

## REL Southwest Ask A REL Response

English Learners  
February 2019

### Question:

*What recent empirical studies examine evidence-based pedagogical practices and programs, as well as administrative organization, policies, and practices facilitating the development of K–12 English learner students’ English language proficiency and academic content proficiency?*

### Response:

Thank you for the question you submitted to our REL Reference Desk. We have prepared the following memo with research references to help answer your question. For each reference, we provide an abstract, excerpt, or summary written by the study’s author or publisher. Following an established Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Southwest research protocol, we conducted a search for pedagogical practices, programs, administrative organization, policies, and practices facilitating the development of K–12 English learner students’ English language or academic content proficiency.

We have not evaluated the quality of references and the resources provided in this response. We offer them only for your reference. Also, we searched the references in the response from the most commonly used resources of research, but they are not comprehensive, and other relevant references and resources may exist. References provided are listed in alphabetical order, not necessarily in order of relevance. We do not include sources that are not freely available to the requestor.

### Research References

Al-Seghayer, K. (2017). Effects of electronic reading environments’ structure on L2 reading comprehension. *English Language Teaching*, 10(12), 88–106.  
<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1160984>

*From the ERIC abstract:* “This study examines the effects of an electronic reading environment’s structure on second language (L2) reading comprehension. In particular, this study explores whether clarifying the underlying structure of an electronic text, along with the ways in which its units or nodes are organized and interrelated results in better comprehension as well as whether L2 reading proficiency affects the comprehension of electronic text. In this study, 40 English as a second language (ESL) learners, grouped into proficient and less-proficient groups based on their scores on the Test of English as a

Foreign Language's (TOEFL's) Reading section, were asked to read two electronic texts using computerized programs classified as either 'well structured' or 'less structured.' To assess the efficacy of each type of reading environment, two tests—a multiple-choice test and a mapping of main ideas and details (MOMID) test—were developed and administered to the participants after they read each text. The results of these tests were analyzed using a paired-samples 't'-test and a two-way (proficiency level by computerized reading program) mixed-model analysis of variance (ANOVA). The findings revealed that well-structured electronic texts can aid ESL readers in developing a more coherent mental representation of the electronic texts' content, thereby increasing their reading comprehension. Furthermore, well-structured electronic texts are more helpful for less-proficient readers than for more-proficient readers. These findings have significant pedagogical and technological implications for L2 reading instructors and instructional designers.”

Arellano, B., Liu, F., Stoker, G., & Slama, R. (2018). *Initial Spanish proficiency and English language development among Spanish-speaking English learner students in New Mexico* (REL 2018-286). Washington, DC: Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED580202>

*From the report:* “This study of the 2010 and 2011 kindergarten cohorts of Spanish-speaking English learner students in four school districts in New Mexico examined the connection between initial Spanish proficiency and English language development, as well as grade-level readiness by grade 4 or 5 in English language arts and math. Key findings include:

- More than 80 percent of English learner students in the 2010 cohort started kindergarten at the lowest English proficiency level, as did half of those in the 2011 cohort.
- A majority of students in both cohorts attained English proficiency by grade 4, but students with high initial Spanish proficiency were more likely to do so.
- Among English learner students with low or medium initial Spanish proficiency, roughly a quarter of the 2010 cohort were not reclassified as fluent English proficient by grade 5, and roughly half the 2011 cohort were not reclassified by grade 4.
- Of English learner students who were reclassified as fluent English proficient by grade 4 or 5, fewer than a quarter also demonstrated grade-level readiness in grade 4 or 5 English language arts or math on standardized academic assessments.”

August, D., & Slama, R. (2016). *Literature review related to assessment and accountability provisions relevant to English learners*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/title3-litreview.pdf>

*From the abstract:* “This document reviews the literature related to assessment and accountability provisions relevant to English learners (ELs). This review begins with a description of the process used to conduct the literature review, parameters for the review, and the characterization of the literature. The body of this review consists of four sections: (1) Development and/or Adoption of State English Language Proficiency (ELP)

Standards, (2) Design and Development of the ELP Assessment System, (3) Technical Quality, and (4) Uses of an ELP Assessment System for Accountability. The research questions are described at the beginning of each section. At the end of the document, we suggest Areas for Further Research, some of which are related to outstanding problems of practice.”

