

Title: Summary of research and resources on long-term English learner students

Date: October 2016

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Request: Could you provide 1) definitions of long-term English learner (LTEL) students and 2) research and resources on programs and practices for serving LTEL students?

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Response:

We have prepared the following memo with references and resources on long-term English learner students. Citations include a link to a free online version, when available. All citations are accompanied by an abstract, excerpt, or summary written by the author or publisher of the document. We also include relevant organizations.

We have not done a methodological evaluation of these resources, but rather provide them for your information only.

## **1. Definitions of LTELs**

States, districts, and schools determine the criteria and student characteristics used to identify LTELs, but definitions and classification criteria vary widely from place to place. Typically, LTEL refers to a formal educational classification given to students who have been enrolled in American schools for more than six years, who are not progressing toward English proficiency, and who are struggling academically due to their limited English skills. California is the only state in the nation to have adopted a formal definition of LTEL students,<sup>1</sup> with the passage of AB 2193 in 2012. And in October 2015, SB 750 further amended the Education Code as follows:

- (a) Revises the definition of “long-term English learner” definition to mean an English learner in grades 6-12 who has been enrolled in U.S. schools for 6 years or more, has remained at the same English language proficiency level for 2 or more consecutive prior years, or has regressed to a lower English language proficiency level, as determined by a specified English language development test, or a score determined by the Superintendent of Public Instruction on any successor test, and, for a pupil in grades 6-9, scored far below basic or below basic on the specified English language arts standards-based achievement test, or a score determined by the Superintendent on any successor test. Encourages the Superintendent to revisit the score determined for any successor test after 3 years of assessment data on the successor test.
- (b) Revises the definition of “English learner at risk of becoming a long-term English learner” to mean, except as specified, an English learner in grades 3-12, in U.S. schools for 4 to 5 years, scored at the intermediate level or below on the specified English language development test, or a score determined by the Superintendent on any successor test, and, for a pupil in grades 3-9, scored in the 4th or 5th year at the below basic or far below basic level on the specified English language arts standards-based achievement test, or a score determined by the Superintendent on any successor test. Encourages the Superintendent to revisit the score determined for any successor test after 3 years of assessment data on the successor test. (Section 313.1)

## **2. Research and resources**

**Research-based discussion** (*an author’s discussion of key issues in a research area without a formal analysis of the current state of research knowledge on the topic*)

Ascenzi-Moreno, L., Kleyn, T., & Menken, K. (2013). *A CUNY-NYSIEB framework for the education of long-term English language learners 6-12 grades*. New York: CUNY-NYSIEB, The Graduate Center, The City University of New York. Retrieved on October 14, 2016, from <http://www.nysieb.ws.gc.cuny.edu/files/2013/06/CUNY-NYSIEB-Framework-for-LTEs-Spring-2013-FINAL.pdf>

*Excerpt:* This is a detailed guide produced by the CUNY-New York State Initiative on Emergent Bilinguals for professionals whose mission includes the educational and literacy development of emergent bilingual students who are labeled “Long-Term English Learners” (LTELs). In specific, LTELs are emergent bilinguals who have attended U.S. schools for seven years or more but remain labeled “English language learners” (ELLs) by the state because they have not yet passed the

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<sup>1</sup> For additional discussion of LTEL students, see Calderon & Minaya-Rowe, 2011; Freeman & Freeman, 2007; and Menken, Kleyn, & Chae, 2007.

English language proficiency test called the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT). Students labeled LTELs are found in middle and high schools in Grades 6-12. In New York City, for example, they currently comprise about 13% of all ELLs in the city, and in some schools they make up a quarter to a half of the emergent bilinguals in a grade.

Dutro, S., & Kinsella, K. (2010). English language development: Issues and implementation in grades 6–12. In *Improving education for English learners: Research-based approaches*. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education.

*Chapter description:* In this chapter, we advocate a comprehensive, standards-aligned, English language development (ELD) curriculum taught during a dedicated course of study. We present an approach for rethinking English language instruction for adolescent English learners based on current research and promising practices. We do this by providing:

1. a discussion of the linguistic challenges adolescent English learners face,
2. an overview of the diversity of English learners in grades six to twelve and standards-based English proficiency levels,
3. a rationale for instructed ELD in the secondary school context,
4. an analysis of common course placements for adolescent English language learners and their potential shortcomings of those placements, and
5. a model for instructed ELD in the secondary school context.

Faltis, C. J., & Wolfe, P. M. (1999). *So much to say: Adolescents, bilingualism, and ESL in the secondary school*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

*Book description:* Some of the most influential and well-known specialists in the field of language education share their research and knowledge about a wide range of issues in bilingualism and ESL; sheltered content teaching; language teaching; demographics; discrimination; and the social realities of culturally diverse classrooms and schools. Offering practical advice for teachers, administrators, and guidance counselors, all of the authors discuss the implications of their work for helping immigrant and bilingual teenagers connect with and benefit from school.

Menken, K., Kleyn, T., & Chae, N. (2007). *Meeting the needs of long-term English language learners in high school* (A report for the Office of English Language Learners of the New York City Department of Education). New York, NY: Research Institute for the Study of Language in an Urban Society. Retrieved on October 14, 2016, from [http://www.edweek.org/media/ltell\\_phase\\_ii\\_report\\_final.pdf](http://www.edweek.org/media/ltell_phase_ii_report_final.pdf).

