

English Language Learners

Supplemental Resources for NCTE's Policy Research Brief

*This document is a supplement to
[English Language Learners: A Policy Research Brief](#),
produced by the National Council of Teachers of English.*

Research Clips on English Language Learners

*Research Clips are short research-based responses to questions about practice. For more detailed explanations and a list of related research, see [English Language Learners: A Policy Research Brief](#).
www.ncte.org/library/files/Publications/Newspaper/Chron0308PolicyBrief.pdf*

Accounting for English Language Learner Students and a Global and Multilingual World

What are some major concerns surrounding English language learner education?

- Our U.S. student populations are drastically shifting as a result of a newly-global, diverse, and changing world. Our classrooms reflect these changes and demand a response.
 - English language learners (ELLs) are the fastest growing segment of the student population.¹
 - ELL students are increasingly present in all US states.²
 - ELLs sometimes struggle academically.³
 - These numbers lead to reports about an emerging and underserved population of students who are ELLs.

Changing Ideas about English Language Learner Education

What are some misconceptions we can change about English language learners?

- ELLs are often perceived and placed as students with learning disabilities. This designation may or may not be accurate; further, research suggests that ELLs with disabilities can learn, and early intervention can prevent academic failure. Inclusive environments that provide challenging rather than remedial instruction will be most effective.⁴
- A variety of factors affect student language acquisition, and language acquisition is not a simple, quick, or once-and-for-all process, nor is it the same process for all students. Because English language learning is a recursive and multifaceted process, educators should integrate listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills into instruction from the start.⁵
- Instructional support for ELLs benefits not just them, but all students. Many cognitive aspects of reading are common to both native speakers of English and ESL learners, though research shows that teachers should pay additional attention to background knowledge, interaction, and word use with ELLs.⁶

Teacher Strategies for English Language Learners

What strategies can teachers use to support English language learners in the classroom?

- Present ELLs with challenging curricular content.⁷
- Set high expectations for ELLs.⁸
- Use technology effectively.⁹
- Recognize sociocultural factors.¹⁰
- Position native languages and home environments as resources.¹¹
- Teach ELLs in grades K-8 the basics of academic literacy, such as those recommended by models like Five Standards for Effective Pedagogy, Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA), and Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP).^{12, 13}

- Teach ELLs in secondary school, like their K-8 peers, to simultaneously develop their skill with academic English and learn content in a variety of disciplines.¹⁴
- Recognize the difference between ELLs and under-prepared students in higher education.¹⁵

Support for Teachers

What kinds of support for teachers can help them help ELL students?

- Professional development for teachers of English language learners in effective practices that build on home languages.
- Support for bilingual and dual immersion programs.

Useful Links

TESOL Bibliography on Compile

<http://comppile.tamucc.edu/wiki/TESOLBibliography/Introduction>

Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach

www.gwu.edu/~calla/

Census information on languages in the home

<http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/GRTT>

From the Center for Applied Linguistics: The SIOP Model of Sheltered Instruction

www.cal.org/siop

NCTE Resources

Research Policy Brief on English Language Learners

www.ncte.org/library/files/Publications/Newspaper/Chron0308PolicyBrief.pdf

English Language Learners Pathways

www.ncte.org/pathways

Language Learners in the English Classroom (NCTE, 2007).

www.ncte.org/store

¹ Hoffman, L., & Sable, J. (2006). Public elementary and secondary students, staff, schools, and school districts: School year 2003-2004. Washington, DC: National Center for Educational Statistics.

² Kindler, A. (2002). Survey of the states' limited English proficient students and available educational programs and services: 2000-2001 summary report. Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition.

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³ Short, D. J., & Fitzsimmons, S. (2007). Double the work: Challenges and solutions to acquiring language and academic literacy for adolescent English language learners. Report to Carnegie Corporation of New York. New York: Alliance for Excellent Education.

⁴ Artiles, A.J. & Ortiz, A.A. (2002). English language learners with special education needs. McHenry, IL: Center for Applied Linguistics and Delta Systems Co.

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⁵ Harklau, L., Losey, K. & Siegal, M (Eds). (1999). *Generation 1.5 meets college composition: Issues in the teaching of writing to U.S.-Educated Learners of ESL*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

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⁶ Meltzer, J. & Hamann, E. (2005). *Meeting the literacy development needs of adolescent English language learners through content-area learning; Part two: Focus on developing academic literacy habits and skills across the content areas*. Providence: The Education Alliance.

⁷ Callahan, R. (2005). Tracking and high school English learners: Limiting opportunities to learn. *American Educational Research Journal*, 42(2): 305-328.

⁸ Callahan, 2005.

⁹ Pennington, M. (2004). "Electronic media in second language writing: An overview of tools and research findings." In S. Fotos & C. Browne (eds.), *New perspectives on CALL for second language classrooms*. (pp. 69-92) Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

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¹⁰ Walqui, A. (2000). *Strategies for success: Engaging immigrant students in secondary schools*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

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¹¹ Yi, Yongjoo. (2007). "Engaging literacy: A biliterate student's composing practices beyond school." *Journal of Second Language Writing* 16: 23-39.

Villalva, K. E. (2006). "Hidden literacies and inquiry approaches of bilingual high school writers." *Written Communication* 23 (1): 91.

¹² Thar, R.G., Estrada, P., Dalteen, S.S., and Yamauchi, L. (2000). *Teaching transformed: Achieving excellence, fairness, inclusion and harmony*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

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¹³ Fránquíz, M.E. & Reyes, M.L. (1998). Creating inclusive learning communities through English language arts: From chanclas to canicas. *Language Arts* 75(3): 211-220.

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¹⁴ McCarthy, S.J., Garcia, G.E., Lopez-Velasquez, A.M., & Guo, S.H. (2004). Understanding contexts for English language learners. *Research in the Teaching of English* 38(4): 351-394.

¹⁵ CCCC Statement on Second-Language Writing and Writers (2001). *College Composition and Communication* 52(4): 669-674.