Developing Plans for a Focus Group Project to Study Implementation of the Biliteracy-Bilingualism Seal in New Mexico

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Today's goals

- Learn about best practices for designing a focus group study.

- Gain consensus on the purpose, use of findings, research questions, and initial considerations for the focus group project.

- Determine a timeline and roles for the focus group project.

Agenda

1. Overview

2. National trends and research on Biliteracy Seals

3. Focus group research

4. Initial considerations for our project

5. Steps in the focus group project

6. Project timeline and partner roles

National trends and research on Biliteracy Seals

National trends

Year	State seal adopted
2011	California
2013	Illinois, New York, and Texas
2014	**New Mexico**, Washington, Louisiana, Minnesota, District of Columbia
2015	North Carolina, Virginia, Indiana, Nevada, Hawaii, Wisconsin, and Utah
2016	New Jersey, Florida, Oregon, Maryland, Georgia, Arizona, Kansas, and Rhode Island
2017	Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Missouri, Massachusetts, and Ohio
2018	Arkansas, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Tennessee, and South Carolina
2019	North Dakota

National trends

State Laws Regarding the Seal of Biliteracy
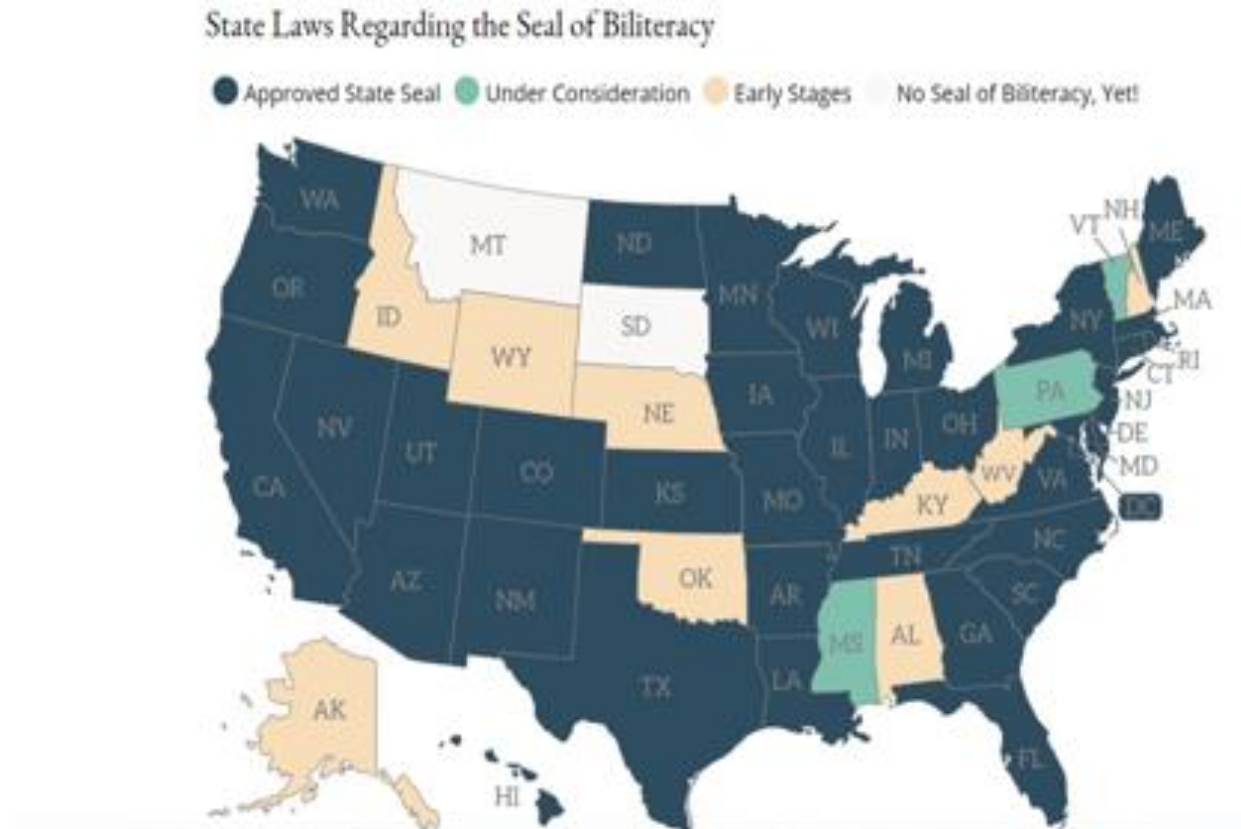
Current status of state laws regarding the Seal of Biliteracy as of July 14, 2019. sealofbiliteracy.org

National trends

Seal policies vary across states in the following areas:

- Number and level of the Seal awards.
- Minimum level of required proficiency.
- Ways in which students can demonstrate proficiency in non-English languages.

Research

REL Southwest Ask A REL Response

English Learners

May 2019

Question:

What does the research say about successful implementation of a high school diploma Biliteracy Seal program at the state or district level, and what are the outcomes for students who earn a Biliteracy Seal?