*Excerpt:* This report shares findings from research about emergent bilinguals who have attended U.S. schools for seven or more years and whose prior schooling has been linguistically subtractive—in the U.S., these students are referred to as “long-term English language learners” (or LTELLs). In New York City, approximately one-third of all English language learners (ELLs) at the secondary level are long-term ELLs. With funding from the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE), Office of English Language Learners, we implemented a new biliteracy program to meet the needs of these students in two New York City high schools. Prior to our work in these schools, the native languages of long-term ELLs were not used in their education. In the 2008-2009 academic year, by contrast, both of our research sites implemented a new program for Spanish-speaking LTELs as a way to increase their literacy skills in English and Spanish and subsequently improve their academic performance. This is our second phase of NYCDOE-funded research about this student population, and builds on our Phase I research in which we conducted a descriptive, qualitative pilot study from January through June of 2007 in three New York City high schools serving LTELs, to identify student characteristics and educational needs.

Olvera, C. (2015). Teacher perceptions of English learners' acquisition of academic English: Impacts on long term English learner classification. *JEP: Ejournal of Education Policy*, 78-92. Retrieved on October 14, 2016, from [https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0ahUKEwj83Ma-otvPAhULwlQKHZY0AZMQFggjMAA&url=https%3A%2F%2Fnau.edu%2FCOE%2Fejournal%2F\\_Forms%2Fspeciss2015%2FOlvera%2F&usg=AFQjCNH7sebDVJ5mARITv6GtWxEADoKr4g&sig2=s2VC3vJymceTz0-vBFBw8A&cad=rja](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0ahUKEwj83Ma-otvPAhULwlQKHZY0AZMQFggjMAA&url=https%3A%2F%2Fnau.edu%2FCOE%2Fejournal%2F_Forms%2Fspeciss2015%2FOlvera%2F&usg=AFQjCNH7sebDVJ5mARITv6GtWxEADoKr4g&sig2=s2VC3vJymceTz0-vBFBw8A&cad=rja)

*Abstract:* This article examines how teacher's perceptions of students classified as English learners (ELs) can impact the reclassification of these students as long-term English Language Learners (LTEL). Understanding teachers' perceptions will empower them to understand the needs of students struggling with English proficiency and how their perceptions impact student achievement. The conceptual framework for this paper consists of three concepts: (a) historical, political and social influences on ELs, (b) programs for ELs, and (c) teacher expectations. This article study sought to examine classroom level factors impacting some students' ability to become proficient in English. Overall, the findings support that teachers' perceptions are grounded in deficit thinking. Educators may find it useful to interview their own students as a form of self-review process in order to become more aware of their teaching methods and how students internalize the instruction.

Ruiz-de-Velasco, J., Fix, M., & Chu Clewell, B. (2000). *Overlooked and underserved*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute. Retrieved on October 14, 2016, from [http://www.urban.org/research/publication/overlooked-and-underserved-immigrant-students-us-secondary-schools/view/full\\_report](http://www.urban.org/research/publication/overlooked-and-underserved-immigrant-students-us-secondary-schools/view/full_report)

*Excerpt:* This report focuses in particular on two subpopulations of immigrant children that pose special challenges to secondary schools but have received little attention. One subpopulation is immigrant teens who arrive in the U.S. school system with significant gaps in their schooling. Many of these children are not fully literate in their native language, much less in English. The second subpopulation is students from language minority homes who have been in U.S. schools longer, but have yet to master basic language and literacy skills. While these students may be orally proficient in English, their reading and writing skills lag those of their student counterparts. We refer to these students here as long-term LEPs.

Soto, M., Freeman, Y. S., & Freeman, D. (2013). In for the long haul. *Language Magazine*, 13(1), 24-28. Retrieved on October 14, 2016, from [http://languagemagazine.com/?page\\_id=11275](http://languagemagazine.com/?page_id=11275)

*Abstract:* The article focuses on long-term English learners (LTEL) and the different types of schooling they experienced. The academic language needs of LTEL are discussed, as well the findings of a study of LTEL. LTEL refer to students who have attended U.S. schools for seven or more years. Research findings showed that students receive inconsistent schooling due to different language policies of schools. It notes that LTEL need to learn complex academic subject matter in a second language.

**Policy discussion** (an author's summary of key policy and program issues in a particular topic area, which may include recommendations for specific actions, including some backed by research references, and is aimed at educators, policymakers, and others who are interested in formulating or influencing policy and practice).

Calderon, M. (2007). *Teaching reading to English language learners, grades 6–12*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

*Book description:* This book provides a field-tested, research-based approach to expediting reading comprehension that results in higher test scores not just for ELLs, but for all students.

Calderon, M., & Minaya-Rowe, L. (2011). *Preventing long-term ELL students: Transforming schools to meet core standards*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

*Book description:* This practical guidebook's 10 components for success helps educators close the achievement gap with a professional development program that advances learning for EL students.

