Slide 1

2025 Annual Conference — MSLHA Michigan Speech Language Hearing Association — March 14, 2025

Separating Difference from Disability

in Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Students

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Slide 2

Case Studies
Welcome!

OaklandSchools

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Oakland Schools Guidance
Separating Difference from Disability in English Learners Who Struggle

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Slide 3

What are best practices for EL/ML evals?

Is this referral appropriate?

What patterns of performance indicate difference vs disability?

3

Slide 4
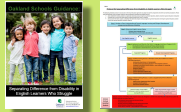
Today's Agenda

Compelling WHY for this Discussion (15 min)

5 Big Ideas to Guide Decision-Making for CLD Learners (30 min)

Application to Referrals and Evaluations (30 min)

4

TOOLS

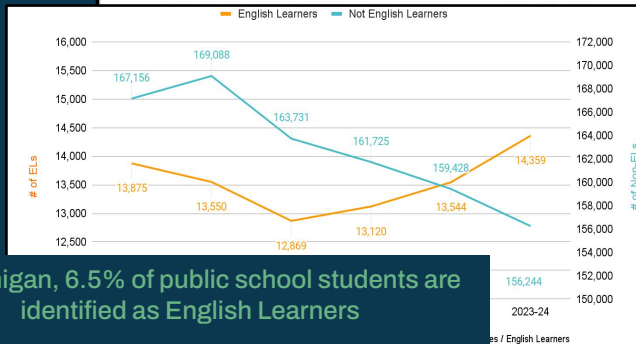| REVIEW	INTERVIEW	OBSERVE	TEST
★ Home Language & Culture Characteristics + **Contrastive Analysis** ★ Acculturation Quick Screen	★ **Socio-Cultural Interview** ★ **Language Exposure Data** ★ Ortiz PVAT	★ Enculturation ★ Acculturation ★ Routines ★ Interactions ★ Learning in school contexts	★ Speaking & listening in L1 ★ Speaking & listening in L2 ★ **Dynamic Assessments**

Oakland Schools Guidance: Effective Interpretation Process for English Learners and Their Families

Evaluation Plan TEMPLATE   Example REPORT

5

What EL & ML trends are we noticing?

6

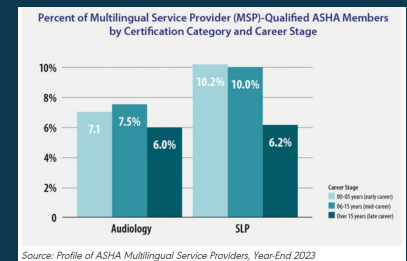English Learners — Not English Learners

★ In Michigan, 6.5% of public school students are identified as English Learners

★ In Oakland, EL enrollment is growing faster (8% of our students right now) while non-EL enrollment is declining
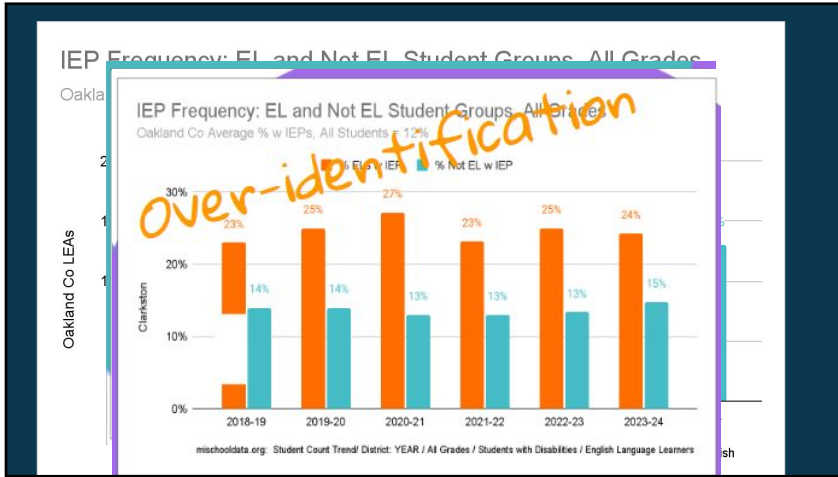
Chart values (# of ELs): 13,875, 13,550, 12,869, 13,120, 13,544, 14,359
Chart values (# of Non-ELs): 167,156, 169,088, 163,731, 161,725, 159,428, 156,244