Research

1. **2012/13 survey by a UCLA professor, Patricia Gándara**

   - Questions about attitudes and practices regarding hiring bilingual employees for a job in different industries.

   - Most employers were not familiar with the Seal.

   - Once respondents were explained what the Seal means, 67 to 92 percent of them, depending on the industry, indicated that having the Seal would be beneficial for job applicants in the hiring process.
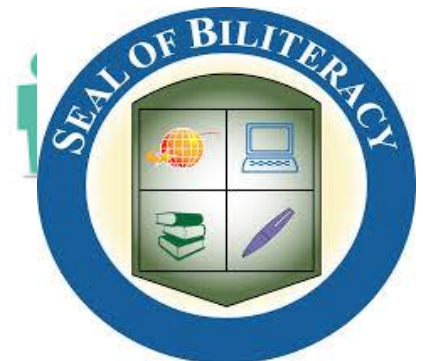
Research

2 . Dissertation by a Ph.D. student, Arun Kolar, of the University of Wisconsin

- Work was based on school-level K–12 administrative data from California.

- Pathway awards also at 5th and 8th grades.

- Having the Seal program at a school is related to a higher percentage of K–12 English learner students who become proficient English.

Research

- Professors Heineke and Davin will start a nationwide study about the Seal in the 2019/20 academic year.
- The study includes a survey of Seal recipients to glean trends in achievement and use of the Seal.

Focus group research

Focus groups constitute one of many methods for collecting data

Focus groups
Interviews
Surveys
Observations
Document scan
Access existing administrative data

Focus group research

- Qualitative data collection method used.
- Research questions explored through moderated discussion with small groups of participants.
- Semistructured interview process.
- Multiple groups conducted.
- Transcripts coded, analyzed, and summarized to answer research questions.

Participant interaction can provide a rich description of views and experiences.

Benefits

Group interactions can elicit deep conversation about complex issues.

Focus groups can explore topics from multiple perspectives.

Focus groups can be cheaper than other methods.

Limitations

Findings are not statistically representative of a population.

Not all participants are equally talkative and candid in group setting.

Data analyses is time consuming.

Steps

1. **Define** what we want to learn and why.

2. **Determine** participants.

3. **Create** protocols.

4. **Recruit** participants.

5. **Conduct** focus group sessions.

6. **Analyze** data.

7. **Communicate** findings to key stakeholders.

8. **Use** the findings to achieve project goals.

Steps

1. **Define** what we want to learn and why.

- Clarify and gain consensus on project goals and what actions will be taken based on the findings.
- Prioritize focus group topics that best align to those goals.
- Choose one or two topics to explore fully rather than try to cover too much.

Steps

2. Determine participants.

- Choose participant types whose perspectives are most informative and aligned to the project goals.
- Include multiple participant types if multiple perspectives are important.
- Typically, focus groups aim for multiple homogenous groups, each representing an important subgroup.

Initial considerations for our project

Why are we doing this project?

Conduct focus groups to better understand districts' and schools' challenges and successes with the Biliteracy-Bilingualism Seal.

We use results to improve guidance and support for districts and schools.

Districts and schools use the guidance and support to increase numbers of students who pursue and earn the Seal.

Students who pursue and earn the Seal have better motivation, language and academic proficiency, and college and career opportunities.

this project

What do we want to learn from these focus groups?

What decisions, actions, or new resources will the data inform?

How does PED currently support the Seal implementation, and how will that be improved with better information?

If we knew more about _____, we could _____ more effectively.

What on this list will be best captured through focus groups?

Are there other sources of data (for example, administrative data, district websites or other district document reviews) that can be accessed or collected to understand the important issues?

What are our main topics for the focus groups?

What are the highest priority topics?

Who can best report on this information? Who should we include as focus group members?

What school/district roles need to be represented?

What types of schools and districts need to be represented? Nonadopter districts? Adopter districts with few Seal earners, many Seal earners, different pathways types?

Take a break

See you in 15 minutes.

Steps in the focus group project

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Project timeline and partner roles

When	What	Who
July	Meeting 1 (in person): Initial planning	Team
Aug	Create first draft focus group protocols	REL Southwest
Aug	Meeting 2 (virtual): Protocol review, sampling, and recruitment	Team
Aug–Oct	Recruit participants	?
Aug–Sept	Facilitate further protocol reviews	?
Sept	Finalize protocols	REL Southwest
Sept–Oct	Meeting 3 (in person): Review protocol, plan coding, practice moderator techniques	Team
Nov 13–16	Conduct focus groups at the La Cosecha conference (moderators and notetakers)	REL Southwest and ?
Nov–Dec	Transcribe focus group audio tapes and prepare data for coding	REL Southwest
Dec	Meeting 4 (virtual): Coding data together	Team
Dec	Finish coding and send to REL Southwest	?
Jan	Compile coded data; prepare for analysis	REL Southwest
Jan	Meeting 5 (virtual): Analyze data, discuss findings and next steps	Team
Feb	Draft ideas for guidance and resources, communication plan	REL Southwest
Feb	Meeting 6 (in person): Finalize guidance and resources and communication plan	Team

Contacts

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Thank you!

🌐 https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/southwest/index.asp

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