Boon, R. T., & Barbetta, P. M. (2017). Reading interventions for elementary English language learners with learning disabilities: A review. *Insights into Learning Disabilities, 14*(1), 27–52. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1165741>

*From the ERIC abstract:* “This paper provides a review of the literature on reading interventions for English language learners (ELLs) with learning disabilities (LD) in the elementary grade levels (K-5). The goal of this review was to identify and evaluate reading interventions that have been used in the special education literature for ELLs with LD in the early grade levels. A systematic search of the literature from 1975 to 2016 yielded nine studies that met our inclusion criteria. Reading interventions that emerged from our review included: (a) computer-based constant time delay, (b) graphic organizers, (c) peer-tutoring, (d) repeated reading with a vocabulary component, and (e) two reading programs (Project PLUS & Read Well). Overall, the results of the studies showed promising effects on improving the reading outcomes for ELLs with LD in the elementary classroom.”

Estrella, G., Au, J., Jaeggi, S. M., & Collins, P. (2018). Is inquiry science instruction effective for English language learners? A meta-analytic review. *AERA Open, 4*(2), 1–23. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1194148>

*From the ERIC abstract:* “Despite being among the fastest growing segments of the student population, English Language Learners (ELLs) have yet to attain the same academic success as their English-proficient peers, particularly in science. In an effort to support the pedagogical needs of this group, educators have been urged to adopt inquiry approaches to science instruction. Whereas inquiry instruction has been shown to improve science outcomes for non-ELLs, systematic evidence in support of its effectiveness with ELLs has yet to be established. The current meta-analysis summarizes the effect of inquiry instruction on the science achievement of ELLs in elementary school. Although an analysis of 26 articles confirmed that inquiry instruction produced significantly greater impacts on measures of science achievement for ELLs compared to direct instruction, there was still a differential learning effect suggesting greater efficacy for non-ELLs compared to ELLs. Contextual factors that moderate these effects are identified and discussed.”

Islam, R. (2017). Investigating factors that contribute to effective teaching-learning practices: EFL/ESL classroom context. *English Language Teaching, 10*(4), 15–21. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1133191>

*From the ERIC abstract:* “This paper seeks to address some key issues, which can influence as well as determine the nature of teaching and learning practices in an ELT

classroom directly or indirectly. This paper views an EFL or ESL classroom as a dynamic and multi-dimensional platform open to different interpretations of teaching and learning. Factors like teachers' beliefs, teacher talk, teachers' questioning, diversity and complexity of ELT classroom, classroom values and individual learner differences require thoughtful attention irrespective of teaching methods and approaches. However, these issues are not straight forward, rather inherent in the activities related to classroom interaction and management and demand proper conceptualization by teachers, ELT practitioners and researchers.”

Johnson, T., & Wells, L. (2017). English language learner teacher effectiveness and the Common Core. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 25(23), 1–24.  
<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1137865>

*From the ERIC abstract:* “Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and teacher effectiveness are among the most contentious issues in education today. With an increase in English language learners (ELLs) and the rigorous requirements imposed by the CCSS, teachers are left unprepared and ELLs struggle to stay afloat. Using California as a case study, this research synthesis outlines the current problem, which includes the complexity of the CCSS, the achievement gap between ELLs and their peers, and ill-equipped teachers. In addition, present-day efforts to alleviate such difficulties like the revised World Language: English Language Development credential and multicultural training are outlined. Based on our review, we recommend targeted policy changes, which include preservice teachers' participation in extensive fieldwork with ELLs, in-service teachers' comprehensive professional development connected to practice, as well as a systematic evaluation process to measure ELL teacher effectiveness.”

