Number	Percent
Less than 1 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	**360**	**99.9***

N=1,495.

A greater share (61.2%) had an English language acquisition specialist (e.g., English as a second language teacher or coordinator) on their Individualized Education Program team. A majority (54.8%) of sample students received interpretive services.

If educators indicated that the students were in the U.S. for less than a year, they were asked if the student received newcomer services, special services for recently arrived students. Among 44 students who had been in the United States for under one year, 34.1% received newcomer services and 31.8% did not, while educators were not sure for 34.1% of these students.

Alternate Assessment Scores

The Individual Characteristics Questionnaire gathered information about students' performance on state content assessment in English language arts, mathematics, and science. For this report, this section only reports alternate assessment scores from students who are in states that are part of a consortium that distributes alternate academic achievement standards (e.g., Dynamic Learning Maps or Multi-State Alternate Assessment) or the ALTELLA project states: Arizona, Michigan, Minnesota, South Carolina, and West Virginia.

Educators responded to the question whether or not students took the state alternate content assessment. The questionnaire did not ask educators to provide reasons why the students were not tested. Educators may have indicated that the student was not tested due to a variety of reasons, including that the state alternate content assessment was not administered in the student's grade, educators did not have access to the student's score report, or the student may not yet have been tested in the current academic year.

Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards Science

Arizona assesses students' science achievement using a state-developed assessment, called Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards Science (AIMS Science). The assessment has four levels: Level 1 (falls far below the standard), Level 2 (approaches the standard), Level 3 (meets the standard), and Level 4 (exceeds the standard). A majority (54.0%) of students using alternate academic achievement standards were not assessed in science in Arizona. Of students who were assessed, more than a quarter (28.7%) scored at Level 1. Due to small numbers, Levels 3 and 4 are combined (Table 22).

Table 22: Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards Science Scores

Science	Number	Percent
Level 1	68	28.7
Level 2	15	6.3
Levels 3 and 4	26	11.0
Not Tested	128	54.0
Total	**237**	**100.0**

N=237.

Dynamic Learning Maps

Dynamic Learning Maps administers an alternate assessment in multiple states where data were collected. This assessment gauges student achievement in English language arts, math, and science, although not all states administer the science section. The assessment has four levels: Level 1 (foundational), Level 2 (emerging), Level 3 (meets standard), and Level 4 (exceeds standard).

In English language arts, out of 204 students completing the Dynamic Learning Maps assessment, the greatest share scored at Level 1 (36.8%), while 4.4% of students scored Level 4. Some (13.7%) students did not test in English language arts. In math, the greatest share of students scored at Level 1 (41.7%), while 3.4% of students scored at Level 4. In science, out of the 168 students who took this test, the greatest share scored at Level 1 (42.9%), while 4.2% scored at Level 4 (refer to Table 23 for more details).

Table 23: Dynamic Learning Maps Assessment Scores

Level	ELA #	ELA %	Math #	Math %	Science #	Science %
Level 1	75	36.8	85	41.7	72	42.9
Level 2	56	27.4	48	23.5	36	21.4
Level 3	36	17.6	36	17.6	25	14.9
Level 4	9	4.4	7	3.4	7	4.2
Not Tested	28	13.7	28	13.7	28	16.7
Total	**204**	**99.9***	**204**	**99.9***	**168****	**100.1***

N=204. *Totals do not equal 100% due to rounding.
**Numbers differ because of response rate.

Michigan Access

Michigan uses a state-developed assessment, Michigan Access, to gauge student achievement on alternate academic achievement standards. The Michigan Access has three performance levels: Level 1 (emerging), Level 2 (attained), and Level 3 (surpassed). In English language arts and math, the greatest shares of students scored at Level 1 (44% and 40% respectively). In English language arts, 28% of students were not assessed, while 36% of students were not assessed in math. Greater than half (60%) of students were not assessed in science (refer to Table 24 for more details).

Table 24: Michigan Access Assessment Scores

Level	ELA #	ELA %	Math #	Math %	Science #	Science %
Level 1	11	44.0	10	40.0	<6	NA
Level 2	<6	NA	<6	NA	<6	NA
Level 3	<6	NA	<6	NA	<6	NA
Not Tested	7	28.0	9	36.0	15	60.0
Total	**25**	**NA**	**25**	**NA**	**25**	**NA**

N=25.

Minnesota Test of Academic Skills

Minnesota uses its own assessment, the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills, to assess student achievement on alternate academic achievement standards. This assessment has four performance levels: Level 1 (does not meet standards), Level 2 (partially meets standards), Level 3 (meets the standards), and Level 4 (exceeds the standards). In English language arts, the greatest share of students scored at Level 1 (40%). In math, the same percentage of students scored at Level 1 and at Level 3 (35.7%). In science, the greatest share of students scored at Level 1 (32.1%); half of students were not assessed in science (50%) (Table 25).

Table 25: Minnesota Test of Academic Skills Scores

Level	ELA #	ELA %	Math #	Math %	Science #	Science %
Level 1	12	40.0	10	35.7	9	32.1
Level 2	<6	NA	<6	NA	0	0
Level 3	8	26.7	10	35.7	<6	NA
Level 4	<6	NA	<6	NA	<6	NA
Not Tested	<6	NA	<6	NA	14	50.0
Total	**30**	**NA**	**28***	**NA**	**28***	**NA**

N=30. *Numbers differ because of response rate.

Multi-State Alternate Assessment

The Multi-State Alternate Assessment is administered in several states where data were collected. It has four levels of performance, indicated by numbers one through four. The assessment assesses student achievement in English language arts and math. In English language arts, the greatest share of students who took the Multi-State Alternate Assessment scored at Level 1 (36.9%), which indicates the lowest proficiency, while 2.2% of students scored at Level 4, the highest level (see Table 26 for more details). More than one third of students using alternate academic achievement standards in these states were not assessed in English language arts (35.1%). In math, the greatest share of students scored at Level 1 (32.3%), while a small percentage of students (3.3%) scored at Level 4. A majority of students using alternate academic achievement standards in these states were not assessed in math (34.6%).

Table 26: Multi=state Alternate Assessment Scores

Level	ELA #	ELA %	Math #	Math %
Level 1	100	36.9	87	32.3
Level 2	37	13.7	38	14.1
Level 3	33	12.2	42	15.6
Level 4	6	2.2	9	3.3
Not Tested	95	35.1	93	34.6
Total	**271**	**100.1***	**269***	**99.9***

N=271. *Totals do not equal 100% due to rounding.
**Numbers differ because of response rate.

South Carolina Alternate

The South Carolina Alternate is a state-developed alternate content assessment. The test has three levels of performance, as follows: Level 1 (emerging), Level 2 (approaching target), and Level 3 (target). In English language arts, a majority of students scored at Level 1 (60.2%), while 18.6% of students were not assessed. Similarly, 60.5% of students scored at Level 1 in math, and 20.2% were not assessed.

Finally, 51.4% of students scored at Level 1 on science, whereas 31.2% of students were not assessed (refer to Table 27 for more details).

Table 27: South Carolina Alternate Scores

Level	ELA #	ELA %	Math #	Math %	Science #	Science %
Level 1	68	60.2	69	60.5	56	51.4
Level 2	19	16.8	12	10.5	14	12.8
Level 3	<6	NA	10	8.8	<6	NA
Not Tested	21	18.6	23	20.2	34	31.2
Total	**113***	**100.0**	**114***	**100.0**	**109***	**100.0**

N=114. *Numbers differ because of response rate to the question.