Californians Together. (2014). *California is the first state in the nation to define and Identify English learners who after many years are struggling to succeed*. Long Beach, CA: Author. Retrieved on October 14, 2016, from <https://www.californianstogether.org/california-is-the-first-state-in-the-nation-to-define-and-identify-english-learners-who-after-many-years-are-struggling-to-succeed-2/>

*Excerpt:* Every school district in the state needs to look at their LTEL numbers, focus on those students and develop high quality language and academic instructional approaches to accelerate their language and academic development", said Shelly Spiegel-Coleman, Executive Director of Californians Together. Some school districts are doing just that:

*Preventing Students from Becoming LTEs:* Seven school districts in northern and one southern California district are focused on grades preK-3<sup>rd</sup> implementing the highly successful Sobrato Early Academic Language (SEAL) model that was designed to prevent English Learner students from ever becoming LTELs. SEAL powerfully develops the language and literacy skills of young English Learner children through an intensive approach that emphasizes language development throughout the school day through integrated standards-based thematic units and curriculum incorporating the Common Core standards, Next Generation Science standards, and state social studies standards. In 30 schools, language and literacy is woven into all aspects of the school day. Utilizing rigorous and interactive instructional strategies, teachers support English Learners and others to reach high levels of language and literacy as well as academic mastery in science and social studies.

*Addressing Students at Risk of Becoming LTELs:* For the past five years, the Center for Equity for English Learners (CEEL) at Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles has partnered with five school districts in Southern and Central California to offer a successful project-based intervention program that has as its goal preventing at-risk English Learners from becoming LTELs by improving their academic achievement before leaving elementary school. The *Journalism for English Learners Program* seeks to improve the English skills and academic achievement of ELs in grades 3-5 who have been in United State schools at least four years; are at the beginning, early intermediate or intermediate English proficiency level; and scored below "basic" levels on state language arts assessments. The program is a specialized, intensive after-school intervention that focuses on the basic linguistic underpinnings of the English language through a real-world application of language skills culminating in the development of a community-based newspaper.

*Serving and Accelerating LTELs:* Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) has developed special classes to accelerate both the academic English Language Development and overall literacy skills of English Learners who have not met the criteria to be reclassified as English proficient after five full

years of instruction in the district. This program option ultimately aims to ensure that LTELs will have access to and meet A-G graduation requirements to be college-prepared and career-ready, ensure that these students are able to perform at a level comparable to their native-English speaking peers and reduce the risk of dropping out of school. The two special LTEL courses provide opportunities to practice meaningful discourse about academic topics and to incorporate language development with intensive, accelerated literacy skills. LTELs are concurrently placed in their core grade level English course with all other students (A-G English in High School) and one period of a specialized LTEL Language/Literacy course. The LTEL courses have received credit approval by the University of California Office of the President as college preparation. In the 2013-14 school year, the first year of implementation, the district served 40,000 LTELs.

Dounay Zinth, J. (2013). *The progress of education reform: English learners*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States. Retrieved on October 14, 2016, from <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/10/20/11020.pdf>

*Excerpt:* Key takeaways:

- Nearly one in 10 K-12 students in public schools is an English-language learner.
- Many preschool programs are not equipped to adequately serve English-language learners.
- Long-term English learners suffer worse outcomes than other English learners. States generally do not monitor how long students spend in English-learner programs.
- In spite of the prevalence of English learners, many general classroom teachers receive little to no training in addressing the needs of ELLs.

Francis, D., Rivera, M., Lesaux, N., Kieffer, M., & Rivera, H. (2006). *Practical guidelines for the education of English language learners: Research-based recommendations for instruction and academic interventions*. Portsmouth, NH: RMC Research Corporation, Center on Instruction. Retrieved on October 14, 2016, from <http://www.centeroninstruction.org/files/ELL1-Interventions.pdf>.

*Excerpt:* The fundamental principles underlying the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 focus on high standards of learning and instruction with the goal of increasing academic achievement—reading and math in particular—within all identified subgroups in the K-12 population. One of these subgroups is the growing population of English language learners (ELLs). NCLB has increased awareness of the academic needs and achievement of ELLs as schools, districts, and states are held accountable for teaching English and content knowledge to this special and heterogeneous group of learners. However, ELLs present a unique set of challenges to educators because of the central role played by academic language proficiency in the acquisition and assessment of content-area knowledge. Educators have raised multiple questions about effective practices and programs to support the academic achievement of all ELLs, including questions about classroom instruction and targeted interventions in reading and math, the special needs of adolescent newcomers, and the inclusion of ELLs in large-scale assessments. While ELLs vary in their academic outcomes and many thrive in U.S. schools, there is indeed a significant proportion—whether or not formally designated limited English proficient (LEP) or English language learner (ELL) and thus receiving support services for language development—who struggle considerably in developing English proficiency, academic skills, and meeting grade-level standards. This document was written primarily with this latter group in mind. Like any other population of learners with academic difficulties, struggling ELLs require effective instructional approaches and interventions to prevent further difficulties and to augment and support their academic development. When designing an instructional approach or intervention, educators must consider several factors in addition to the content, such as the format for delivery, the match between the learner’s difficulty and the approach or intervention, and whether it is meant to be a class-wide approach or targeted for small-group or one-on-one settings.

For ELLs, it is especially important to consider the role of second language proficiency in their difficulties as well as in their ability to profit from the planned instruction or intervention.

