



**30 years  
& counting**

**School Practitioner  
Listserv**

**A Weekly Community of Practice Network  
for Sharing and Interchange**



*November 21, 2016*

**Request from a Teacher**  
**>About bilingual education**

- Center Comments
- Comments from Colleagues in the Field

**Invitation to Listserv Participants to Share Perspectives**

**Featured Set of Center Resources**  
**>Related to English Learners**

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**Please forward this to a few colleagues you think might be interested.  
The more who join, the more we are likely to receive to share.**

**For those who have been forwarded this and want to be part of  
the weekly exchange, send an email to [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)**

**For previous recent postings of this community of practice, see  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm>  
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**Note: In keeping with the *National Initiative for Transforming Student & Learning Supports*,\* this is being sent to and forwarded by over 114,000 school and community stakeholders concerned about (1) daily matters confronting schools, (2) promoting whole child development and positive school climate, and (3) the transformation of student and learning supports.**

**R**quest from a Teacher: “I went from k-4th grade in a mainly Spanish speaking classroom because my parents decided this was best for me at the time. I only switched to a full English speaking classroom because the school decided to place me in a ‘highly gifted’ class in the 5th grade. I'm wondering what my trajectory would have been if I had not been switched out of the bilingual education program. Why is there so much support for bilingual education at this time? I feel that I'm either missing information/misunderstanding or even just being biased based on my experience?”

**C**enter Comments: Given this topic has been the subject of so much controversy, there is a large body of literature on it. See the following resources on the matter:

(1) We explored some of the issues in a Center brief entitled: *Addressing the Language Barrier: English Language Learners, Bilingual Education, and Learning Supports*  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/biling.pdf>

Here is a brief excerpt:

“ Many issues and problems have arisen related to how schools meet the needs of English language learners. Concerns include: teaching English as a second language, transitioning immigrants into a school, assimilating them into a new culture without undercutting students’ primary languages and demeaning their cultural background, ensuring equity of opportunity, and more...

Given that language concerns are basic, it is essential not to fall into the trap of ignoring all the other barriers to learning and teaching experienced by many immigrant students. For example, many additional intervention concerns arise when students’ families are migrant workers, undocumented, are refugees from war zones, are living in poverty, and so forth. Experiences that generate negative attitudes in students about school also require considerable attention ...

For schools with many limited English proficient students, the press to teach English often works against providing a broader set of student and learning supports for these students. The irony is that, when schools attend too narrowly to the broad range of student concerns highlighted above, a significant number of immigrant students continue to do poorly in learning English at school, and many misbehave, disengage, and eventually dropout. Given this, we suggest embedding efforts for English language learning into a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of supports so that each school can address a broad range barriers to student learning effectively.”

(2) With respect to the Every Student Succeeds Act, the U. S. Department of Education’s Guidance on English Learners also suggests a broader look at support for students and families learning English <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essatitleiiiiguideenglishlearners92016.pdf>

"... States and LEAs may wish to incorporate methods of supporting home language development. Research on language use in early childhood programs and in elementary school, and on supporting home language development, including fostering bilingualism, maintaining cultural connections and communication with family members, and the transferability of home language skills to English language acquisition, suggests that systematic and deliberate exposure to English, paired with supporting home language development within high quality educational settings, can result in strong, positive outcomes for children who are non-native English speakers, as well as positive outcomes for native English speakers. ..."

(3) With the focus on evidence based interventions, many have cited the following recent research reports from Stanford as a research base supporting bilingual education.

>*The Promise of Bilingual and Dual Immersion Education*

<https://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/wp15-11v201510.pdf>

“Conclusion: As the population of EL students grows, and with it a growing understanding of both the rich assets these students have and the ways in which they are currently struggling in school, it is important that school leaders and teachers have access to good information about the most effective instructional programs for ELs. We hope our research contributes to the body of evidence available to educators. Our research shows that two-language instructional programs can be very effective for emerging bilingual students acquiring English. In English proficiency, reclassification patterns, and academic growth, EL students in these programs show equivalent or superior outcomes to comparable students in English immersion programs. Based on this, we suggest that states and school districts use their resources to develop and support high-quality two-language programs that meet the needs of their students and communities.”