Lara-Alecio, R., Irby, B. J., Tong, F., Guerrero, C., Koch, J., & Sutton-Jones, K. L. (2018). Assessing conceptual understanding via literacy-infused, inquiry-based science among middle school English learners and economically-challenged students. *Education Sciences*, 8(27), 1–20. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1174975>

*From the ERIC abstract:* “The overarching purpose of our study was to compare performances of treatment and control condition students who completed a literacy-infused, inquiry-based science intervention through sixth grade as measured by a big idea assessment tool which we refer to as the Big Ideas in Science Assessment (BISA). First, we determine the concurrent validity of the BISA; second, we investigate the differences in the post-test of the BISA between treatment and control English Learners (ELs), controlling for their performance in the pre-test; third, we analyze the differences in the post-test of the BISA between treatment and control non-ELs, controlling for their performance in the pre-test; and fourth, we examine the relationship between students' English language proficiency as measured by standardized assessment, and their performance in the BISA among ELs and non-ELs, respectively. Our findings indicate: (a) literacy-infused science lessons with big ideas, implemented through the tested intervention, improved students' language acquisition and science concept understanding for ELs and economically challenged students (ECs); (b) there was a positive relationship between language and content for both ELs and non-ELs, with a similar magnitude,

suggesting that students with a higher level of English proficiency score higher in science assessment; and (c) the lesson plans prepared were successful for promoting a literacy-infused science curriculum via a 5E Model (Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate) that includes three to five of the Es used daily. A pedagogical approach for a literacy-infused science model with big ideas is proposed.”

Pyle, D., Pyle, N., Lignugaris/Kraft, B., Duran, L., & Akers, J. (2017). Academic effects of peer-mediated interventions with English language learners: A research synthesis. *Review of Educational Research*, 87(1), 103–133. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1132746>

*From the ERIC abstract:* “The purpose of this article is to synthesize the extant research on peer-mediated interventions (PMIs) with English language learners (ELLs) in kindergarten through Grade 12. Fourteen studies that were published in peer-reviewed journals from 1983 to 2013 were examined in terms of study characteristics, the effects on academic outcomes, study quality, and overall effectiveness. Structured, heterogeneous grouping was used in the 10 peer pairing and 4 collaborative/cooperative grouping PMIs with ELLs. Eight of the 14 studies included high methodological quality. Overall, PMIs with ELLs are associated with medium to large effects on measures of phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and comprehension when compared to teacher-mediated comparison conditions. More research on PMIs with ELLs in high school and across core content areas, particularly mathematics, is warranted. Implications and future research for PMIs with ELLs are discussed.”

Rodríguez, A., & Rodríguez, D. (2017). English learners with learning disabilities: What is the current state? *Insights into Learning Disabilities*, 14(1), 97–112. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1165743>

*From the ERIC abstract:* “As the demographics across the United States continues to change, specifically with increases in school age English Learners who speak a home language other than English, it is imperative that schools meet the diverse needs of these children. This article summarizes studies about English Learners with learning disabilities. It reports on the analysis of 21 articles. Results indicate that the areas of prevention and early intervention, referral and decision making, assessment procedures, teaching strategies, and disproportionality and overrepresentation are important topics to consider with respect to the education of English Learners with learning disabilities.”

Ruiz de Castilla, V. (2018). *Teacher certification and academic growth among English learner students in the Houston Independent School District* (REL 2018-284). Washington, DC: Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED580928>

*From the report:* “This study examined the relationship between teacher certification—both type and route—and growth in academic achievement and English proficiency among English learner students in grades 4 and 5 in the Houston Independent School District. Key findings include:

- For math, having a teacher with bilingual certification was associated with higher student growth in achievement in grade 4 but lower growth in achievement in grade 5 compared with having a teacher without bilingual or English as a second language certification. Having a teacher with bilingual certification through the alternative route was associated with the highest growth in achievement in grade 4.
- For reading, having a teacher with bilingual certification was associated with higher student growth in achievement in grade 4 compared with having a teacher without bilingual or English as a second language certification. Having a teacher with bilingual certification through the traditional route was associated with the highest growth in achievement in grade 4.
- For English proficiency, having a teacher with bilingual certification through the postbaccalaureate route was associated with the highest student growth in grade 4. Having a teacher with bilingual certification through the alternative route was associated with the highest growth in English proficiency in grade 5.”