This document provides evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, administrators, and teachers in K–12 settings who seek to make informed decisions about instruction and academic interventions for ELLs. The domains of focus include reading and mathematics, and the recommendations apply to both a classwide instructional format and individualized, targeted interventions, depending on the population and the goals of the instruction.

Freeman, D. E., & Freeman, Y. S. (2007). *English language learners: The essential guide*. New York: Scholastic.

*Book description:* Focused on middle school and high school students, this book addresses the unique needs of English language learners (ELLs) who are struggling to master English language proficiency and academic language. The authors explain their keys to success for teachers: know your students, teach language through content, organize curriculum around themes, draw on students' primary language and cultures, and emphasize meaningful reading and writing. Classroom environments, routines, and strategies described in this book are designed to give teachers the tools they need when scaffolding instruction for ELLs and customizing their differentiated instruction.

Freeman, Y. S., Freeman D. E., & Mercuri, S. P. (2003). *Closing the achievement gap: How to reach limited-formal-schooling and long-term English learners*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

*Book description:* This book reviews the research on effective practices for older English learners. It is intended for teachers, program directors, resource personnel, and administrators who are attempting to meet the needs of older English learners who come to school with limited formal schooling experiences. The book shows how three teachers have put theory into practice to reach their older English learners and help them close the achievement gap. These teachers organize curricula around themes, use predictable classroom routines, and scaffold instruction in a variety of ways. This book features the following: the four keys for school success for older English learners; clear distinctions among the types of older English learners in the schools, with examples of students from each category; a discussion of the kinds of language proficiency older English learners need; a review of the latest research on effective practices for older English learners; detailed descriptions from the classroom of the three teachers; and professional extension activities to help readers apply the information in this book to their own educational settings.

Kinsella, K. (2011). Research brief: Helping long-term English learners master the language of school. *Scholastic*. Retrieved on October 14, 2016, from [http://research.scholastic.com/sites/default/files/publications/English3D\\_ResearchFoundation\\_2011.pdf](http://research.scholastic.com/sites/default/files/publications/English3D_ResearchFoundation_2011.pdf).

*Excerpt:* How can we actively engage students with a track record of non-engagement and advance their academic standing? Current research and best practices for LTELL students recommend clustered placement into grade-level content classes mixed with English proficient students. LTELL students need to interact academically with skilled English speakers and have access to rigorous curricula at their grade level.

Meltzer, J., & Hamann, E. (2005). *Meeting the literacy development needs of adolescent English language learners through content-area learning. Part two: Focus on classroom teaching and learning strategies*. Providence, RI: The Education Alliance at Brown University. Retrieved on October 14, 2016, from [https://www.brown.edu/academics/education-alliance/sites/brown.edu.academics.education-alliance/files/publications/adell\\_litdv2.pdf](https://www.brown.edu/academics/education-alliance/sites/brown.edu.academics.education-alliance/files/publications/adell_litdv2.pdf)

*Abstract:* Today, English language learners (ELLs) represent an increasing proportion of U.S. middle and high school enrollment. As a result, mainstream content-area teachers are more likely than ever to have ELLs in their classrooms. At the same time, education policymakers and researchers are increasingly calling for improved academic literacy development and performance for all adolescents. The research on recommended practices to promote mainstream adolescents' academic literacy development across the content areas and the research on effective content-area instruction of ELLs in middle and high schools overlap substantially, suggesting that mainstream teachers who use effective practices for adolescents' content-area literacy development will be using many of the practices that are recommended for those trained to work with ELLs. Such practices appear to support the literacy development and content-area learning of both ELLs and other adolescents. Eight instructional practices are supported by both literatures: (1) teacher modeling, strategy instruction, and using multiple forms of assessment; (2) emphasis on reading and writing; (3) emphasis on speaking and listening/viewing; (4) emphasis on thinking; (5) creating a learner-centered classroom; (6) recognizing and analyzing content-area discourse features; (7) understanding text structures within the content areas; and (8) vocabulary development. These practices should be part of the design of pre-service and in-service teacher professional development, thus enabling mainstream content teachers to be more responsive to the needs of all of their students.

Olsen, L. (2010). *Reparable harm: Fulfilling the unkept promise of educational opportunity for California's long-term English Learners*. Long Beach, CA: Californians Together. Retrieved on October 14, 2016, from <https://www.californianstogether.org/publications/> (executive summary).

*Excerpt:* *Reparable harm* is a wake-up call to California educators and policymakers to recognize the large number of English learner students amassing in California secondary schools who, despite many years in our schools and despite being close to the age at which they should be able to graduate, are still not English proficient and have incurred major academic deficits—the “long-term English learners.” This publication presents new survey data collected from 40 school districts throughout all regions of California in 2009/2010. It includes information on 175,734 secondary school students, almost one-third of all secondary school English learners in the state. It is further informed by existing research literature and inquiries conducted in California secondary schools. Together, these sources provide an emerging and startling picture of students left behind, parents uninformed, educators unaware, and districts largely stumped about what to do.