English Language Proficiency Assessment Scores

The Individual Characteristics Questionnaire asked educators to report scores from the English language proficiency assessment administered to the student. Such assessments include summative English language proficiency assessments developed by the WIDA assessment consortium (ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs), by the English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century consortium, or by individual states (e.g., Arizona English Language Learner Assessment, New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test). For the purposes of this report, only the results of

annual summative English language proficiency assessments administered in the ALTELLA partner states (Arizona, Michigan, Minnesota, South Carolina, and West Virginia) are reported. From a sample of 1,325 students, 31.2% did not take an English language proficiency assessment.

Arizona English Language Learner Assessment

The Arizona English Language Learner Assessment uses proficiency levels and domains. Students receive proficiency level scores of 1 through 5 in the listening, speaking, reading, and writing domains, as well as an overall composite score that combines scores from all four domains. In all domains, students primarily scored at Level 1. A greater number of students scored at Level 1 in writing than the other domains (83.3%) (Table 28).

Table 28: Arizona English Language Learner Assessment

Level	List #	List %	Spkg #	Spkg %	Rdg #	Rdg %	Wrtg #	Wrtg %	Overall #	Overall %
Level 1	22	73.3	22	73.3	21	70	25	83.3	22	72.3
Level 2	<6	NA	6	20.0	<6	NA	<6	NA	<6	NA
Level 3	<6	NA	<6	NA	<6	NA	<6	0	<6	NA
Level 4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Level 5	<6	NA	<6	NA	<6	NA	<6	NA	<6	NA
Total	**30**	**NA**	**30**	**NA**	**30**	**NA**	**30**	**NA**	**30**	**NA**

*N=30.

English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century

A consortium of several states (including West Virginia) administers the English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century, which gauges student performance in the listening, speaking, reading, and writing domains using five proficiency levels. Students receive separate scores for each language domain, but not an overall composite score. In the student sample, 72 students took the assessment. Generally, students scored highest in the listening domain and lowest in the reading and writing domains (Table 29).

Table 29: English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century

Level	List #	List %	Spkg #	Spkg %	Rdg #	Rdg %	Wrtg #	Wrtg %
Level 1	42	58.3	54	73.3	58	80.6	57	79.2
Level 2	13	18.1	7	20.0	9	12.5	10	13.9
Level 3	12	16.7	8	NA	<6	NA	<6	NA
Level 4	<6	NA	<6	0	<6	NA	<6	NA
Level 5	<6	NA	<6	NA	0	0	0	0
Total	**72**	**100.0**	**72**	**100.0**	**72**	**100.0**	**72**	**NA**

*N=72.

WIDA

WIDA, a consortium of 39 states and U.S. territories (including Michigan, Minnesota, and South Carolina), has developed two summative English language proficiency assessments: ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 (Alternate ACCESS). ACCESS is WIDA's general English language proficiency assessment. Alternate ACCESS is an English language proficiency assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities. The ACCESS assessments provide proficiency level scores for the listening, speaking, reading, and writing language domains. Alternate ACCESS has three more proficiency levels than the general ACCESS for ELLs 2.0. Alternate ACCESS starts with alternate proficiency levels A1-A3, then shifts to the general assessment's proficiency levels P1-P3[2]. The general assessment has six proficiency levels ranging from beginning (proficiency level P1) to reaching (proficiency level P6) .

Across all domain and composite scores on the Alternate ACCESS, the greatest shares of students scored at Level A1. Students generally scored highest in listening and, among composite scores, students generally scored highest in comprehension. The greatest share of students (39.2%) who took the Alternate ACCESS had an overall composite scores at level A1 (refer to Table 30 for more details).

[2] Students can only score level P3 in the writing domain. In other areas, P2 is the highest possible level.

Table 30: WIDA Alternate ACCESS Scores

Level	List #	List %	Spkg #	Spkg %	Rdg #	Rdg %	Wrtg #	Wrtg %
A1	127	35.2	151	41.9	148	41.1	152	42.2
A2	56	15.6	42	11.7	42	11.7	73	20.3
A3	47	13.1	39	10.8	44	12.2	56	15.6
P1	46	12.8	63	17.5	56	15.6	49	13.6
P2 and P3	84	23.3	65	18.1	70	19.4	30	8.3
Total	**360**	**100.0**	**360**	**100.0**	**360**	**100.0**	**360**	**100**

Level	Oral Lang #	Oral Lang %	Comprehension #	Comprehension %	Literacy #	Literacy %	Overall #	Overall %
A1	146	40.6	142	39.4	151	41.9	142	39.2
A2	43	11.9	44	12.2	46	12.8	55	15.2
A3	44	12.2	49	13.6	67	18.6	62	17.1
A4	54	15.0	55	15.3	48	13.3	55	15.2
P2 and P3	73	20.3	70	19.4	48	13.3	48	13.3
Total	**360**	**100.0**	**360**	**100.0**	**360**	**100.0**	**362***	**100.0**

N=362. *Two educators provided incomplete responses.

The students who took WIDA ACCESS generally scored highest in the listening domain. Only the listening domain reported scores for Proficiency Levels 2 and 3. In composite level scores, the results show the same numbers for comprehension and literacy, with the majority of students scoring proficiency level P1 for both (54.2%). In the overall composite score, a majority of students (52.5%) scored at Level P1 (refer to Table 31 for more details).

Table 31: WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Scores

Level	List #	List %	Spkg #	Spkg %	Rdg #	Rdg %	Wrtg #	Wrtg %
P1	51	42.9	57	47.9	62	52.1	62	52.1
P2	18	15.1	31	26.0	37	31.1	32	26.9
P3	27	22.7	19	16.0	13	10.9	21	17.6
P4	6	5.0	6	5.0	<6	NA	<6	NA
P5	8	6.7	<6	NA	<6	NA	<6	NA
P6	9	7.6	<6	NA	<6	NA	<6	NA
Total	**119***	**NA**	**119***	**NA**	**119***	**NA**	**119***	**NA**

Level	Oral Lang #	Oral Lang %	Comprehension #	Comprehension %	Literacy #	Literacy %	Overall #	Overall %
P1	62	52.1	64	54.2	64	54.2	63	52.5
P2	32	26.9	33	28.0	33	28.0	31	25.8
P3	21	17.6	16	13.6	16	13.6	21	17.5
P4	<6	NA	<6	NA	<6	NA	<6	NA
P5	<6	NA	<6	NA	<6	NA	<6	NA
P6	<6	NA	<6	NA	<6	NA	<6	NA
Total	**119***	**NA**	**118***	**NA**	**118***	**NA**	**120***	**NA**

N=120. *Numbers differ because of response rate to the question.

Classroom Setting

The Individual Characteristics Questionnaire gathered information about the settings in which students spent their time at school, including primary classroom setting (a), hours in classrooms where (b) instruction occurs only in English, (c) instruction occurs in a language other than English, and (d) English language development instruction is provided. Over half of the students (56.7%) spend their time in self-contained special education classrooms, while 15.2% of students spend their time in special school (refer to Table 32 for details).