Slama, R., Molefe, A., Gerdeman, D., Herrera, A., Brodziak de los Reyes, I., August, D., & Cavazos, L. (2017). *Time to proficiency for Hispanic English learner students in Texas* (REL 2018-280). Washington, DC: Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED577092>

*From the ERIC abstract:* “English learner students are challenged by the difficult task of learning English concurrently with learning content in areas such as reading and math. English learner students who have not attained proficiency in English or learned core course content by the middle and upper grades may not have the requisite skills to enroll in courses required for high school graduation, placing them at greater risk of dropping out of school before graduation. The lack of a high school diploma could subsequently limit the economic opportunities open to them. Texas, which serves 16 percent of the nation’s English learner students (U.S. Department of Education, 2016), provides a unique context for examining the time it takes these students to achieve English proficiency and master core content. Using data from the Texas Education Agency, a study team from Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest examined the average time it took the 2005/06 cohort of grade 1 Hispanic English learner students in Texas public schools to attain English proficiency and to demonstrate at least satisfactory academic performance in reading and math as measured by state standardized assessments. This longitudinal study also examined whether the time it took students to attain these key outcomes differed by enrollment in a public prekindergarten program, initial English language proficiency level, the type of English learner program (English as a Second Language or bilingual), whether a parent had opted the student out of English learner services, and student background characteristics (gender, eligibility for the federal school lunch program, immigrant status, and participation in a special education program). This study demonstrates the use of state historical data to expand knowledge of how English learner students fare in school while classified as English learner students and after reclassification as fluent English proficient. Study results can be used to inform expectations for progress toward English language proficiency for English learner students.”

Steele, J. L., Slater, R. O., Zamarro, G., Miller, T., Li, J., Burkhauser, S., & Bacon, M. (2017). Effects of dual-language immersion programs on student achievement: Evidence from lottery data. *American Educational Research Journal*, 54(1), 282S–306S. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1155308>

*From the ERIC abstract:* “Using data from seven cohorts of language immersion lottery applicants in a large, urban school district, we estimate the causal effects of immersion programs on students’ test scores in reading, mathematics, and science and on English learners’ (EL) reclassification. We estimate positive intent-to-treat (ITT) effects on reading performance in fifth and eighth grades, ranging from 13% to 22% of a standard deviation, reflecting 7 to 9 months of learning. We find little benefit in terms of mathematics and science performance but also no detriment. By sixth and seventh grade, lottery winners’ probabilities of remaining classified as EL are 3 to 4 percentage points lower than those of their counterparts. This effect is stronger for ELs whose native language matches the partner language.”

U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students. (2018). *The biennial report to Congress on the implementation of the Title III State Formula Grant Program, school years 2012–14*, Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <https://ncela.ed.gov/files/uploads/3/BiennialReportToCongress.pdf>

*From the executive summary:* “This Biennial Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Title III State Formula Grant Program, School Years 2012–14 is the sixth report of states’ self-reported data about English learners (ELs) receiving services in Title III-supported language instruction educational programs (LIEPs). This report is for members of Congress and is available for public use. The biennial report to Congress on the implementation of the Title III state formula grant program provides a snapshot of the status of the U.S. Department of Education’s (the Department’s) efforts to hold states accountable for ensuring that all ELs attain English language proficiency (ELP) and are achieving in the content areas of mathematics and reading/language arts at the same high level set by the states for all students. Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which focuses on the specific goals of serving ELs with effective LIEPs, was first implemented upon the reauthorization of the ESEA by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.”

