It’s clear, in short, that no one program works for all children. It’s also clear that native language instruction is no magic bullet—just as no other single program component would be. Taken together, these findings imply a need for local autonomy, an interrelationship between what’s desirable and what’s feasible, and an effort to move the debate beyond program labels and language of instruction to the broader set of issues schools must address to ensure the academic success of language-minority children.

The National Research Council (NRC) committee identified the following attributes of effective schools and classrooms that benefit all students, especially English learners:

- supportive but challenging schoolwide climate (including aligning teacher, student, and family beliefs, assumptions, and expectations toward high academic achievement);
- strong instructional leadership at the school level;
- customized learning environment, adapted to meet the identified instructional needs of students;
- articulation and coordination of programs and practices within and between schools;
- use of native language and valuing of home cultures as resources to be built upon, rather than liabilities to remediate;
- curriculum that balances basic and higher-order skills;
- explicit skills instruction for certain tasks, particularly in acquiring basic skills and learning strategies;
- opportunities for student-directed activities (small group work on conceptual tasks, peer tutoring) particularly in using language to make sense or create meaning;
- instructional strategies that enhance comprehension (sheltered instructional approaches, calling attention to language while using it, providing background knowledge and building on previous knowledge);
- opportunities for practice (built-in redundancy, extended dialog and instructional conversation);
- systematic student assessment to adjust instruction to students’ needs and improve program practices in a timely way;
- high-quality, sustained staff development that improves classroom practice; and
• family involvement to build supportive environments at home and home-school connections.

Reaction Questions:
1. This document speaks to characteristics of effective schools and class settings to meet the needs of ELL students. What do you know about how your building/district/state currently addresses the following in order to meet the educational needs of students who are English Language Learners:
   a. Academic instructional strategies;
   b. Behavioral/pro-social skills instruction; and
   c. Learning environments?
2. From your viewpoint, what is necessary to foster successful outcomes, academically and behaviorally, for students who are ELL?
3. How does your building/district/state/community acknowledge and value the languages and cultures of students who are ELL?
4. From your viewpoint, what is necessary to foster successful outcomes, academically and behaviorally, for ELL students?
5. To what degree are supports for ELL students articulated and implemented Pre-K through grade 12, across content or specialized service departments (special education, Title I, gifted and talented), in your district?
6. How would you describe the necessary skills and behaviors of a high school graduate? What are the current gaps that need to be addressed in order to ensure that all students who are ELL graduate with the necessary and appropriate skills and behaviors to successfully transition to post secondary education and/or employment?
7. How can we balance the customized learning needs of students who are ELL with the need for all students to meet state accountability standards?
8. In your opinion, what do school personnel need to know in order to understand the instructional needs of students who are ELL?

Application Questions:
1. What processes/practices can we put into place to ensure all students, including ELL are afforded appropriate
a. Academic instructional strategies;

b. Behavioral/pro-social skills instruction; and

c. Learning environments?

2. How can the state/district/school/community work together to plan and implement professional development opportunities for school personnel/the community that will support greater understanding of the characteristics of effective schools and class settings to meet the needs of English language learners?

3. What can we put in place to better articulate (Pre-K through grade 12), coordinate (across schools at a grade level), and collaboratively foster academic success across content or specialized service departments (special education, Title I, gifted and talented)?

These questions were developed by the following stakeholders working together within the IDEA Partnership:

Role: Family Member  
Location: California

Role: School Psychologist  
Location: California

Role: Teacher  
Location: California

Role: Special Education Administrator  
Location: Florida

Role: Consultant  
Location: North Carolina

Role: Regional Comprehensive Content Center Staff  
Location: Texas

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