Supporting Special Populations Students in CTE

A self-paced online course for CTE leaders and instructors

Module Four

Supporting English Learners

Who are English Learner Students?

The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act defines English Learners (EL) as:

- A secondary school student who is an English learner, as defined in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

- An adult or an out-of-school youth who has limited ability in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language and

    o whose native language is a language other than English; or

    o who lives in a family environment or community in which a language other than English is the dominant language.

English Learner Students in CTE

- Three percent of secondary students participating in Pennsylvania CTE are identified as English Learners.

- Students who are identified as ELs are a diverse group of learners, as their English language proficiency, acquisition rates, and home languages can all vary.

- Given this diversity and because so much of CTE instruction involves highly technical language, it can be a challenge for instructors to meet the significant learning needs of these students.

- Schools must implement strategies that not only teach EL the content and skills they need, but also provide supports for these students to develop their English language skills.

Barriers Faced by English Learner Students

English Learners may encounter barriers due to:

- lack of educator awareness and cultural sensitivity,

- inconsistent referral systems in schools, and

- Lack of challenging, relevant coursework due to lowered expectations.

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Schoolwide Strategies to Engage EL Students & Families

- It is federally required to provide access to translation services (written) and interpretation services (oral) for students and their families.

- ELs and their families benefit when they can easily access information and communicate effectively with school personnel.

- To help achieve this, CTCs and schools shall:

  - o Translate all school documents that are sent home into the home language. This includes administrative, classroom and promotional/ informational items.

  - o Translate school signage.

  - o As needed, provide photographs to complement translated materials.

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Provide Pre-Enrollment Transition Services

Specific practices that could be implemented to help facilitate the transition for students include:

- At the home school, an intensive and organized program to deter potential dropout prior to entry into CTE programs (e.g., orientation and peer mentoring).

- A guided tour of the CTC and its programs to prospective students and their parents.

- Opportunities to meet with CTC EL staff prior to enrollment.

- Opportunities for students and parents to meet with their CTE instructor.

- Early conversations between the sending schools and the CTC.

Strategies for the CTE Classroom

- Deploy EL classroom assistants so that they can provide push-in services in the CTE classroom.

- Provide professional development to instructors and instructional assistants

- Provide instructors with resources and materials

- Use instructional practices that support learning and address the language barrier.

Retention of English Learners in CTE

- A peer mentoring option like a cohort within a class or a study group facilitated by a bilingual individual.

- Ensure learners are included in career development activities and a variety of work-based learning options

- Provide parents with information about career development and career opportunities beyond the CTE program.

- Provide other appropriate support services (not only language specific services).

- Support for learning about postsecondary education and workplace success skills.

Promising Practices: Supporting English Learners

Promising Practice profiles to review:

Thomas Edison High School: Hands-on Support for English Learners in the CTE classroom.

Reading-Muhlenberg CTC: Enrolling & Supporting English Learners in CTE

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Module Four Resources

Reading Muhlenberg Career & Technology Center: Serving English Learners

Integrating Employability Skills with Classroom Instruction to Support English Learners

Strategies for Special Populations Success

Pennsylvania Seal of Biliteracy: A statewide program to recognize students proficient in more than one world language.

Educating English Learners: The PDE web page with EL guidance and policies.

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Module Four Assignment

Please complete the Module Four Prompts (Reflection Journal):

1. Which two strategies defined in this module could you integrate into your classroom to support English Learners?

2. How do we prepare EL students with language skills for success for employability in their industry?

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Contact/Mission

For more information on supporting special populations students in CTE, please visit PDE's website at www.education.pa.gov

The mission of the department is to academically prepare children and adults to succeed as productive citizens. The department seeks to ensure that the technical support, resources and opportunities are in place for all students, whether children or adults, to receive a high-quality education.

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