2023-24

Nationally…

- 93% of SLPs are monolingual English speakers
- 30% of kids under age 8 are bilingual

Percent of Multilingual Service Provider (MSP)-Qualified ASHA Members by Certification Category and Career Stage

	Audiology	SLP
00-05 years (early career)	7.1	10.2%
06-15 years (mid-career)	7.5%	10.0%
Over 15 years (late career)	6.0%	6.2%

Source: Profile of ASHA Multilingual Service Providers, Year-End 2023

Source: ASHA

IEP Frequency: EL and Not EL Student Groups, All Grades

Oakland Co Average % w IEPs, All Students = 12%

Over-identification

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
% EL w IEP	23%	25%	27%	23%	25%	24%
% Not EL w IEP	14%	14%	13%	13%	13%	15%

mischooldata.org: Student Count Trend/ District: YEAR / All Grades / Students with Disabilities / English Language Learners

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5 Big Ideas to Guide Decision-Making for ELs & MLs

1

Teams must develop a shared understanding of bilingual and multilingual development & protocol for supporting ELs who are struggling

Oakland Schools Guidance:

Separating Difference from Disability in English Learners Who Struggle

Protocol for Separating Difference from Disability in English Learners Who Struggle

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Audience Q&A

Do not edit
How to change the design

slido

Slide 2 (slide 13):

2

★ Bilingualism and multilingual learning does NOT predispose an individual to SSD (speech sound disorder) nor DLD (developmental language delay)
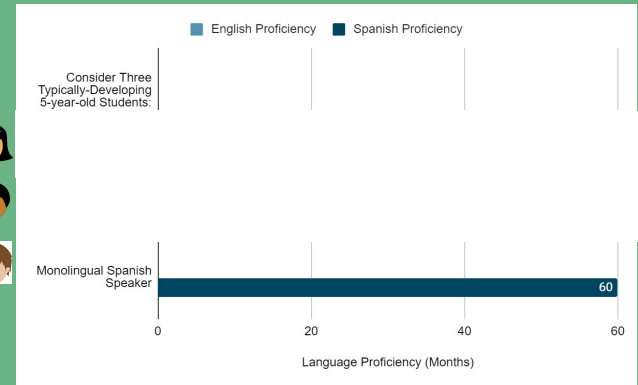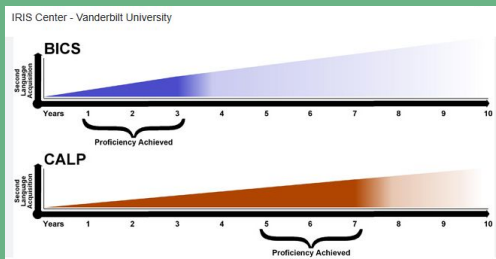
FICTION
VERSUS
FACT
LEARNING MORE THAN ONE LANGUAGE
✗ ✓

Slide 3 (slide 14):

3 Language learning is additive

■ English Proficiency ■ Spanish Proficiency

Consider Three Typically-Developing 5-year-old Students:

Giving a test & just looking at a score will never validly answer the question of difference vs disability!