>Stanford News Release – *San Francisco's bilingual programs as effective as English only, study finds (features research by Sean Reardon)*

<https://ed.stanford.edu/in-the-media/san-franciscos-bilingual-programs-effective-english-only-study-finds-features-research>

Excerpt:

“...By the time they reach 5th grade, English-language learners in San Francisco's public schools were equally proficient in English regardless of whether they had been in a bilingual program or had received all their instruction in English...Though ELLs who were in bilingual education programs in San Francisco lagged in the earlier grades, they also scored similarly on the state's academic tests and had virtually the same rates of reclassification to English-fluent status by 5th grade as their ELL peers who were in the district's English-immersion program.

One notable exception: By 5th grade, higher numbers of Latino ELLs in bilingual programs reached the "mid-basic" level of achievement on the state's English/language arts exam than their Latino ELL peers in English-immersion. Mid-basic is a score of 325 on the state's former ELA exam (out of 600 points) and was the required minimum score to be considered for reclassification to English-proficient status, among other criteria. ...

These results shedding light on the effectiveness of four distinct instructional programs offered to ELLs in the San Francisco district come just as there's growing momentum to repeal California's 15-year-old restrictions on bilingual education in public schools. For years, debates over the most effective methods of English-language instruction have often gotten snarled in political and ideological disagreements....”

## **C**omments from a Colleague in the Field:

We shared this question with a range of colleagues who focus on this concern. Here are the first responses:

(1) Thank you for reaching out with this very important question. It sounds like the school was separated into covert tracks such that the honors courses were separate from the bilingual courses. I personally view this as a result of the academic tracking that takes place. It brings into question why the honors course cannot be bilingual as well? There seems to be a mutual exclusiveness. Additionally, I think there is a difference between an English as a Second Language kind of classroom and a bilingual classroom. The pedagogy of each differs as do people's attitudes. I have personally met parents who have their child in an ESL track and

advocate very much for their children to be placed into English mainstream courses because they feel schools continue to place students who should not be in ESL (hence, long term English Language Learners). I would say that it also may matter who is in each of the courses. Which students are in the Spanish speaking classroom compared to the honors classroom? Do they differ based on race? parent education? parent advocating? etc. I also think that there is a value system in many states. There has been much work on language policies, such as the ban of the bilingual curriculum. Compared to other countries who value multilingualism, I think the devaluing of the Spanish language is prevalent and unfortunately intimately tied to our history of xenophobia. There has also been recent work on how some students themselves see Spanish as less worthy than English even in bilingual programs (Alexandra Babino & Mary Amanda Stewart (2016): “‘I Like English Better’: Latino Dual Language Students’ Investment in Spanish, English, and Bilingualism,” *Journal of Latinos and Education*, DOI: 10.1080/15348431.2016.1179186). I think this may also relate to how they may perceive themselves if they are in bilingual or Spanish focused courses. Then there is also the culture of the school. What I have seen is that even in schools with a majority Latino population students that are in ELL tracks are often de-valued or seen as less.”

(2) “Thank you for sharing this interesting question with me! Currently the school I'm working for has a type of bilingual program for English learners. Based on what I have seen, I believe that bilingual programs are most beneficial when dealing with students that are at the early stages of acquiring the English language or are struggling with it. For students like herself/himself who was sent to a fully English speaking classroom because they were gifted, seems like it was the best fit for them. If the student would have continued in the bilingual program I believe that they would have gotten the same type of education as in the English speaking classes. However, the only difference might have been that the classes in the bilingual program might move at a slower pace considering that sometimes students who are at different levels of learning English are placed in the same classroom. Aside from this, had the student stayed in the bilingual program I don't see any disadvantage taking place. Based on personal experience, when I work with the English learners I see the benefits of the bilingual programs since they accommodate to the language needs of the students and it gives these students a safe space to learn in a language they feel comfortable with, while learning English at the same time. Overall, I think bilingual programs are great and I am glad to hear that some schools are reverting back to them. I hope my input was helpful!”