Vaughn, S., Martinez, L. R., Wanzek, J., Roberts, G., Swanson, E., & Fall, A.-M. (2017). Improving content knowledge and comprehension for English language learners: Findings from a randomized control trial. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 109(1), 22–34. Retrieved from <https://www.meadowscenter.org/files/resources/Vaughn-2017.pdf>

*From the abstract:* “Supporting the reading comprehension and content knowledge acquisition of English language learners (ELs) requires instructional practices that continue beyond developing the foundational skills of reading. In particular, the challenges ELs face highlight the importance of teaching reading comprehension practices in the middle grades through content acquisition. We conducted a randomized

control trial to examine the efficacy of a content acquisition and reading comprehension intervention implemented in eighth-grade social studies classrooms with English language learners. Using a within-teacher design, in which 18 eighth-grade teachers' social studies classes were randomly assigned to treatment or comparison conditions. Teachers taught the same instructional content to treatment and comparison classes, but the treatment classes used instructional practices that included comprehension canopy, essential words, knowledge acquisition, and team-based learning. Students in the treatment group (n = 845) outperformed students in the comparison group (n = 784) on measures of content knowledge acquisition and content reading comprehension but not general reading comprehension. Both ELs and non-ELs who received the treatment outperformed those assigned to the BAU comparison condition on measures of content knowledge acquisition (ES = 0.40) and content-related reading comprehension (ES = 0.20). In addition, the proportion of English language learners in classes moderated outcomes for content knowledge acquisition.”

*Note:* What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Rating: Meets WWC standards with reservations because it is a randomized controlled trial with low attrition, but the randomization was compromised. <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Study/85559>

Vela, A., Jones, D., Mundy, M.-A., & Isaacson, C. (2017). Determining the effectiveness of bilingual programs on third grade state exam scores. *Research in Higher Education Journal*, 33(1), 1–15. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1161491>

*From the ERIC abstract:* “This ex-post-facto quasi-experimental research design was conducted by selecting a convenient sample of approximately 2,000 3rd grade ELLs who took the regular reading and math English STAAR test during the 2014-15 school year in an urban southern Texas school district. This study was conducted using a quantitative research method of data collected from the school district. The data collected consisted of 3rd grade ELL students’ reading and math English STAAR scores. The researcher analyzed and compared the reading and math STAAR scores of 3rd grade ELL students enrolled in a transitional bilingual program, in a dual language two-way bilingual program and a regular program with immersion into all English instruction, utilizing two one way analysis of variance (ANOVAs). Approximately 2,000 3rd grade ELL students enrolled in this urban southern Texas school district. The researcher examined for differences among the scores of ELLs enrolled in the bilingual programs. Conclusions to the findings determined that there were significant differences among the three educational programs for ELL students in third grade on the STAAR test results in the regular English math STAAR test for ELL students in third grade, but did not find significant differences in the test scores in the regular English reading STAAR test results.”

Wilcox, K. C., Gregory, K., & Yu, L. (2017). Connecting the dots for English language learners: How odds-beating elementary school educators monitor and use student performance data. *Journal for Leadership and Instruction*, 16(1), 37–43. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1159864>

*From the ERIC abstract:* “This article reports on findings from a multiple case study investigating the nature of educators’ approaches toward monitoring English language learners’ (ELLs) performance and using data to improve instruction and apply appropriate interventions. Six New York elementary schools where ELLs’ performance was better than predicted (i.e. odds-beating) based on student assessment data were studied. The analysis revealed that several strategies were common among the schools studied and were associated with the schools’ better ELL performance outcomes. These include: 1) connecting instruction and interventions to "real time" data based on multiple measures of student performance including benchmark and formative assessments; 2) communicating performance via technology among teachers and with family members and legal guardians; 3) collaborating through routines among teaching and support staff as well as school and district leaders. Implications for district and school leaders and teachers are discussed. Implications for district and school leaders as well as teachers and other instructional specialists are offered.”

Wood, C., Fitton, L., Petscher, Y., Rodriguez, E., Sunderman, G., & Lim, T. (2018). The effect of e-book vocabulary instruction on Spanish–English speaking children. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 61(8) 1945–1969.  
<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1187764>