Monolingual Spanish Speaker — 60

| 0 | 20 | 40 | 60 |

Language Proficiency (Months)

Slide 4 (slide 15):

4

Multilingual learners show predictable patterns in language development

IRIS Center - Vanderbilt University

BICS
Second Language Acquisition
Years 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Proficiency Achieved

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills
Conversational, social, informal everyday language that is acquired naturally within **6 months - 3 years**

CALP
Second Language Acquisition
Years 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Proficiency Achieved

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
School-based, higher-level knowledge of academic vocabulary, complex sentence structures, and classroom discourse that develops across **5-7 years or longer**

Slide 5 (slide 16):

5

Teams can predict EXPECTED vs UNEXPECTED patterns of performance based on the lived language & cultural experiences of the child

PREDICT
the present level of performance that would be

BUILD
an understanding of the child's culture & language-learning experience

EXPECTED UNEXPECTED

COLLECT
data to describe the present level of performance

COMPARE
the present level with predictions & determine which prediction is the closest match

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- ★ Socio-Cultural Interview

- ★ Language Exposure Data

  Early Childhood: School Age:

- ★ Home Language & Culture Characteristics + Contrastive Analysis

  L1 Characteristics — Characteristics shared by L1 & L2 — L2 Characteristics

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Slide 18

Errors only here indicate delay in native language but they do not impact access to/ progress in gen ed in US English-speaking school; would not likely meet eligibility for IEP; Q2 = No

L1 Characteristics — Characteristics shared by L1 & L2 — L2 Characteristics
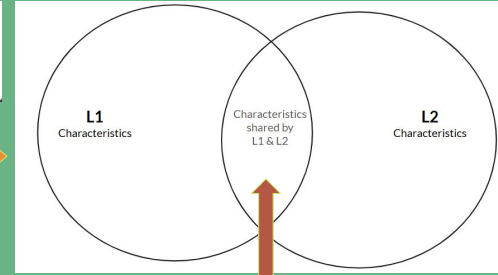
Errors only here indicate influence of second language learning on the student; they do not indicate a delay; they are a difference that results from the influence of L1 on L2; would not likely meet eligibility for IEP; Q1 = No

Errors here indicate true delay that is present in both languages; these errors are UNEXPECTED and could impact access to/ progress in general ed in US English-speaking school; may meet eligibility for IEP
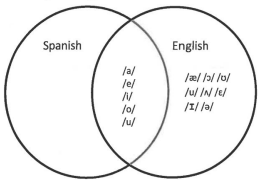
- ★ Find out what is shared and what is not between L1 and L2 to understand if a difference is EXPECTED vs UNEXPECTED

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Slide 19

SPEECH

Venn Contrast: Spanish & English Consonant Phonemes
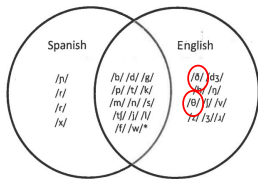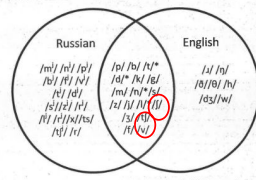
Spanish — English

Venn Contrast: Spanish & English Vowel Phonemes

Spanish — English

Difference is EXPECTED→ No Referral Needed

Venn Contrast: Russian & English Consonants Phonemes

Russian — English

Phonemes marked with an asterisk (*) are always dentalized in Russian. The following sounds also occur in Russian but are considered by most linguists to be allophones rather than phonemes: kʲ, gʲ, xʲ, ɣ, ʑː, dʑ.

Venn Contrast: Russian & English Vowel Phonemes

Russian — English
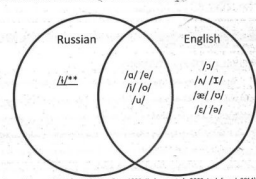
(Gildersleeve-Neumann & Wright, 2010); Hamilton, 1980; Kedrova, et al., 2002, Ladefoged, 2014)
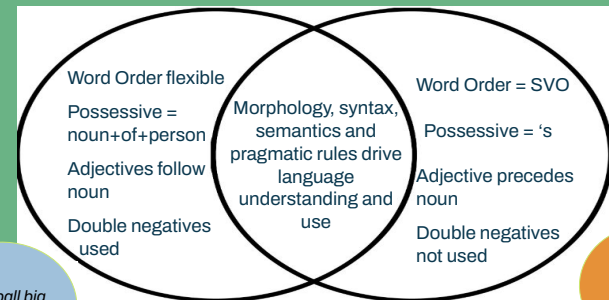** There is controversy about whether [ɨ] is a phoneme or an allophone of [i] in Russian.