Olsen, L. (2012). *Secondary school courses designed to address the language needs and academic gaps of long-term English learners*. Long Beach, CA: Californians Together. Retrieved on October 14, 2016, from <http://www.ctdev.changeagentsproductions.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/SecondarySchoolsLTELreport.compressed.pdf>

*Abstract:* Well over half of the secondary school English learners in California are long-term English learners—struggling academically and stuck in progressing towards English proficiency despite six or more years in U.S. schools. Many secondary schools and districts, feeling the urgency of meeting the needs of these long-term English learners, are attempting to modify curriculum or create new courses that address the unique language and academic gaps of these students. Most are doing so without guidance, without a clear sense of how best to design these classes, and making do with whatever curricular resources they happen to have or hear about. Now, a new publication, *Secondary School Courses Designed to Address the Language Needs and Academic Gaps of Long-Term English Learners*, culls the lessons learned from districts throughout the state and provides needed guidance for the field.

Olsen, L. (2014). *Meeting the unique needs of long term English language learners: A guide for educators*. Washington, DC: National Education Association. Retrieved on October 14, 2016, from [https://www.nea.org/assets/docs/15420\\_LongTermEngLangLearner\\_final\\_web\\_3-24-14.pdf](https://www.nea.org/assets/docs/15420_LongTermEngLangLearner_final_web_3-24-14.pdf)

*Excerpt:* What can and must be done to prevent the continuing creation of Long Term English Language Learners? Who are these students? Why is this happening? And what are the best practices for meeting their needs? This booklet provides information and guidance for educators who are seeking answers to these questions, and who are committed to ensuring educational access and opportunity for English Language Learners.

Short, D., & Fitzsimmons, S. (2007). *Double the work: Challenges and solutions to acquiring language and academic literacy for adolescent English language learners*. New York: Carnegie Corporation and Alliance for Excellent Education. Retrieved on October 14, 2016, from [https://www.carnegie.org/media/filer\\_public/bd/d8/bdd80ac7-fb48-4b97-b082-df8c49320acb/ccny\\_report\\_2007\\_double.pdf](https://www.carnegie.org/media/filer_public/bd/d8/bdd80ac7-fb48-4b97-b082-df8c49320acb/ccny_report_2007_double.pdf).

*Excerpt:* Developing academic literacy is a complex endeavor that involves reading, writing, listening, and speaking for multiple school-related purposes using a variety of texts and demanding a variety of products. Recognizing this complexity, the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), on behalf of Carnegie Corporation of New York, convened a panel of distinguished researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to consider the adolescent ELL literacy crisis, review the lessons of research and practice, and to develop recommendations. Additionally, CAL researchers conducted a review of the literature on adolescent ELL literacy and conducted site visits to three promising programs.

Walqui, A., Koelsch, N., Hamburger, L., Gaarder, D., Insaurralde, A., Schmida, M., & Weiss, S. (2010). *What are we doing to middle school English Learners? Findings and recommendations for change from a study of California EL programs*. San Francisco: WestEd. Retrieved on October 14, 2016, from [http://www.wested.org/online\\_pubs/PD-10-02-full.pdf](http://www.wested.org/online_pubs/PD-10-02-full.pdf).

*Excerpt:* This two-phase research project, conducted by WestEd and funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, aims first to map the current landscape of programs and interventions for English Learners in districts in California with the highest percentage of ELs in their schools, and then to contextualize through case studies what happens at the middle school and classroom levels. The first phase of the study presents a broad picture of the education of English learners in California middle schools. In this phase, the study focused on how districts translate state mandates

for the education of English Learners, and, in turn, how schools reinterpret district guidelines for site implementation. In the second phase, study researchers investigated the specific instructional context of middle schools through case studies of five middle schools that were selected by triangulation of student data (substantially higher than average EL performance on standardized measures), survey responses, and district nominations. A key goal for this phase was to inspire school change by providing descriptions of promising approaches. What researchers found in the case study schools, however, was a need to identify as well elements of EL instructional programs that need to be changed or strengthened. The hope is to contribute to more informed decisions in the future for improving the education of English learners.

***Individual research study*** (presents the results of a specific study, including analyses of large district, state, or national datasets.)

Brooks, M. D. (2015). It's like a script: Long-term English learners' experiences with and ideas about academic reading. *Research in the Teaching of English, 49*(4), 383.

***Abstract:*** This article presents a multifaceted representation of the in-school reading experiences and ideas about academic reading shared by five adolescent Latina long-term English learners (LTELs). It uses data collected during ethnographic observations of the five focal students' biology and English language arts classrooms and in-depth qualitative interviews with these students and selected teachers to contextualize their standardized reading test scores. The findings of this yearlong multiple case study illustrate that the focal students' everyday experience of in-school reading focused on constructing meaning with texts orally in a group. During these classroom reading activities, the teacher played a primary role in facilitating comprehension. On the other hand, the standardized tests that were used to determine their English proficiency required reading to be a silent and independent activity. Moreover, the ideas about academic reading that these students shared reflected their daily experiences with oral reading. By calling attention to the distinction between academic reading on tests and in the classroom, this research documents that what constitutes academic reading is not static across all contexts. These findings contribute to existing work that moves away from seeing academic literacy as a set of decontextualized language skills; this research highlights the socially situated nature of reading. Additionally, these findings problematize the exclusive attribution, without further investigation, of standardized reading test scores to LTELs' English proficiency. This work speaks to the importance of a more holistic understanding of the literacy development of students who are considered to be LTELs.