Table 32: Primary Classroom Settings

Primary Classroom Setting	Number	Percent
Regular School (self-contained special education classroom)	707	56.7
Regular School (primarily self-contained special education classroom)	141	11.3
Regular School (resource room/general education classes)	74	5.9
Regular School (inclusive/collaborative general education class)	87	7.0
Special School	189	15.2
Other	49	3.9
Total	**1,247**	**100.0**

N=1,247.

By far, most students spent four or more hours in classrooms where instruction occurred only in English. Similarly, the majority of students received no instruction in a language other than English (refer to Tables 33 and 34 for details). Almost 3% of students received instruction *only* in a language other than English. A little more than 3% received instruction in a language other than English for more than four hours a week, but not entirely in a language other than English (3.4%).

Table 33: Hours per Week in Classroom where Instruction is in English

Hours	Number	Percent
0	11	<1
Less than 1 hour	6	<1
1-2 hours	15	1.2
2-3 hours	9	<1
3-4 hours	25	2.0
More than 4 hours	192	15.4
All Instruction is in English	976	78.5
Not Sure	10	<1
Total	**1,244**	**100.0**

N=1,244 .

Table 34: Hours per Week in Classroom where Instruction is in Language other than English

Hours	Number	Percent
0	999	82.0
Less than 1 hour	54	4.4
1-2 hours	32	2.6
2-3 hours	18	1.5
3-4 hours	23	1.9
More than 4 hours	42	3.4
All Instruction is in English	33	2.7
Not Sure	17	1.4
Total	**1,218**	**99.9***

N=1,218. *Totals do not equal 100% due to rounding.

Out of 1,243 students, 23.3% of students did not receive English language development instruction. Of students who did receive English language development instruction, 13.5% received less than 1 hour per week. However, 21.4% of students received more than 4 hours a week of English language development instruction (refer to Table 35 for more details).

Table 35: Number of Hours per Week in English Language Development Instruction

Hours	Number	Percent
0	290	23.3
Less than 1 hour	168	13.5
1-2 hours	215	17.3
2-3 hours	105	8.4
3-4 hours	114	9.2
More than 4 hours	266	21.4
Not Sure	85	6.8
Total	**1,243**	**99.9***

N=1,243. *Totals do not equal 100% due to rounding.

Accessibility Features

The Individual Characteristics Questionnaire gathered information about instructional and test accessibility supports and accommodations provided for sample students. The following section details these results.

The most commonly identified instructional accessibility supports and accommodations included the following: extended time (79.2%), directions repeated (74.7%), read aloud (73.4%), scribe (24.1%), and language support (20.8%) (refer to Table 36 for more details). A small share of sample students (5.4%) did not receive any instructional accessibility supports or accommodations. Other instructional accessibility supports and accommodations include but were not limited to adapted books and materials, braille, picture cards, picture dictionaries, realia, and the student's other language.

Table 36: Instructional Accessibility Supports and Accommodations

Support/Accommodation	Number	Percent
Directions Repeated	910	74.7
Extended Time	966	79.2
Language Support (e.g., translation)	253	20.8
Masking	115	9.4
Read Aloud	895	73.4
Scribe	294	24.1
Sign Interpretation	58	4.8
Text to Speech	234	19.2
Student Does Not Receive Instructional Accommodations	66	5.4
Other	231	18.9
Total	**4,022***	**NA***

N=1,219. *Multiple response question.

The most commonly identified test accessibility supports and accommodations included: extended time (75.3%), read aloud (66.1%), directions repeated (65.5%), scribe (22.9%), and text to speech (18.3%). Again, a small share of students (7.3%) did not receive any assessment accessibility supports or accommodations. This item did not ask educators to further distinguish among accessibility supports and accommodations specific to English language proficiency assessments and those specific to state content assessments. Other assessment accessibility supports and accommodations include but are not limited to braille, breaks, manipulatives, picture cards, picture dictionaries, realia, and the student's other language (refer to Table 37 for more details).

Table 37: Assessment Accessibility Supports and Accommodations

Support/Accommodation	Number	Percent
Color Contrast	64	5.3
Directions Repeated	798	65.5
Extended Time	918	75.3
Language Support (e.g., translation)	195	16.0
Masking	90	7.4
Read Aloud	806	66.1
Scribe	279	22.9
Sign Interpretation	51	4.2
Text to Speech	223	18.3
Student Does Not use Test Accommodations	89	7.3
Other	229	18.8
Total	**3,742***	**NA***

N=1,219. *Multiple response question.

Engagement

The Individual Characteristics Questionnaire gathered information about how students engage in communication in both English and a language other than English. With respect to engagement in English, 39% of students in the sample initiated and sustained social interactions, while 31% responded to social interaction but did not initiate or sustain social interaction. As for languages other than English, 17.8% of sample students initiated and sustained social interaction, while 17.1% responded with social interaction, but did not initiate or sustain social interaction. Many educators (38.8%) were not aware of how the student was able to engage in a language other than English; this was unknown to educators for only 3.9% of students when considering students' engagement in English. Refer to Table 38 for more details.

Table 38: Student Engagement

Engagement	English #	English %	Language Other Than English #	Language Other Than English %
Initiates and Sustains Social Interactions	472	39.3	213	17.8
Responds with Social Interaction, but Does Not Initiate or Sustain Social Interactions	371	30.9	205	17.1
Alerts to Others Speaking	205	17.1	166	13.8
Does Not Alert to Others Speaking	105	8.8	150	12.5
Unknown	47	3.9	466	38.8
Total	**1,200**	**100.0**	**1,200**	**100.0**

N=1,200.

Academic Skills

The Individual Characteristics Questionnaire gathered information about students' academic skills in English and a language other than English for reading, mathematics, and writing.

Of the 1,200 students for whom educators provided responses, 33.7% could read basic sight words, simple sentences, directions, bullets, and/or lists in print in English, whereas 6.8% could perform the same tasks in a language other than English. A large share of students had no observable awareness of print in English (24.9%), and this share increases when students' observable awareness of print in a language other than English (39.0%) is considered. Small shares of students could read fluently with critical understanding in print in English (2.3%) or in a language other than English (1.1%). Educators were asked to provide students' reading skills in braille if they indicated that the student used braille as a way of communicating. However, because fewer than six responses were provided, these results are not reported. Refer to Table 39 for more information about students' reading skills.

Table 39: Reading Skills

Reading Skills	English #	English %	Language Other Than English #	Language Other Than English %
Reads Fluently with Critical Understanding in Print	27	2.3	13	1.1
Reads Fluently with Basic (literal) Understanding from Paragraphs/Short Passages with Narrative/Informational Texts in Print in English	137	11.4	30	2.5
Aware of Text, Follows Directionality, Makes Letter Distinctions, or Tells a Story from the Pictures that is not Linked to the Text	284	23.7	72	6.0
Reads Basic Sight Words, Simple Sentences, Directions, Bullets, and/or Lists in Print in English	404	33.7	81	6.8
No Observable Awareness of Print	299	24.9	468	39.0
Unknown	49	4.1	536	44.7
Total	**1,200**	**100.1***	**1,200**	**100.1***

N=1,200. *Totals do not equal 100% due to rounding.