Difference is UNEXPECTED→ Referral May Be Appropriate

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Slide 20

LANGUAGE

Spanish — English

Word Order flexible

Possessive = noun+of+person

Adjectives follow noun

Double negatives used

Morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatic rules drive language understanding and use

Word Order = SVO

Possessive = 's

Adjective precedes noun

Double negatives not used

"The ball big bounced."

"Go thing there."

Difference is EXPECTED→ No Referral Needed

Difference is UNEXPECTED→ Referral May Be Appropriate

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Slide 21 — Spanish LANGUAGE Features

Sources for home language features and culture characteristics→

- Cultures
- Languages
- Bilinguistics Languages
- ASHA contrastive Analysis

Feature	Spanish	English	Examples of Errors
Word order	Flexible	Strict Subject-Verb-Object order	The ball he threw.*/ He threw the ball.
Possessives	noun+of+person	's	The car of my mom is blue*/ My mom's car is blue.

Feature	Spanish	English	Examples of Errors
Adjectives	Adjective follows noun	Adjective precedes noun	The ball big bounced.*/ The big ball bounced.
Present tense verb inflection	5-6 forms, determined by subject: *Yo como* *Tú comes* *Él/Ella/Ud. come* *Nosotros comemos* *Vosotros coméis* *Ellos comen*	2 forms: I eat You eat He eats We eat You all eat They eat	She talk to me.* / She talks to me.
Use of subject pronouns	Pro-drop	Pronoun is always required	Looks for the frog* / He looks for the frog.
Regular past tense	5-6 forms, determined by subject	One form (-ed)	She walk to the store* / She walked to the store.
Double object pronoun	Can be used	Cannot be used	I saw him the man*/ I saw the man
Double negative	Can be used	Cannot be used	I don't want to do nothing*/ I don't want to do anything.
Question formation	Questions marked by inflection or question words	Questions marked by word order inversion, question words, or addition of *do*	You give me a sticker?*/ Will you give me a sticker? What you think?*/ What do you think? We can go?* / Can we go?

Slide 22 — LANGUAGE

Typical MLs	Syntax	Morphology	Semantics	Pragmatics
Respond to the following strategies when learning English: Repetition of instructions Visual supports Repeating back instructions Pre Teaching lesson vocab Peer supports Explicit instructional routines	**Different languages have different word order** The use of word order that is different than English but consistent with the home language is expected for typical MLs	**Morphology varies greatly across languages** Plurality, verb tense, negatives, copua and relative clauses are highly variable The use of specific verbs and nouns as well as complete sentences are consistent across languages	**MLs often borrow words from one language to use in another** MLs know different words in their different languages & only a portion of the words do they know in both languages MLs know the same # of concepts as monolingual peers; they just know them in only one language or the other	**Many social aspects can vary across cultures:** - Eye contact expectations - Body language and space - Communication initiations w/ adults
Do not make a referral when these strategies facilitate English learning that is fairly effortless	Do not make a referral for word order patterns that are consistent with the ML's home language	Do not make a referral for patterns in English that are due to or consistent with the ML's home language	Do not make a referral for translanguaging, code-switching or reduced # of English words only	Do not make a referral for behaviors that are different due to cultural variation

Slide 23 — Additional Learning:

Oakland Schools Guidance: Separating Difference from Disability in English Learners Who Struggle

Oakland Schools Guidance: Separating Difference from Disability in English Learners Who Struggle
Key Concept from Step 4: Using Language Exposure Data To Interpret Student Performance