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

***Abstract:*** Programs and policies related to the education of English learners are often based on the belief that fluency in English is the primary, if not sole, requirement for academic success. While English is in fact necessary for academic success in U.S. schools, so is a strong base in content-area academics. This study investigated the effects of track placement and English proficiency on secondary English learners' academic achievement while taking students' previous schooling and length of time enrolled in U.S. schools into account. In the case of a variety of outcomes, track placement was a better predictor of achievement than proficiency in English. Results indicate that track placement is a better predictor of English learners' academic performance than proficiency in English, highlighting the importance of quality instruction for English learners.

Flores, N., Kleyn, T., & Menken, K. (2015). Looking holistically in a climate of partiality: Identities of students labeled long-term English language learners. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education, 14*(2), 113–132.

*Abstract:* In recent years there has been growing awareness about a sub-group of students labeled Long-Term English Language Learners (LTELLs). Our study seeks to show how students who fall within the LTELL category see themselves through the lens of their lived experiences as (emergent) bilinguals, students, family/community members and transnational individuals. Countering discourses which frame these students as deficient, we apply the discourse of partiality framework as a lens through which to better understand how these students perceive themselves via their languages, ethnic-connectivity and academic trajectories. We argue that the discourse around the label can be understood as a racial project that serves to perpetuate white supremacy through the marginalization of the language practices of communities of color. We conclude by exploring how schools can take a broader view of this population to create positive learning opportunities that build on who they are and how they see themselves.

Hakuta, K., Goto Butler, Y., & Witt, D. (2000). *How long does it take English Learners to attain proficiency?* University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute Policy Report 2000-1. Retrieved on October 14, 2016, from <http://www.stanford.edu/~hakuta/Publications/%282000%29%20-%20HOW%20LONG%20DOES%20IT%20TAKE%20ENGLISH%20LEARNERS%20TO%20ATTAIN%20PR.pdf>.

*Abstract:* One of the most commonly asked questions about the education of language minority students is how long they need special services, such as English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) and bilingual education. Under the U.S. Supreme Court's interpretation of the Civil Rights Act in *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), local school districts and states have an obligation to provide appropriate services to limited-English-proficient students (in California now referred to as EL or English learner students), but policy makers have long debated setting time limits for students to receive such services. The purpose of this paper is to pull together findings that directly address this question. This study reports on data from four different school districts to draw conclusions on how long it takes students to develop oral and academic English proficiency. Academic English proficiency refers to the ability to use language in academic contexts, which is particularly important for long-term success in school. Two of the data sets are from two school districts in the San Francisco Bay Area and the other two are based on summary data from reports by researchers in Canada. The data were used to analyze various forms of English proficiency as a function of length of exposure to English. The clear conclusion emerging from these data sets is that even in two California districts that are considered the most successful in teaching English to LEP students, oral proficiency takes three to five years to develop, and academic English proficiency can take four to seven years. The data from the two school districts in Canada offer corroboration. Indeed, these estimates of the time it takes may be underestimates, because only students who remained in the same district since kindergarten were included.

Kim, W. G. & García, S. B. (2014). Long-term English language learners' perceptions of their language and academic learning experiences. *Remedial and Special Education, 35*, 300-312. Retrieved on October 14, 2016, from <http://rse.sagepub.com/content/35/5/300.full.pdf+html>

*Abstract:* Long-term, adolescent English language learners (ELLs) experience persistent academic underachievement in spite of several years of schooling; yet, the research on this topic is scant. To increase our understanding of these students' educational experiences, we explored perceptions of 13 long-term ELLs about their schooling in the context of their school history, including program placements, special education referral, and academic outcomes. Data from semistructured interviews and documents were analyzed using a grounded theory approach. Participants viewed themselves as English-proficient, motivated learners, and described their school experience as positive but challenging. The findings revealed a gap between their postsecondary aspirations and

the reality of their academic performance, which raises questions about the adequacy of educational programs and identification of ELLs with disabilities.

Lavadenz, M., Armas, E. G., & Barajas, R. (2012). Preventing long term English learners: Results from a project-based differentiated ELD intervention program. *The Multilingual Educator*, California Association for Bilingual Education, 2012 Conference Edition. Retrieved on October 14, 2016, from [http://www.weingartfnd.org/files/Preventing\\_LTEs\\_Lavadenz\\_Armas\\_Barajas\\_Multilingual\\_Educator.pdf](http://www.weingartfnd.org/files/Preventing_LTEs_Lavadenz_Armas_Barajas_Multilingual_Educator.pdf).

*Excerpt:* Taking a proactive approach to address the growing concern [over long-term English language learners (LTEL students)], Lennox School District designed and implemented a project-based, differentiated English Language Development (ELD) Intervention program...This article provides (a) an overview of the Lennox ELD program; (b) a synthesis of the results of the program implementation; and (c) a discussion of implications for the prevention of LTEL status.

Robles, J. W. (2010). Participatory leadership for English learner success. *Leadership*, 26–29. Retrieved on October 14, 2016, from <http://www.ctdev.changeagentsproductions.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/RoblesEdLeadershiparticle.pdf>.