The Individual Characteristics Questionnaire asked for students' skills in mathematics, ranging from rote counting from 1 through 5 to applying computational procedures. In English, many students could count 1:1 correspondence to at least 10 and/or make numbered sets of items (26.9%) and could perform computational procedures with or without a calculator (27.1%). These percentages decreased when looking at the same skills in a language other than English (8.4% and 5.5% respectively). Some educators did not know about students' mathematics skills in English (10.9%); this percentage, 48.4%, was much higher for a language other than English (Table 40).

Table 40: Mathematic Skills

Mathematic Skills	English #	English %	Language Other Than English #	Language Other Than English %
Applies Computational Procedures to Solve Real-life or Routine Word Problems from a Variety of Contexts	57	4.8	21	1.8
Counts 1:1 Correspondence to at least 10, and/or Makes Numbered Sets of Items	323	26.9	101	8.4
Does Computational Procedures with or without a Calculator	325	27.1	66	5.5
Counts by Rote to 5	129	10.8	49	4.1
No Observable Awareness or Use of Numbers	235	19.6	381	31.8
Unknown/Not Sure	131	10.9	579	48.4
Total	**1,200**	**100.1***	**1,197****	**100.0**

N=1,200. *Totals do not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Numbers differ because of response rate to the question.

With regard to writing abilities, many students did not write in either English (26.1%) or a language other than English (43.8%). Almost one fifth of students could write words in English (18.8%), while 2.5% could write words in a language other than English. Educators indicated that they did not know the student's ability to write in a language other than English for a large share of students (46.7%), while this was the case for 9% of students when considering writing abilities in English (refer to Table 41 for more information about students' writing skills.) From the students who do not write, a majority of these students are in the grade 3–5 cluster (refer to Table 42 for details).

Table 41: Writing Skills

Writing Skills	English #	English %	Language Other Than English #	Language Other Than English %
Writes Full Sentences	169	14.1	26	2.1
Writes Phrases	175	14.6	29	2.4
Writes Words	225	18.8	30	2.5
Writes Letters	208	17.4	29	2.4
Does Not Write	313	26.1	524	43.8
Unknown/Not Sure	107	9.0	559	46.7
Total	**1,197**	**100.0**	**1,197**	**99.9***

N=1,197. *Totals do not equal 100% due to rounding.

Table 42: Students Who Do Not Write at Grade Level

Grade	English #	English %	Language Other Than English #	Language Other Than English %
Kindergarten	36	11.5	41	7.8
1-2	55	17.6	90	17.2
3-5	88	28.1	172	32.8
6-8	74	23.6	126	24.0
9-12	60	19.2	95	18.1
Total	**313**	**100.0**	**524**	**99.9***

N=313, 524. *Totals do not equal 100% due to rounding.

Discussion

The findings from the Individual Characteristics Questionnaire shed light on the characteristics of English learners with significant cognitive disabilities. This report highlights the most common characteristics in this population of students, the characteristics that are not as common, areas of performance in English and a language other than English, and areas where there is a dearth of information even for educators.

The Individual Characteristics Questionnaire indicates that although most students spend all of their day in classrooms where English is the primary language, many of these students receive little or no English language support during the school day. The findings from the study on questions that asked about English and a language other than English show that teachers largely do not know much about how the student is able to perform in

the other language, including the student's home language. Educators knowing students' proficiency in their other language might give insight into what the students know or can convey.

These students have a large range of receptive and expressive communication abilities. Many students can combine words, signs, or symbols to accomplish a variety of communicative purposes, and have some method of indicating that they have understood what has been told to or asked of them.

Furthermore, the findings from the study on English language proficiency or academic content assessments give insight into these students' average performance on these assessments. Generally, with the exception of the Arizona English Language Learner Assessment, students' performance was better in the listening domain than other domains. A majority of students scored at a Level 1 in all areas of the alternate content assessments.

There were a few limitations in the design and reporting of this pilot. The sample is a convenience sample. In many cases it represents a small percentage of the number of students who are English learners with significant cognitive disabilities in each state. Also, data reported here are dependent upon the educators who provide the information. As a result, educators may not have interpreted the questions as intended. For example, several responses to the question on student ethnicity were answered as "Other" even though what was specified may have also fit into one of the more specific ethnicity choices (e.g., "Puerto Rican" instead of "Hispanic" or "Latino"). Furthermore, after the creation of the survey,

ALTELLA researchers considered additional questions, including questions about the student's verbal abilities and a question on English language program models (e.g., bilingual programs). Finally, the Individual Characteristics Questionnaire did not gather information about general state content assessments because of the structure of the survey and only obtained rich information about the state's alternate content assessments.

Conclusion

This pilot of the Individual Characteristics Questionnaire is the first step in uncovering more about English learners with significant cognitive disabilities. Knowing the characteristics of these students has a few implications for serving these students appropriately. These student characteristics give insight into the continued development of alternate English language proficiency assessments, with questions designed for students who may have difficulty accessing the general English language proficiency assessment in their state. Additionally, the Individual Characteristics Questionnaire provides information that may be useful for states in developing accountability policies, alternate academic achievement standards, and other state policies and guidance materials. Ultimately, data generated by the Individual Characteristics Questionnaire have the potential to inform optimal instruction and assessment of English learners with significant cognitive disabilities.

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Appendix A: Individual Characteristics Questionnaire

ALTELLA distributed the Individual Characteristics Questionnaire electronically using Qualtrics software. The software allowed ALTELLA researchers to build a display logic. This way only relevant questions were displayed and had to be answered by survey takers. For example, answering the question about location determined the type of question about assessment scores, as specific locations, i.e., states and territories, administer specific assessments. For readability, the formatting of some sections of the Individual Characteristics Questionnaire as included in this appendix has been modified.

Introduction

Responses to this survey will be used to create a profile of the population of students with significant cognitive disabilities who are English learners. The survey will not collect any identifying information about you or your school or district. It does not request student names or identification numbers. We will report the results of the study only by state. The risks associated with providing this information are minimal. This survey is estimated to take 15-20 minutes. You will need to complete one survey per student.

If available, it may be helpful to have the following documents prior to completing this survey:

- Home Language Survey
- English Language Proficiency assessment scores
- Alternate academic achievement scores (most recent alternate assessment score reports).

We encourage you to contact James Mitchell at mitchell27@wisc.edu or 608-262-5725 about any questions that may arise during your participation in this survey. If you have any questions about this project, and you would prefer not to correspond with your state Department of Education contact, you may contact Laurene Christensen at laurene.christensen@wisc.edu or 612-616-7627, or the University of Wisconsin's Anonymous Human Research Protection Hotline at 608-890-1273.

You may visit altella.wceruw.org for more information about this project.