Oakland Schools Guidance: Separating Difference from Disability in English Learners Who Struggle
Key Concept from Step 5: Contrastive Analysis of L1 and L2

Slide 24

Application to Referrals & Evaluations of ELs/ MLs

Slide 25

Is this referral appropriate?

| IF the behavior/ pattern/ skill you are noticing is any of the following…	IF the behavior/ pattern/ skill you are noticing is any of the following…
❑ A result of influence from the student's native language on English ❑ Only seen in English, not in the home language ❑ Observed for structures that are unique to English and not in the home language ❑ Expected based on the child's exposure and lived experience ❑ Learned easily when provided with explicit, well-matched instruction	❑ Seen for both English and the home language ❑ Observed for common structures or characteristics shared by English and the home language ❑ Unexpected based on the child's exposure and lived experience ❑ Not learned easily when provided with explicit, well-matched instruction
THEN the primary determinant factor of the learning difficulty is limited English proficiency	THEN the primary determinant factor of the learning difficulty may be a true impairment present in all languages
Referral NOT appropriate	Referral appropriate

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Slide 26

Is this referral appropriate?

Slide 27
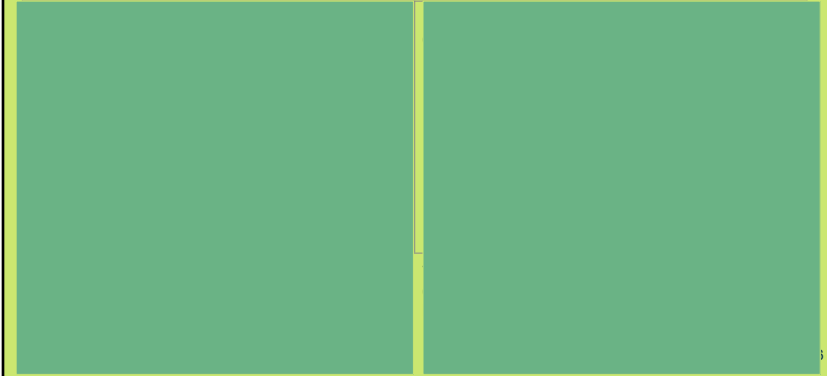
Is this referral appropriate?

Additional Resources:

Should I Refer This Bilingual Student for a Speech-Language Evaluation?

A Presentation for the Awesome Teachers at This School

BILINGUISTICS

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Slide 28

What are best practices for EL evals?

★ Design a culturally and linguistically responsive evaluation plan

★ Follow all IDEA and MARSE requirements …

★ Apply decision-rules

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Slide 1

Summary of IDEA and MARSE Requirements for Eligibility relevant to ELs and MLs:

3-Question Litmus Test (3QLT)
Children are entitled to an IEP or IFSP only when the answer to all 3 questions is YES:

1. Is there a disability/ developmental delay or established condition?
2. Does the disability/ condition adversely affect the access to/ progress in the general curriculum/ participation in daily routines and activities?
3. Are the disability/ condition and limitations severe enough to require special education/ early intervention services so that the child can access/ progress in the general curriculum/ participate in daily routines and activities?

Assessments

- Are nondiscriminatory
- Are in child's native language
- Are valid & reliable
- Are administered by trained, knowledgeable personnel

Determination

- Eligibility findings are not primarily the result of limited English proficiency (LEP)

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Slide 2

★ Assessments and evaluation materials are provided and administered in the child's native language… and in the form most likely to yield accurate information on what the child knows and can do academically, developmentally, and functionally…

★ A child must not be determined to be a child with a disability under Part B if the determinant factor for that determination is:
- Lack of appropriate instruction in reading…
- Lack of appropriate instruction in math or
- Limited English proficiency

IDEA
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Slide 3

★ Communication difficulties must not be due to cultural or linguistic differences
★ A regional, social or cultural/ ethnic variation of a symbol system should not be considered a disorder
★ Assessments & evaluations must be conducted in all languages of the child