*From the ERIC abstract:* “Purpose: This study aimed to examine the effect of an intensive vocabulary intervention embedded in e-books on the vocabulary skills of young Spanish-English speaking English Learners (ELs) from low SES backgrounds. Methods: Children (288) in kindergarten and first grade were randomly assigned to treatment and read-only conditions. All children received e-book readings approximately 3 times a week for 10-20 weeks using the same books. Children in the treatment condition received e-books supplemented with vocabulary instruction that included scaffolding through explanations in Spanish, repetition in English, checks for understanding, and highlighted morphology. Results: There was a main effect of the intervention on expressive labeling ( $g = 0.38$ ) and vocabulary on the PPVT ( $g = 0.14$ ) with no significant moderation effect of initial PPVT score. There was no significant difference between conditions on children's expressive definitions. Conclusions: Findings substantiate the effectiveness of computer implemented embedded vocabulary intervention for increasing ELs’ vocabulary knowledge. Implications: Computer-assisted vocabulary instruction with scaffolding through Spanish explanations, repetitions, and highlighted morphology is a promising approach to facilitate word learning for ELs in kindergarten and first grade.”

*Note:* WWC Rating: Meets WWC standards without reservations because it is a randomized controlled trial with low attrition. <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Study/86137>

## Additional Organizations to Consult

Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) – <http://www.cal.org/what-we-do/research>

*From the website:* “Research is a critical component of CAL’s mission. CAL conducts large-scale and small-scale research projects on a wide variety of topics related to language teaching and learning, literacy, assessment, and the use of language in society. We collect and analyze data using diverse research designs, including experimental studies, qualitative case studies, and large-scale surveys. We frequently collaborate with universities and research centers to conduct research and disseminate findings.

Research findings guide all of CAL’s project work, services, and products. CAL publishes the findings, professional opinions, and best practices developed as a result of our research. We’re also focused on using our research as a foundation for the development of pragmatic and forward-thinking solutions to a variety of issues related to language and culture.

### Featured Research Projects

- [Promoting Educator Networks: Standards-Based Instruction for English Learners \(PEN\)](#)
- [Center for Research on the Educational Achievement and Teaching of English Language Learners \(CREATE\)](#)
- [Exemplary Programs for Newcomer English Language Learners at the Secondary Level](#)
- [Vocabulary Instruction and Assessment for Spanish Speakers \(VIAS\)”](#)

The Center for English Language Learners (ELLs) at AIR – <https://www.air.org/center/center-english-language-learners-ells-air>

*From the website:* “The core of AIR’s work supporting ELLs is done through the Center for English Language Learners. English language learners (ELLs) face the challenge of acquiring content knowledge in English at the same time as they acquire English as an additional language. These students can be supported by conducting rigorous research and evaluation to improve instruction and learning, evaluating policy to inform decision-making, and enhancing ELL practice at the district, school, and classroom level.”

*Note:* The center offers numerous resources on its website, including the following research studies or publications:

- Current studies on “Conducting Rigorous Research Related to English Language Learners” are available at <https://www.air.org/page/conducting-rigorous-research-english-language-learners>. Selected projects include the following:

- “Math and English Language Development for English Language Learners (Project MELD)” available at <https://www.air.org/project/math-and-english-language-development-english-language-learners-project-meld>.
- “Transitional Kindergarten in California: The Impact of Transitional Kindergarten on English Learner Students: Research Brief” available at <https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/Transitional-Kindergarten-Impact-on-English-Learners-May-2017.pdf>.

Center on Response to Intervention (RTI4Success) at American Institutes for Research (AIR) – <https://rti4success.org/related-rti-topics/english-learners>

*From the website:* “This collection of resources provides information about improving educational outcomes for English Learners through culturally and linguistically responsive implementation of an MTSS/RTI framework. As a result of revisions to the website, links embedded within documents may no longer be correct. To ensure you are able to access supplemental or related materials search by the title of the document on the website.”

*Note:* RTI4Success offers the following relevant resource on its website: “Implementing Effective Literacy Practices for Instructing English Language Learners Within the Response to Intervention (RTI) Framework,” available at: <https://rti4success.org/resource/implementing-effective-literacy-practices-instructing-english-language-learners-within>

Cleveland Collaboration for English Learner Success, Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest, Institute of Education Sciences – [https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midwest/partnerships/cleveland\\_partnership\\_for\\_english\\_learner\\_success.aspx](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midwest/partnerships/cleveland_partnership_for_english_learner_success.aspx)

*From the website:* “The objective of REL Midwest's collaboration with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District is to analyze the effects of the district's Multilingual Multicultural Education Program on language proficiency and content area knowledge development for English learners.”

