

Figure 3. Diversifying the English Language Learner Label for Informing Instructional and Assessment Practices

**Diversifying the English Language Learner Label
For Informing Instructional and Assessment Practices**

By: Dr. Ambareen Nasir

Below is a table taken from Lenski et. al (2006) indicating the characteristics of the four possible categories for English learners. Working with your teacher colleagues, brainstorm which of your English learners would apply for each category. Then, discuss opportunities for how grouping your students according to these categories can be helpful for your future language instruction and assessment practices. Complete your answers using the graphic organizer below.

TABLE 1 Categories of English-language learners	
<p>Newly arrived students with adequate formal schooling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have been in the country for fewer than five years, • Have had an adequate degree of schooling in their native country, • Perform in reading and writing at grade level, • Find it relatively easy to catch up with their native-English-speaking peers, • Have difficulty with standardized tests, • Have parents who are educated speakers of their L1 (native language), • Developed a strong foundation in their L1, • Demonstrate the potential to make fast progress in English, and • Have found it easy to acquire a second or third language. <p>Newly arrived students with limited formal schooling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have recently arrived in an English-speaking school (fewer than five years), • Have experienced interrupted schooling, • Have limited native-language and literacy skills, • Perform poorly on achievement tasks, • May not have had previous schooling, • May experience feelings of loss of emotional and social networks, • Have parents who have low literacy levels, and • Could have difficulty learning English. 	<p>Students exposed to two languages simultaneously</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were born in the United States but have grown up in households where a language other than English is spoken, • Live in communities of speakers who primarily communicate in their L1 or go back and forth between languages, • Have grown up being exposed to two languages simultaneously, • May have not developed academic literacy in either L1 or L2 (second language), • Often engage in extensive code-switching, thus making use of both linguistic systems to communicate, and • Have acquired oral proficiency in a language other than English first but may not have learned to read or write in that language. <p>Long-term English-language learners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have already spent more than five years in an English-speaking school, • Have literacy skills that are below grade level, • Have had some English as a second language classes or bilingual support, and • Require substantial and ongoing language and literacy support.

Note. Adapted from Freeman and Freeman (2003).

(Lenski, et. al., 2006, p. 26)

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Newly Arrived Students with Adequate Formal Schooling</u></p> <p>Names of Students:</p> <p>Instruction and Assessment Needs:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Newly Arrived Students with Limited Formal Schooling</u></p> <p>Names of Students:</p> <p>Instruction and Assessment Needs:</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Students Exposed to Two Languages Simultaneously</u></p> <p>Names of Students:</p> <p>Instruction and Assessment Needs:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Long Term English Learners</u></p> <p>Names of Students:</p> <p>Instruction and Assessment Needs:</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Reflections</p> <p>1. How has this activity helped informed how you plan to work with your ELs?</p> <p>2. What additional information would you need (and how can you gather that information) to inform future language instruction and assessment measures?</p>	