*Excerpt:* Ventura Unified School District has embarked on an extensive effort to restructure the services offered to English learner students through a participatory leadership model that includes teachers, administrators, and support staff and incorporates input from our students. Together, we are building pathways for student success that have already begun to produce positive results. Although efforts are taking place at all grade spans, our starting place has been the high school level with a focus on long-term English learners. These are English learners who have been enrolled in U.S. schools for six years or more and still lack the English and/or academic skills for reclassification as fluent English proficient.

Thompson, K. D. (2015). Questioning the long-term English learner label: How categorization can blind us to students' abilities. *Teachers College Record*, 117(12).

*Abstract:* Background/Context: The label long-term English learner (LTEL) is increasingly used to describe students who have been educated in the United States for many years but have not met criteria to be considered proficient in English. Though created to draw awareness to the unique needs of a particular group of students, the LTEL label has acquired strongly negative connotations, with descriptions of LTEs often focusing on students' perceived deficits. Limited empirical analysis of achievement and other outcomes among this group of students has been conducted, and little is known about the impact of the LTEL label on students' educational trajectories. Purpose/Objective: This study explores the characteristics and educational trajectories of students considered long-term English learners. In addition, the study explores the costs and benefits associated with the LTEL label. In particular, the author examines how prolonged classification as an English learner impacted students' opportunity to learn and explores whether and how the LTEL label was linked to stigma for students. Research Design: Using case study research methods, this study focuses on the experiences of three students in a medium-sized California school district who were considered long-term English learners. Analysis of district-wide, longitudinal data contextualizes the experiences of the three focal students. Findings/Results: First, findings provide evidence of the heterogeneity of academic achievement, course placement, and long-term outcomes among students to whom the long-term English learner label is applied. Approximately half of students considered LTEs in the district had met at least some of the criteria necessary to be considered English proficient in at least one year. For instance, one focal student remained an English learner throughout middle school solely because of her scores on the state standardized math test. Meanwhile, 35% of students in the district who were considered LTEs also qualified for special

education services because of documented disabilities. Second, findings indicate that there was a loose coupling between the LTEL label and specific services for students in this district. Among the three focal students, all could be considered LTEs, but their course placements and the academic rigor of their courses varied dramatically in high school. Finally, students experienced courses designed exclusively for English learners at the secondary level (but not at the elementary level) as stigmatizing. Conclusions/Recommendations: Given the substantial variation among students to whom the Long-Term English Learner label is applied, this research suggests that educators and policymakers should use the LTEL label with caution. For example, "intervention" courses designed for LTELs at the secondary level may need to be reconsidered, taking into account the unique needs of the particular students the courses are intended to serve. Given the stigma that students associate with EL-only courses at the secondary level, the conditions under which such courses can function as empowering rather than stigmatizing spaces represents an important area for future research.

Yang, H., Urrabazo, T., & Murray, W. (2001). *How did multiple years (7+) in a BE/ESL program affect the English acquisition and academic achievement of secondary LEP students? Results from a large urban school district*. Dallas, TX: Dallas Public Schools. Retrieved on October 14, 2016, from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED452709.pdf>.

*Abstract:* The rapid increase in the number of limited English proficient (LEP) students is especially significant in the nation's large urban school districts. The numbers of LEP students in special, bilingual education programs has exploded due to the constant stream of immigrants into the United States and the inability of so many children, even those who have already been in such bilingual education programs, unable to meet program exit criteria. The fact that a large number of continuing LEP students fail to exit ESL programs even after seven years is a serious issue facing many urban school systems with limited resources. This paper explores what it means for all the students who remain permanently in LEP programs or continue to be labeled as such. What happens academically to these students, and what kind of futures they have is rarely addressed or seriously discussed in the field. It is concluded that while there are certainly other relevant factors affecting these long-term LEP students, there is evidence that continuing BE/ESL programs does not improve academic performance and that such learners usually lack higher order thinking skills necessary to perform well on norm and criterion-referenced assessments. Other conclusions are drawn and policy implications discussed.

Zhao, H., & Maina, N. (2015). *English language proficiency and progress: Students receiving English for speakers of other languages services from 2012 to 2014*. Rockville, MD: Montgomery County Public Schools. Retrieved on October 14, 2016, from [http://montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/sharedaccountability/reports/2015/ELL%20student%20performance%20and%20growth%20on%20ACCESS Final.pdf](http://montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/sharedaccountability/reports/2015/ELL%20student%20performance%20and%20growth%20on%20ACCESS%20Final.pdf)

*Abstract:* This is one of several studies conducted by the Office of Shared Accountability that evaluated students identified as eligible for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services in Montgomery County (Maryland) Public Schools (MCPS). This study has two major purposes: (1) to examine English proficiency levels and progress in English language acquisition for students eligible for ESOL services from 2012 to 2014; and (2) to describe long-term ESOL students, and students who were eligible for ESOL services but whose parents or guardians refused the services. Since 2012, ESOL students in Maryland are required to take Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State (ACCESS) for English Language Learners (ELLs). This descriptive study examined the distribution of ACCESS for ELLs scores (percentile ranks) among students and one-year or two-year gains on the ACCESS for ELL scores for elementary, middle, and high school students. In addition, the study examined the progress for two groups of students: (1) students who stayed in ESOL for four or more years and were considered at risk of becoming long-

term ESOL; and (2) long-term ESOL students who were enrolled in the ESOL program for six or more years.