*Note:* REL Midwest offers an archived documentary, “Learning English: Diverse Students in American Classrooms,” available at [https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midwest/events/archived\\_events/2017/september\\_13.aspx](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midwest/events/archived_events/2017/september_13.aspx)

Colorín Colorado, School Support, Assessment for English Language Learners – <http://www.colorincolorado.org/>

*From the website:* “Colorín Colorado is the premier national website serving educators and families of English language learners (ELLs) in Grades PreK-12. Colorín Colorado has been providing free research-based information, activities, and advice to parents, schools, and communities around the country for more than a decade....”

Colorín Colorado is an educational service of WETA, the flagship public broadcasting station in the nation’s capital, and receives major funding from the American Federation of Teachers and National Education Association.”

National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) –<http://www.nabe.org/>

*From the website:* “As tireless advocates, NABE works to influence, support and create policies, programs, research, pedagogy and quality professional development because investing in our children's education is an investment in our nation’s future leadership and our world’s well-being. By using native and second languages in everyday life, we not only develop intercultural understanding, but we also show by example that we respect and can effectively cross cultural and linguistic borders.

NABE has 20 state/regional affiliates and 4 international affiliates, which collectively represent more than 5,000 members. These members include bilingual and English learner (ELs) teachers, parents, paraprofessionals, administrators, professors, advocates, researchers, and policy makers.

Bilingualism and Biliteracy for all are admirable goals for everyone. We embrace this mantra and advocate academically learning more than two languages and cultures.

Our annual conference is the only gathering of professionals in the United States dedicated to exploring topics of interest for teachers, administrators, and parents of ELs, which include dual language education, second language acquisition, bilingual education, assessment and accountability, teacher training, special education, and grassroots activism.”

*Note:* NABE publishes the *NABE Journal of Research and Practice*, which “disseminates research-based studies as well as best instructional practices in the fields of bilingual education, dual-language teaching and learning, ESL and other related fields. We also encourage collaboration between University faculty and teachers or graduate students.” Volume 8 of the journal, published in 2017, is available at <http://www.xcdsystem.com/nabe/files/NJRP%20FINAL%202017%20PDF.pdf>.

Office of English Language Acquisition, U.S. Department of Education – <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/index.html>

*From the website:* “The U.S. Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) provides national leadership to help ensure that English Learners and immigrant students attain English proficiency and achieve academic success. In addition to preserving heritage languages and cultures, OELA is committed to prompting opportunities for biliteracy or multiliteracy skills for all students. OELA accomplishes this in the following ways:

- Providing national leadership by informing policy decisions
- Administering discretionary grant programs to prepare professionals for teaching and supporting English Learners

- Investing in research and evaluation studies that have practical applications for preparing English Learners to meet college and career learning standards
- Disseminating information about educational research, practices, and policies for English Learners through our [National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition \(NCELA\)](#).”

*Note:* OELA offers numerous relevant resources on its website, including the following:

- [EL Family Toolkit](#)
- [EDTech for English Learners](#)
- [Academic Performance and Outcomes for English Learners](#)
- [Study on EL identification for Gifted & Talented Programs](#)
- [NAM cohorts study](#)
- [Webinar on ELs with disabilities](#)
- [English learner guidance](#)
- [Newcomer Tool Kit](#)
- [English Learner Tool Kit](#)
- [Fast Facts: Relevant data on ELs](#)
- [Dual Language Education Programs: Current State Policies and Practices](#)

Southwest English Learners (SWEL) Research Partnership, Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest, Institute of Education Sciences –  
<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/southwest/default.aspx>

*From the website:* “Southwest English Learners (SWEL) Research Partnership: With one of the highest proportions of English learner (EL) students in the nation, New Mexico has prioritized providing high-quality and culturally appropriate EL language instruction. REL Southwest is working with the New Mexico Public Education Department and other partners to support these ongoing efforts.”