Sincerely,

ALTELLA Research Team at Wisconsin Center for Education Research

1. Location

- ○ Alabama
- ○ Alaska
- ○ American Samoa
- ○ Arizona
- ○ Arkansas
- ○ Bureau of Indian Education
- ○ California
- ○ Colorado
- ○ Connecticut
- ○ Delaware
- ○ Department of Defense
- ○ District of Columbia
- ○ Florida
- ○ Georgia
- ○ Guam
- ○ Hawaii
- ○ Idaho
- ○ Illinois
- ○ Indiana
- ○ Iowa
- ○ Kansas
- ○ Kentucky
- ○ Louisiana
- ○ Maine
- ○ Marshall Islands
- ○ Maryland
- ○ Massachusetts
- ○ Michigan
- ○ Micronesia
- ○ Minnesota
- ○ Mississippi
- ○ Missouri
- ○ Montana
- ○ Nebraska
- ○ Nevada
- ○ New Hampshire
- ○ New Jersey
- ○ New Mexico
- ○ New York
- ○ North Carolina
- ○ North Dakota
- ○ Northern Mariana Islands
- ○ Ohio
- ○ Oklahoma
- ○ Oregon
- ○ Palau
- ○ Pennsylvania
- ○ Puerto Rico
- ○ Rhode Island
- ○ South Carolina
- ○ South Dakota
- ○ Tennessee
- ○ Texas
- ○ U.S. Virgin Islands
- ○ Utah
- ○ Vermont
- ○ Virginia
- ○ Washington
- ○ West Virginia
- ○ Wisconsin
- ○ Wyoming

2. Student's age in years

- ○ 4
- ○ 5
- ○ 6
- ○ 7
- ○ 8
- ○ 9
- ○ 10
- ○ 11
- ○ 12
- ○ 13
- ○ 14
- ○ 15
- ○ 16
- ○ 17
- ○ 18
- ○ 19
- ○ 20
- ○ 21
- ○ 22
- ○ 23
- ○ 24
- ○ 25

3. Student's grade

- ○ Kindergarten
- ○ 1st
- ○ 2nd
- ○ 3rd
- ○ 4th
- ○ 5th
- ○ 6th
- ○ 7th
- ○ 8th
- ○ 9th
- ○ 10th
- ○ 11th
- ○ 12th

4. Student's gender

- ○ Male
- ○ Female

5. Student's ethnicity and race (optional response)

- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native Asian
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Hispanic
- ☐ Latino
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander White
- ☐ Other. Specify ethnicity: _____

6. Was the student born in the U.S.?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

7. How long has the student been in the U.S.?

- ○ Less than one year
- ○ More than one year, less than two years
- ○ More than two years, less than three years
- ○ More than three years, less than four years
- ○ More than four years, less than five years
- ○ More than five years
- ○ Other

8. Does the student receive newcomer services?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Not sure/unknown

9. Does the student have a limited or interrupted formal education?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Not sure/unknown

10. Does the student have migrant status?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Not sure/unknown

11. What is the student's primary IDEA disability category?

- ○ Autism
- ○ Deaf/Blind
- ○ Deafness
- ○ Developmental Delay
- ○ Emotional Disability
- ○ Hearing Impairment
- ○ Intellectual disability (includes Mild, Moderate, and Profound)
- ○ Multiple disabilities
- ○ Other Health Impaired
- ○ Orthopedic Disability
- ○ Speech/Language Impairment
- ○ Traumatic Brain Injury
- ○ Visual Impairment including Blindness
- ○ Other. Enter the "Other" primary IDEA disability category: _____

12. Does the student have a secondary disability category?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

13. If yes, what is the student's secondary disability?

- ○ Autism
- ○ Deaf/Blind
- ○ Deafness
- ○ Developmental Delay
- ○ Emotional Disability
- ○ Hearing Impairment
- ○ Intellectual disability (includes Mild, Moderate, and Profound)
- ○ Multiple disabilities
- ○ Other Health Impaired
- ○ Orthopedic Disability
- ○ Speech/Language Impairment
- ○ Traumatic Brain Injury
- ○ Visual Impairment including Blindness
- ○ Other

14. Student's vision

- ○ Vision within normal limits
- ○ Corrected vision within normal limits
- ○ Low vision; uses vision for some activities of daily living
- ○ No functional use of vision for activities of daily living, or unable to determine
- ○ Unknown/Not sure

15. Student's hearing

- ○ Hearing within normal limits
- ○ Corrected hearing loss within normal limits
- ○ Hearing loss aided, but still with a significant loss
- ○ Profound loss, even with aids
- ○ Unable to determine functional use of hearing
- ○ Unknown/Not sure

16. Student's motor skills

- ○ No significant motor dysfunction that requires adaptations
- ○ Requires adaptations to support motor functioning (e.g., walker, adapted utensils, and/or keyboard)
- ○ Uses wheelchair, positioning equipment, and/or assistive devices for most activities
- ○ Needs personal assistance for most/all motor activities
- ○ Unknown/Not sure

17. Student's attendance

- ○ Attends at least 90% of school days
- ○ Attends approximately 75% of school days
- ○ Attends approximately 50% or less of school days
- ○ Receives Homebound instruction
- ○ Unknown/Not sure

18. What is the primary reason for the student's absences?

- ○ Health issues
- ○ Transportation issues
- ○ Other. Please specify: _____
- ○ Unknown/Not sure

19. Is the primary language a language other than English?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

20. If yes, what is the primary home language?

- ○ Arabic
- ○ Cantonese
- ○ Cherokee
- ○ French
- ○ German
- ○ Gujarati
- ○ Hmong
- ○ Italian
- ○ Japanese
- ○ Korean
- ○ Mandarin
- ○ Navajo
- ○ Ojibwa
- ○ Portuguese
- ○ Russian
- ○ Spanish
- ○ Somali
- ○ Tagalog
- ○ Vietnamese
- ○ Other. Specify language:_____

21. Are there other languages that the student is exposed to?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

22. If yes, what other languages is the student exposed to (other than English)?

- ○ Arabic
- ○ Cantonese
- ○ Cherokee
- ○ French
- ○ German
- ○ Gujarati
- ○ Hmong
- ○ Italia
- ○ Japanese
- ○ Korean
- ○ Mandarin
- ○ Navajo
- ○ Ojibwa
- ○ Portuguese
- ○ Russian
- ○ Spanish
- ○ Somali
- ○ Tagalog
- ○ Vietnamese
- ○ Other. If other was selected, specify language: _____

23. Identify the settings where the student uses English.

- ☐ Home
- ☐ School
- ☐ Community
- ☐ Student doesn't use English

24. Identify the settings where the student uses [*language(s) selected in question 23*].

- ☐ Home
- ☐ School
- ☐ Community

25. In what ways does the student communicate? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Augmentative and alternate communication (AAC) device
- ☐ Braille
- ☐ Communication board
- ☐ Eye gaze
- ☐ Picture cards
- ☐ Sign
- ☐ Speech or speaking
- ☐ Other

26. What type of sign does the student use?

- ☐ American Sign Language (ASL)
- ☐ Conceptually Accurate Signed English (CASE)
- ☐ Cued Speech
- ☐ Manually Coded English (MCE), including Signed Exact English (SEE) Pidgin
- ☐ Other. Please describe: _____

27. Does the student's family use interpretive services during school meetings?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

28. How many years has the student received English language (EL) services?

- ○ Never received any EL services
- ○ Less than a year
- ○ 1-2 years
- ○ 3-4 years
- ○ 5-6 years
- ○ 7-8 years
- ○ 9-10 years
- ○ 11-12 years
- ○ 13-14 years
- ○ 15-16 years
- ○ 17-18 years
- ○ 19-20 years
- ○ 21 years or more