**Research literature review** (an author's analysis of the current state of research knowledge on a specific topic, which may include meta-analyses).

Gersten, R., & Baker, S. (2000). What we know about effective instructional practices for English-language learners. *Exceptional Children*, 66, 454–470. Retrieved on October 14, 2016, from <http://ecx.sagepub.com/content/66/4/454.full.pdf+html>.

*Abstract:* This research synthesis, using a qualitative multivocal method, investigates the knowledge base of effective instruction for English-language learners in elementary and middle school grades. Interviews with professional educators and researchers around the country in a series of five work groups were conducted. Findings from the work groups were enhanced by a review of the literature consisting of nine intervention studies (eight group studies and one single-S study) and 15 descriptive studies. Major themes and implications for conducting future research and improving current practice are discussed.

Goldenberg, C. (2008). Teaching English language learners: What the research does—and does not—say. *American Educator*, Summer, 8–23, 43–44. Retrieved on October 14, 2016, from <http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/periodicals/goldenberg.pdf>

*Excerpt:* In this article, Claude Goldenberg walks us through the major findings of two recent reviews of the research on educating ELLs. Given all the strong opinions one sees in newspaper op-eds, readers may be surprised to discover how little is actually known. What's certain is that if we conducted more research with ELLs, and paid more attention to the research that exists, we would be in a much better position.

Maxwell-Jolly, J., Gándara, P., & Mendez-Benavidez, L., (2007). *Promoting academic literacy among secondary English language learners: A synthesis of research and practice*. Davis, CA: University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute, Education Policy Center. Retrieved on October 14, 2016, from <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/5m14j4vp>.

*Excerpt:* This report is a synthesis of research, challenges, and best practices in the education of secondary English learners (ELs). It incorporates a summary of three days of presentations and discussions by key national experts in the spring of 2005, observations and findings from our own research, and key issues from the research literature. The report provides an overview of the most pressing issues facing schools in the instruction of secondary English learners. It also includes the perspectives of people in the schools and in the classrooms who are attempting to meet these students' needs, as well as individuals who have been grappling with the challenges from the world of policy. The report concludes with our recommendations for California education policy informed by all of the above: the challenges that secondary EL students and teachers face, the needs and limitations of teachers and schools in the state, and the best practices cited by both researchers and practitioners.

Menken, K. (2013). State-of-the-art article: Emergent bilingual students in secondary school—along the academic language and literacy continuum. *Language Teaching*, 46(4), 438–476.

*Abstract:* This article offers a critical review of research about emergent bilingual students in secondary school, where the academic demands placed upon them are great, and where instruction typically remains steadfast in its monolingualism. I focus on recent scholarship about the diversity within this student population, and center on “students with interrupted formal education” (SIFE, new arrivals who have no home language literacy skills or are at the beginning stages of literacy learning) and “long-term English language learners” (LTELLs, primarily educated in their receiving country yet still eligible for language support services). Little has been published about these students, making this a significant area of inquiry. Moreover, both groups are characterized by poor performance and together illustrate the characteristics of secondary students at various points along an academic language and literacy continuum. While existing research provides important information to help us improve secondary schooling for emergent bilinguals, it has also perpetuated deficit views of these students by focusing solely on their perceived academic shortcomings. Grounded in a new body of research in applied linguistics that examines the students’ complex, creative, and dynamic language and literacy practices, I apply a translanguaging lens to critique the positioning of such students as deficient, with implications for research and practice.

## **Methods**

### **Keywords and Search Strings Used in the Search**

("Long-term English learner" OR "long-term ESL students" OR "middle and high school English language learner" OR "adolescent English learner" OR "long-term English language learner") AND ("program" OR "promising practice" OR "research-based practice" OR "definition")

### **Search of Databases**

EBSCO Host, ERIC, PsychInfo, PsychArticle, Google, and Google Scholar

### **Criteria for Inclusion**

When REL West staff review resources, they consider—among other things—four factors:

- **Date of the Publication:** The most current information is included, except in the case of nationally known seminal resources.
- **Source and Funder of the Report/Study/Brief/Article:** Priority is given to IES, nationally funded, and certain other vetted sources known for strict attention to research protocols.
- **Methodology:** Sources include randomized controlled trial studies, surveys, self-assessments, literature reviews, and policy briefs. Priority for inclusion generally is given to randomized controlled trial study findings, but the reader should note at least the following factors when basing decisions on these resources: numbers of participants (Just a few? Thousands?); selection (Did the participants volunteer for the study or were they chosen?); representation (Were findings generalized from a homogeneous or a diverse pool of participants? Was the study sample representative of the population as a whole?).
- **Existing Knowledge Base:** Although we strive to include vetted resources, there are times when the research base is limited or nonexistent. In these cases, we have included the best resources we could find, which may include newspaper articles, interviews with content specialists, organization websites, and other sources.

This memorandum is one in a series of quick-turnaround responses to specific questions posed by educators and policymakers in the West Region (Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah), which is served by the Regional Educational Laboratory West (REL West) at WestEd. This memorandum was prepared by REL West under a contract with the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES), Contract ED-IES-12-C-0002, administered by WestEd. Its content does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IES or the U.S. Department of Education nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

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