*Note:* REL Southwest offers a research tool publication, “Professional learning communities facilitator’s guide for the What Works Clearinghouse practice guide: Teaching academic content and literacy to English learners in elementary and middle school,” available at  
[https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/southwest/pdf/REL\\_2015105.pdf](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/southwest/pdf/REL_2015105.pdf).

TESOL – <https://www.tesol.org/>

*From the website:* “The TESOL Research Agenda reports on emerging research trends and questions (practical and theoretical) in the field of English language teaching. It aims to stimulate discussion and create networking opportunities for TESOL members and other ELT professionals worldwide.

[TESOL’s current Research Agenda](#) seeks to bridge the gap between research and classroom practice. This latest agenda has been designed to raise interest in TESOL’s research direction as well as to bring researchers and practitioners together in the field of English language teaching.”

WIDA – <https://wida.wisc.edu/about/mission-history>

*From the website:* “WIDA provides language development resources to those who support the academic success of multilingual learners. We offer a comprehensive, research-based system of language standards, assessments, professional learning and educator assistance. WIDA’s trusted resources are used by 41 domestic states and territories and more than 400 international schools throughout the world.

Core programs within WIDA include:

- [WIDA Consortium](#) – A U.S.-based collaborative group of 39 member states
- [WIDA International School Consortium](#) – A network of more than 400 member schools
- [WIDA Early Years](#) – A program to support emergent multilingual learners, ages 2.5–5.5 years
- [WIDA Español](#) – A program to support Spanish language development of multilingual learners, Grades K–12

WIDA is part of the University of Wisconsin–Madison, a top-five university in the field of education. WIDA is housed in the [Wisconsin Center for Education Research](#) (WCER), one of the first, largest, and most productive education research centers in the world. WCER has assisted scholars and practitioners to develop, submit, conduct, and share grant-funded education research for more than 50 years.”

## Methods

### Keywords and Search Strings

The following keywords and search strings were used to search the reference databases and other sources:

- (“impact” OR “intervention” OR “continuous improvement” OR “pedagogy” OR “policy” OR “practices” OR “program” OR “program organization” OR “scaffolding instruction” OR “linguistically sustaining” OR “culturally sustaining”)

AND

- (EL OR ELL OR ESL OR ELD OR LEP OR SIFE OR SLIFE OR “English learner” OR “English language learner” OR “limited English” OR “English (second language)” OR newcomer OR “newly arrived” OR “interrupted formal education” OR “structured English immersion” OR “English immersion” OR “transitional bilingual” OR “developmental bilingual” OR “maintenance bilingual” OR “dual language immersion” OR “dual-language immersion” OR “two-way bilingual immersion” OR “two way bilingual immersion” OR “English as a second language” OR “English language development” OR “recently arrived” OR immigrant OR “language minority” OR multilingual OR “non-native English speaker” OR “second language learner”)

AND

- (“proficiency” OR “early literacy” OR “integrated language” OR “designated language” OR achievement OR fluency OR mastery)

### **Databases and Resources**

We searched [ERIC](#) for relevant, peer-reviewed research references. ERIC is a free online library of more than 1.7 million citations of education research sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES). Additionally, we searched the [What Works Clearinghouse](#).

### **Reference Search and Selection Criteria**

When we were searching and reviewing resources, we considered the following criteria:

- *Date of the publication:* References and resources published from 2004 to present, were included in the search and review.
- *Search priorities of reference sources:* Search priority is given to study reports, briefs, and other documents that are published and/or reviewed by IES and other federal or federally funded organizations, academic databases, including ERIC, EBSCO databases, JSTOR database, PsychInfo, PsychArticle, and Google Scholar.
- *Methodology:* The following methodological priorities/considerations were given in the review and selection of the references: (a) study types—randomized control trials, quasi-experiments, correlational studies, descriptive data analyses, literature reviews, mixed methods analyses, and so forth; (b) target population, samples (representativeness of the target population, sample size, volunteered or randomly selected, and so forth), study duration, and so forth; and (c) limitations, generalizability of the findings and conclusions, and so forth.

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