29. Describe AAC systems used.

- ☐ Symbols offered in groups of 1 or 2
- ☐ Low-tech communication board(s) with 8 or fewer symbols
- ☐ Low-tech communication board(s) with 9 or more symbols
- ☐ Low-tech communication book with multiple pages each containing 8 or fewer symbols Low-tech communication book with multiple pages each containing 9 or more symbols
- ☐ Eye gaze board (eye gaze communication) with 4 or fewer symbols
- ☐ Eye gaze board (eye gaze communication) with 5 or more symbols
- ☐ Simple voice output device (e.g., BIGmack, Step by Step, Cheap Talk, Voice-in-a-Box, Talking Picture Frame) with 9 or fewer messages or multiple messages in sequence
- ☐ Simple voice output device with 10 to 40 messages
- ☐ Voice output device with levels (e.g., 6 level Voice-in-a-box, Macaw, Digivox, DAC)
- ☐ Voice output device or computer/tablet with dynamic display software (e.g., DynaVox, Mytobii Proloquo2Go, Speaking Dynamically Pro, Vantage)
- ☐ Voice output device with icon sequencing (e.g., ECO, ECO2, Springboard Lite, Vanguard)
- ☐ Other

30. Does the student take the alternate assessment in English language arts, math, and science based on alternate academic achievement standards (AAAS)?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

31. What are the student's most recent state performance levels in English language arts?
[*Answer choices depend on assessment administered in student's location.*]

31.a MSAA

- ○ Level 1
- ○ Level 2
- ○ Level 3

- ○ Level 4
- ○ Student has not been tested

31.b MI-Access

- ○ Level 1 (Emerging)
- ○ Level 2 (Attained)
- ○ Level 3 (Surpassed)
- ○ Student has not been tested

31.c MTAS

- ○ Level 1 (Does not meet the standards)
- ○ Level 2 (Partially meets the standards)
- ○ Level 3 (Meets the standards)
- ○ Level 4 (Exceeds the standards)
- ○ Student has not been tested

31.d DLM

- ○ Level 1 (Foundational)
- ○ Level 2 (Emerging)
- ○ Level 3 (Meets standard)
- ○ Level 4 (Exceeds standard)
- ○ Student has not been tested

31.e SC-Alt

- ○ Level 1 (Emerging)
- ○ Level 2 (Approaching target)
- ○ Level 3 (Target)
- ○ Level 4 (Advanced)
- ○ Student has not been tested

31.f Other: _____

32. What are the student's most recent state performance levels in math? [*Answer choices depend on assessment administered in student's location.*]

32.a MSAA

- ○ Level 1
- ○ Level 2
- ○ Level 3
- ○ Level 4
- ○ Student has not been tested

32.b MI-Access

- ○ Level 1 (Emerging)

- ○ Level 2 (Attained)
- ○ Level 3 (Surpassed)
- ○ Student has not been tested

32.c MTAS

- ○ Level 1 (Does not meet the standards)
- ○ Level 2 (Partially meets the standards)
- ○ Level 3 (Meets the standards)
- ○ Level 4 (Exceeds the standards)
- ○ Student has not been tested

32.d DLM

- ○ Level 1 (Foundational)
- ○ Level 2 (Emerging)
- ○ Level 3 (Meets standard)
- ○ Level 4 (Exceeds standard)
- ○ Student has not been tested

32.e SC-Alt

- ○ Level 1 (Emerging)
- ○ Level 2 (Approaching target)
- ○ Level 3 (Target)
- ○ Level 4 (Advanced)
- ○ Student has not been tested

31.g Other: _____

33. What are the student's most recent state performance levels in science? [*Answer choices depend on assessment administered in student's location.*]

36.a AIMS

- ○ Level 1 (Falls far below)
- ○ Level 2 (Approaching)
- ○ Level 3 (Meets)
- ○ Level 4 (Exceeds)
- ○ Student has not been tested

36.b MI-Access

- ○ Level 1 (Emerging)
- ○ Level 2 (Attained)
- ○ Level 3 (Surpassed)
- ○ Student has not been tested

36.c MTAS

- ○ Level 1 (Does not meet the standards)
- ○ Level 2 (Partially meets the standards)
- ○ Level 3 (Meets the standards)
- ○ Level 4 (Exceeds the standards)
- ○ Student has not been tested

36.d DLM

- ○ Level 1 (Foundational)
- ○ Level 2 (Emerging)
- ○ Level 3 (Meets standard)
- ○ Level 4 (Exceeds standard)
- ○ Student has not been tested

36.e SC-Alt

- ○ Level 1 (Emerging)
- ○ Level 2 (Approaching target)
- ○ Level 3 (Target)
- ○ Level 4 (Advanced)
- ○ Student has not been tested

36.f Other: _____

34. Did the student take an English Language Proficiency assessment?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

35. What assessment was used to measure English Language Proficiency?

- ○ ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 [*Answer choice is only displayed if location is part of WIDA Consortium.]*
- ○ Alternate ACCESS [*Answer choice is only displayed if location is part of WIDA Consortium.]*
- ○ Other. Please specify: _____

36.What is the student's recent ELP performance level? [Answer choices depend on assessment administered in student's location.]

36.a AZELLA Score Report

Reading	Listening	Speaking	Writing	Overall
○ 1	○ 1	○ 1	○ 1	○ 1
○ 2	○ 2	○ 2	○ 2	○ 2
○ 3	○ 3	○ 3	○ 3	○ 3
○ 4	○ 4	○ 4	○ 4	○ 4
○ 5	○ 5	○ 5	○ 5	○ 5

36.b ELPA21 Score Report

Reading	Listening	Speaking	Writing	Overall
○ 1	○ 1	○ 1	○ 1	○ 1
○ 2	○ 2	○ 2	○ 2	○ 2
○ 3	○ 3	○ 3	○ 3	○ 3
○ 4	○ 4	○ 4	○ 4	○ 4
○ 5	○ 5	○ 5	○ 5	○ 5

36.c Alternate ACCESS Score Report

Reading	Listening	Speaking	Writing	Oral Language	Literacy	Comprehension	Overall
○ A1	○ A1	○ A1	○ A1	○ A1	○ A1	○ A1	○ A1
○ A2	○ A2	○ A2	○ A2	○ A2	○ A2	○ A2	○ A2
○ A3	○ A3	○ A3	○ A3	○ A3	○ A3	○ A3	○ A3
○ P1	○ P1	○ P1	○ P1	○ P1	○ P1	○ P1	○ P1
○ P2	○ P2	○ P2	○ P2	○ P2	○ P2	○ P2	○ P2
○ P3	○ P3	○ P3	○ P3	○ P3	○ P3	○ P3	○ P3

36.d ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Score Report

Reading	Listening	Speaking	Writing	Oral Language	Literacy	Comprehension	Overall
○ A1	○ A1	○ A1	○ A1	○ A1	○ A1	○ A1	○ A1
○ A2	○ A2	○ A2	○ A2	○ A2	○ A2	○ A2	○ A2
○ A3	○ A3	○ A3	○ A3	○ A3	○ A3	○ A3	○ A3
○ P1	○ P1	○ P1	○ P1	○ P1	○ P1	○ P1	○ P1
○ P2	○ P2	○ P2	○ P2	○ P2	○ P2	○ P2	○ P2
○ P3	○ P3	○ P3	○ P3	○ P3	○ P3	○ P3	○ P3

36.e AZELLA Score Report

Reading	Listening	Speaking	Writing	Overall
○ 1	○ 1	○ 1	○ 1	○ 1
○ 2	○ 2	○ 2	○ 2	○ 2
○ 3	○ 3	○ 3	○ 3	○ 3
○ 4	○ 4	○ 4	○ 4	○ 4
○ 5	○ 5	○ 5	○ 5	○ 5

36.f Other. Describe the student's most recent performance level (Score Report).