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**Invitation to listserv participants:**

*What can you share about supporting students (and families) learning English. In addition to good instruction, what more is needed?*

**Share lessons learned. Comments. Recommendations.  
And let us know what's happening locally?**

**Send your responses to [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)**

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**Featured Set of Center Resources**

**>Related to English Learners**

Access a range of resources, references, and direct links related to this matter through the following Center online clearinghouse Quick Finds:

- >Cultural Competence and Related Issues – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/culturecomp.htm>
- >Immigrant Students – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/immigrantkids.htm>

For example, from our Center see:

>*Immigrant Children and Youth: Enabling Their Success at School* –  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/immigrant.pdf>

This brief focuses on implications for school improvement policy and practice. Discussed are (1) different reasons families migrate, (2) concerns that arise related to immigrant students, (3) prevailing school practices for addressing immigrant concerns, (4) a framework for broadening what schools and communities do, and (5) implications for policy.

Also see:

>*Immigrant youth: Some implications for schools* –  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/immig.pdf>

>*Immigrant Students and Mental Health* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/immigrantkids.htm>

>*International Students: Addressing Barriers to Successful Transition* –  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/internat.pdf>

For more references and resources, see

1. *Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School* from the What Works Clearinghouse – practice guide provides four recommendations with extensive examples of activities that can be used to support students as they build the language and literacy skills needed to be successful in school.  
<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide.aspx?sid=19>
2. *Bilingual Education Resources on the Internet* – provides links to bilingual education resources, including government services, journals, schools, and projects online  
[http://courses.education.illinois.edu/EDPSY313/projects/2001\\_fall/bilingual.html](http://courses.education.illinois.edu/EDPSY313/projects/2001_fall/bilingual.html)
3. *Colorin Colorado* – A bilingual site for educators and families of English Language Learners  
<http://www.colorincolorado.org/>
4. *ELL Success* – “WeAreTeachers” homepage for English Language Learners  
<http://www.weareteachers.com/lessons-resources/ell-success>
5. *Larry Ferlazzo Website*– gateway to websites that will help teach ELL, ESL and EFL  
<http://larryferlazzo.edublogs.org/>
6. *Effective Teaching Strategies for English Language Learners* -  
<http://www.supportrealteachers.org/strategies-for-english-language-learners.html>
7. *Teaching Channel* – <https://www.teachingchannel.org/teaching-channels-mission>
8. *Edutopia* – lists websites and resources to Support English-language Learners  
<http://www.edutopia.org/blog/strategies-and-resources-supporting-ell-todd-finley>
9. *Free Apps to Support Vocabulary Acquisition* by Monica Burns  
<http://www.edutopia.org/blog/apps-support-ELL-vocabulary-acquisition-monica-burns>
10. *50 Incredibly Useful Links for Learning & Teaching the English Language* by TeachThought  
<http://www.teachthought.com/learning/50-incredibly-useful-links-for-ell-educators/>

**Don't you like being  
in the bilingual program?**



**The program's good;  
it's school I hate!**

**THE MORE FOLKS SHARE, THE MORE USEFUL AND INTERESTING THE INTERCHANGES BECOME!**  
**Sign-up for the Listserv mailings – email [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)**  
**Also send resources ideas, requests, comments, and experiences for sharing.**  
**We post a broad range of issues and responses to the *Net Exchange***  
**on our website at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newnetexchange.htm>**  
**and on *Facebook* (access from the Center’s home page <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/> )**



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\*For information about the  
***National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports,***  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>

And note that our new book detailing the prototypes and related resources is now in press.

For a preview, contact [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)

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