★ Behaviors, play, gestures, nonverbal communication, joint attention, initiation & feeding skills should be interpreted within the cultural lenses of the child's natural environment
★ Norm-referenced standard scores for assessments in which the normative sample is different from the child being assessed (even when interpretation or translanguage are used) are not valid

MICHIGAN Department of Education

Evaluations and Eligibility

Slide 4

★ True communication disorders will be evident in all languages used by an individual

★ A skilled clinician will appropriately account for variables such as…
- the process of language development,
- language loss,
- the impact of language dominance fluctuation, and
- the influence of dual language acquisition and use when differentiating between a disorder and a difference

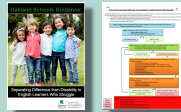★ Informed clinical opinion is required for valid interpretation of data from multiple sources

ASHA
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

Slide 33

TOOLS

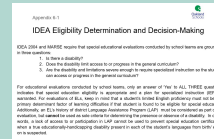| REVIEW	INTERVIEW	OBSERVE	TEST
★ Home Language & Culture Characteristics + Contrastive Analysis ★ Acculturation Quick Screen	★ Socio-Cultural Interview ★ Language Exposure Data ★ Ortiz PVAT	★ Enculturation ★ Acculturation ★ Routines ★ Interactions ★ Learning in school contexts	★ Speaking & listening in L1 ★ Speaking & listening in L2 ★ Dynamic Assessments

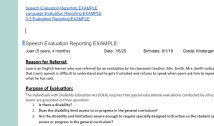Evaluation Plan TEMPLATE   Example REPORT

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Slide 34

★ **Decision-rules**

IDEA Eligibility Determination and Decision-Making

★ **Supportive Scaffolds→**

Example Reports   Report Template

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Slide 35

This EL is entitled to an IEP. Now what?

L1 Characteristics | Characteristics shared by L1 & L2 | L2 Characteristics

English language development services target English language acquisition

IEP services target underlying language or learning components not yet learned but shared by all languages of the individual

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Slide 36

This EL is entitled to an IEP. Now what?

★ Target speech & language components that are shared by English and the Native Language
  ○ Sample IEP goals
★ Understand best practices for dual identified students
  ○ Language of intervention

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After hearing about these big ideas for evaluating CLD Students, I feel empowered to try…

slido

Next Steps

Evaluation Form:
https://forms.gle/okHTL4MXEa8xyk7KA

MS A
MICHIGAN SPEECH LANGUAGE HEARING
ASSOCIATION

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SOURCES

- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.). Documentation in schools [Practice Portal]. Key Issues, Documentation Considerations for English Learners/Dual Language Learners (DLLs) https://www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Professional-Issues/Documentation-in-Schools/

- American Speech-Language Hearing Association. (n.d.-a). Multilingual service delivery in audiology and speech-language pathology [Practice Portal]. https://www.asha.org/practice-portal/professional-issues/multilingual-service-delivery/?srsltid=AfmB OopIRKpoAdmsj7o36Iky40Ron8a7Fx3jekYGx_BSIk9XVrGVpqWs

- Bilinguistics.com. (2014). Difference or Disorder? Understanding Speech and Language Patterns in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students. https://bilinguistics.com/catalog/products/difference-vs-disorder-understanding-speech-and-languag e-patterns/

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. (2004). Sec. 300.304 Evaluation procedures. https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/d/300.304

- Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education (MARSE) With Related IDEA Federal Regulations. (2024, July). State of Michigan. https://www.michigan.gov/-/media/Project/Websites/mde/specialeducation/MI-rules/MARSE_Supple mented_with_IDEA_Regs.pdf?rev=31a344bbefe64c8ca8aeb91d97891591

- Oakland Schools. (2025). Oakland Schools Guidance: Separating Difference from Disability in English Learners Who Struggle. https://tinyurl.com/updatedOSELDifforDisGuidance

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