_____

37. What is the student's primary classroom setting?

- ○ Regular school (Self-contained special education classroom): Some special inclusion (students go to art, music, PE), but return to their special education class for most of the school day.
- ○ Regular school (Primarily self-contained special education classroom): some academic inclusion (students go to some general education academic classes such as reading, math, or science in addition to specials) but are in general education classes less than 40% of the school day.
- ○ Regular school (Resource room/general education classes): Students receive resource room services, but are in general education classes 40% or more of the school day.
- ○ Regular school (Inclusive/collaborative general education class): Students are based in general education classes and special education services are primarily delivered in the general education classes. At least 80% of the school day is spent in general education classes.
- ○ Special school
- ○ Other. Please describe: _____

38. How many hours per week does the student spend in English Language Development instruction?

- ○ 0
- ○ Less than 1 hour
- ○ 1 - 2 hours
- ○ 2 - 3 hours
- ○ 3 - 4 hours
- ○ More than 4 hours
- ○ Not sure

39. How many hours per week does the student spend in classrooms where instruction is in English?

- ○ 0
- ○ Less than 1 hour
- ○ 1 - 2 hours
- ○ 2 - 3 hours
- ○ 3 - 4 hours
- ○ More than 4 hours
- ○ All instruction is in English
- ○ Not sure

40. How many hours per week does the student spend in classrooms where instruction is in a language other than English?

- ○ 0
- ○ Less than 1 hour

- ○ 1 - 2 hours
- ○ 2 - 3 hours
- ○ 3 - 4 hours
- ○ More than 4 hours
- ○ All instruction is in a language other than English
- ○ Not sure

41. Is there an English language acquisition specialist on the IEP team? (e.g., ESL teacher, ESL coordinator)

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

42. Identify instructional accommodations and other accessibility supports that the student uses.

- ○ Color contrast
- ○ Directions repeated
- ○ Extended time
- ○ Language support (e.g., translation)
- ○ Masking
- ○ Read aloud
- ○ Scribe
- ○ Sign interpretation
- ○ Text to speech
- ○ Student does not receive instructional accommodations
- ○ Other

43. Identify assessment accommodations and other accessibility supports that the student uses.

- ○ Color contrast
- ○ Directions repeated
- ○ Extended time
- ○ Language support (e.g., translation)
- ○ Masking
- ○ Read aloud
- ○ Scribe
- ○ Sign interpretation
- ○ Text to speech
- ○ Student does not receive test accommodations
- ○ Other

44. Receptive Communication in English (you may choose more than one that best represents the student)

- ○ Can point to, look at, or touch things in the immediate vicinity when asked (e.g., pictures, objects, body parts)
- ○ 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)
- ○ 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?")

- ○ Responds appropriately in any modality (speech, sign, gestures, facial expressions) to single words that are spoken or signed
- ○ Responds appropriately in any modality (speech, sign, gestures, facial expressions) to phrases and sentences that are spoken or signed
- ○ 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)
- ○ Unknown/Not sure

45. Receptive Communication in a language other than English (you may choose more than one that best represents the student)

- ○ 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)
- ○ 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?")
- ○ Responds appropriately in any modality (speech, sign, gestures, facial expressions) to single words that are spoken or signed
- ○ Responds appropriately in any modality (speech, sign, gestures, facial expressions) to phrases and sentences that are spoken or signed
- ○ 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)
- ○ Unknown/Not sure

46. Expressive Communication in English with speech (choose the best description)

- ○ 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)
- ○ 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)
- ○ 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) 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)
- ○ Student does not use spoken language.
- ○ Unknown/Not sure

47. Expressive Communication in a language other than English with speech (choose the best description)

- ○ 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)
- ○ 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)
- ○ 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) 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)
- ○ Student does not use spoken language.
- ○ Unknown/Not sure

48. Expressive Communication in sign in ASL, CASE, cued speech, MCE, or pidgin (choose the best description)

- ○ Regularly combines 3 or more signed 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)
- ○ Usually uses 2 signed 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 brief questions, and commenting)
- ○ 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)
- ○ Unknown/Not sure

49. Expressive Communication in sign in a language other than English, ASL, CASE, cued speech, MCE, or pidgin (choose the best description)

- ○ Regularly combines 3 or more signed 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)
- ○ Usually uses 2 signed 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 brief questions, and commenting)
- ○ 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)
- ○ Unknown/Not sure

50. Expressive Communication with an AAC Device in English (choose the best description)

- ○ Regularly combines 3 or more symbols according to grammatical rules to accomplish the

4 major communicative purposes (e.g., expressing needs and wants, developing social closeness, exchanging information, and fulfilling social etiquette routines)

- ○ 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, commenting)
- ○ Usually uses only 1 symbol to meet a limited number of simple communicative purposes (e.g., refusing/rejecting things, making choices, requesting attention, greeting)Expressive Communication with an AAC Device in a language other than English (choose the best description)
- ○ Unknown/Not sure

51. Expressive communication with an AAC Device in a language other than English

- ○ Regularly combines 3 or more symbols according to grammatical rules to accomplish the 4 major communicative purposes (e.g., expressing needs and wants, developing social closeness, exchanging information, and fulfilling social etiquette routines)
- ○ 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, commenting)
- ○ Usually uses only 1 symbol to meet a limited number of simple communicative purposes (e.g., refusing/rejecting things, making choices, requesting attention, greeting)Expressive Communication with an AAC Device in a language other than English (choose the best description)
- ○ Unknown/Not sure

52. Engagement in English (choose the best description)

- ○ Initiates and sustains social interactions in English
- ○ Responds with social interaction, but does not initiate or sustain social interactions in English Alerts to others speaking English
- ○ Does not alert to others speaking English
- ○ Unknown/Not sure

53. Engagement in a language other than English (choose the best description)

- ○ Initiates and sustains social interactions in a language other than English
- ○ Responds with social interaction, but does not initiate or sustain social interactions in a language other than English
- ○ Alerts to others speaking a language other than English
- ○ Does not alert to others speaking a language other than English
- ○ Unknown/Not sure

54. Reading in English (choose the best description)

- ○ Reads fluently with critical understanding in print in English (e.g., to differentiate fact/opinion, point of view, emotional responses)
- ○ Reads fluently with basic (literal) understanding from paragraphs/short passages with narrative/informational texts

- ○ Reads basic sight words, simple sentences, directions, bullets, and /or lists in print in English
- ○ Aware of text, follows directionality, makes letter distinctions, or tells a story from the pictures that is not linked to the text in English
- ○ No observable awareness of print in English
- ○ Unknown/Not sure

55. Reading in a language other than English (choose the best description)

- ○ Reads fluently with critical understanding in print in a language other than English (e.g., to differentiate fact/opinion, point of view, emotional responses)
- ○ Reads fluently with basic (literal) understanding from paragraphs/short passages with narrative/informational texts in print in a language other than English
- ○ Reads basic sight words, simple sentences, directions, bullets, and /or lists in print in a language other than English
- ○ Aware of text, follows directionality, makes letter distinctions, or tells a story from the pictures that is not linked to the text in a language other than English
- ○ No observable awareness of print in a language other than English
- ○ Unknown/Not sure

56. Reading in braille (choose the best description). Please complete this item if the student reads braille.

- ○ Reads fluently with critical understanding in braille (e.g., to differentiate fact/opinion, point of view, emotional responses)
- ○ Reads fluently with basic (literal) understanding from paragraphs/short passages with narrative/informational texts in braille
- ○ Reads basic sight words, simple sentences, directions, bullets, and /or lists in print in braille
- ○ Aware of braille, follows directionality, makes letter distinctions, or tells a story from the pictures that is not linked to the text
- ○ Unknown/Not sure

57. Mathematics in English (choose the best description)

- ○ Applies computational procedures to solve real-life or routine word problems from a variety of contexts in English
- ○ Does computational procedures with or without a calculator in English
- ○ Counts 1:1 correspondence to at least 10, and/or makes numbered sets of items in English
- ○ Counts by rote to five in English
- ○ No observable awareness of use of numbers in English
- ○ Unknown/Not sure

58. Mathematics in a language other than English (choose the best description)

- ○ Applies computational procedures to solve real-life or routine word problems from a variety of contexts in a language other than English
- ○ Does computational procedures with or without a calculator in a language other than

English

- ○ Counts 1:1 correspondence to at least 10, and/or makes numbered sets of items in a language other than English
- ○ Counts by rote to five in a language other than English
- ○ No observable awareness of use of numbers in a language other than English
- ○ Unknown/Not sure

59. Writing in English. The student can use AAC devices. (choose the best description)

- ○ Writes full sentences in English
- ○ Writes phrases in English
- ○ Writes words in English
- ○ Writes letters in English
- ○ Does not write in English
- ○ Unknown/Not sure

60. Writing in a language other than English. The student can use AAC devices.(choose the best description)

- ○ Writes full sentences in a language other than English
- ○ Writes phrases in a language other than English
- ○ Writes words in a language other than English
- ○ Writes letters in a language other than English
- ○ Does not write in a language other than English
- ○ Unknown/Not sure

61. If you would like the opportunity to participate in this research further, please include your name and your e-mail below. If not, please leave blank and hit submit to complete this survey.

Name: _____

E-mail: _____

Appendix B: Recruitment Flyer

ALTELLA

ALTERNATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING ASSESSMENT PROJECT

Project Background

The ALTELLA research project aims to generate findings on successful instructional practices, accessibility resources and accommodations, and assessment of English learners (ELs) with cognitive disabilities to develop an evidence-centered design approach to inform the future developments related to alternate English language proficiency (ELP) assessment for these students.

Many ELs with significant cognitive disabilities are often excluded from required state ELP assessments. Currently, there is limited evidence regarding the progress toward English proficiency for ELs with significant cognitive disabilities. Such evidence is critical to ensure success in school, the path to college, career, and community readiness.

Individual Characteristics Questionnaire

Help us create a profile of the population of students with significant cognitive disabilities who are English learners!

The ALTELLA project has developed an Individual Characteristics Questionnaire (ICQ) to gather key information about the characteristics of ELs with significant cognitive disabilities. The profile developed from the ICQ will inform the future development of an alternate ELP assessment.

Completing the ICQ Online Survey

The ICQ is distributed as an online survey found at go.wisc.edu/altella. The survey takes 15-20 minutes. Complete one survey for each student who is an English learner with significant cognitive disabilities.

We encourage special educators, English language learner specialists, and other educators to work as a team. By collaborating, you can learn from one another and gather high-quality data to support your students.

Complete the ICQ online at
go.wisc.edu/altella

ALTELLA ALTERNATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING ASSESSMENT PROJECT

Types of Questions

The ICQ collects information about an individual student:

- 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
- 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

This information will help test developers, policy makers, and researchers know more about English learners with significant cognitive disabilities. It will also help the field know what kinds of items should be included in the test. Finally, this information will help determine participation and accommodations policies.

Security and Publication of Data

The ICQ survey will not collect or report any identifiable information about you, your student, your school, or your district. The survey does not request student names or identification numbers. In most cases, the results of the study will be aggregated by state. ALTELLA project reports are available at http://altella.wceruw.org/resources.html.

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact Laurene Christensen at laurene.christensen@wisc.edu.

Contact Information

Visit us online at altella.wceruw.org.

Questions? Please contact Dr. Laurene Christensen at laurene.christensen@wisc.edu.

ALTELLA is housed within the Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER) at the School of Education, University of Wisconsin–Madison.

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Appendix C: Students' Primary Home Languages

Primary Home Language	Number of Students
Albanian	<6
American Sign Language (ASL)	<6
Amharic	<6
Amish	<6
Bambara	<6
Bengali	7
Burmese	<6
Cantonese	8
Chin	<6
Chinese	<6
Congo	<6
Creole	<6
Crioulo	<6
Dialect of Spanish from Guatemala	<6
English	424
Ewe	<6
Farsi	<6
French	10
Fulani	<6
German	<6
Gujarati	<6
Haitian Creole	14
Hindi	<6
Hmong	<6
Hutterish	<6
I don't know what is spoken at home, but it's not English.	<6
Indian	<6
Japanese	<6
Karen	6
Karen Sgaw	<6
Karenni	<6
Khmer	<6
Kirundi	<6
Korean	<6
Liberian English	<6
Luganda	<6
Maay	<6
Malayalam	<6
Mandarin	19
Marshallese	<6
Moghamo	<6
Navajo	<6
Nepalese	<6
Nepali	<6

Primary Home Language	Number of Students
Oriya	<6
Pennsylvania Dutch	<6
Polish	<6
Portuguese	7
Punjabi	<6
Quiché	<6
Russian	15
Sign Language	<6
Somali	14
Spanish	819
Swahili	<6
Swedish	<6
Syrian	<6
Tagalog	<6
Taishanese	<6
Tamazight	<6
Tamil	<6
Telegu	<6
Turkish	<6
Twi	<6
Ukrainian	<6
Urdu	8
Vietnamese	10
Wolof	<6
Yiddish	<6
Yoruba	<6

Appendix D: Other Languages Students are Exposed To

Language	Number of Students
Aamaric	<6
African Dialect	<6
African Language	<6
American Sign Language (ASL)	16
Amharic	<6
Apache	<6
Arabic	14
Aramaic	<6
Basic Sign Language	<6
Bengali	<6
Burmese	<6
Cantonese	10
Chaldean	<6
Chinese	<6
Creole	<6
French	21
French Creole	<6
Garifuna	<6
German	<6
Gujarati	<6
Haitian Creole	<6
Hebrew	<6
Hindi	<6
Hmong	<6
Hopi	<6
Hungarian	<6
Indian	<6
Italian	<6
Japanese	<6
Kanjobal	<6
Khran	<6
K'iche	<6
Kinyarwanda	<6
Korean	<6
Kurdish	<6
Lingala	<6
Mandarin	9
Mandingo	<6
Navajo	8
Ojibwa	<6
Portuguese	<6
Punjabi	<6
Quiché	<6
Russian	9

Language	Number of Students
Salish	<6
Samoan	<6
Sign Language	<6
Signing Exact English	<6
Somali	<6
Spanish	159
Tagalog	6
Tarasco	<6
Telegu	<6
Thai	<6
Tigrinya	<6
Ukrainian	<6
Unknown	<6
Urdu	<6
Vietnamese	<6
Wolof	<6