

Reference Desk Response No. 347
Instruction and Assessment of Hispanic LEP students

Question:

1. Do Hispanic LEP students in transitional bilingual programs or two way programs achieve at a higher level than students in ESL programs on academic tests (literacy, math) administered in English and in Spanish?
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Report:

Following an established REL-NEI Reference Desk research protocol, we conducted a search for research reports as well as descriptive and policy-oriented briefs and articles in this area. The sources included federally funded organizations, additional research institutions, several educational research databases, and a general Internet search using Google and other search engines. We also searched for appropriate organizations that may act as resources on this issue. We have not done an evaluation of these organizations or the resources themselves, but offer this list to you for your information only.

According to Lui, K. , (1997) a Limited English proficient (LEP) student is defined as “ A student who is a linguistic minority and who, in English, performs at a level below his or her native English speaking peers. The student’s English ability makes it difficult for him or her to benefit from English-only instruction.”

Our researchers have found that though this is a large body of research regarding best practices for English Language Learners instruction, there is no rigorous research on the assessment experiences of Hispanic LEP students in ESL classrooms versus Bilingual immersion. However we are able to provide a number of resources that identify best practices in classrooms with students who have limited English proficiency. We are also able to provide information regarding best practices in ESL classrooms as well. In addition, we provide resources regarding the testing of LEP students in English.

Question:

1. **Do Hispanic LEP students in transitional bilingual programs or two way programs achieve at a higher level than students in ESL programs on academic tests (literacy, math) administered in English? In Spanish?**

We did not locate rigorous research or descriptive briefs on the differences between the test performance of Hispanic LEP students in transitional bilingual programs versus ESL programs. We did, however, identify some general articles and reports on the instruction and assessment ELL and LEP students

1.1. A Review of the Literature on Students with Limited English Proficiency and Assessment.

Liu, K., Thurlow M., Erickson, R., Spicuzza, R., & Heinze, K.; 1997; (Minnesota Report No. 11). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

Source: General internet search using Google > National Center on Educational Outcomes (<http://www.cehd.umn.edu/NCEO/onlinepubs/MnReport11.html>)

From *Factors that Affect Test Results for LEP and Language Minority Students*, “Another intrinsic factor that must be considered in the testing situation is a student’s second language proficiency. The idea of language proficiency is crucial to any discussion on large scale testing because any test written in English is really a test of English proficiency as well as a test of content knowledge

(August et al., 1994; Lacelle-Peterson & Rivera, 1994; National Council on Measurement in Education, as cited in Lam, 1993; Navarette & Gustkee, 1996). Writers of standardized tests usually assume that test takers have no language difficulties that interfere with test performance (Lam & Gordon, 1992), and the writers do not take into account the role of second language proficiency” (Zehler et al., 1994).”

From *Issues of Context and Bias in the Testing Situation*, “Linguistic bias. (Navarette & Gustkee, 1996; Taylor & Lee, 1987; Wilde & Sockey, 1995). Test items that emphasize a certain style of English rather than overall communicative ability, may be biased against students who are not familiar with that particular style of English. One example of this may be students who live in a community where a non-standard dialect of English is used but who need to use standard English on an assessment of academic content (Hoover, Politzer & Taylor, 1987; Taylor & Lee, 1987). If these students are penalized for not having had the opportunity to learn standard English, then the test is biased against them.”

1.2. Effective Literacy and English Language Instruction for English Learners in the Elementary Grades. Gersten, R., Baker, S., Shanahan, T., Linan-Thompson, S., Collins, P., Scarcella, R.; *IES Practice Guide; 2007; NCEE 2007-4011 U.S. DOE; 55 pages..*

Source: What Works Clearinghouse

(<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/20074011.pdf>)

From the What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide: “Recommendation 5. Schedule regular peer-assisted learning opportunities: Ensure that teachers of English learners devote approximately 90 minutes a week to instructional activities in which pairs of students at different ability levels or different English language proficiencies work together on academic tasks in a structured fashion. These activities should practice and extend material already taught. Level of evidence: Strong This recommendation is based on several high-quality experiments and quasi experiments with English learners. In addition, many peer-assisted studies also have been conducted with native-English-speaking students, and the results have consistently supported the positive impact of peer tutoring on student learning outcomes.” (p.28)

The resource continues: “Possible roadblocks and solutions: Some teachers may feel that the added time required by English learners may take instructional time away from other students. A benefit of peer-assisted instruction is that all students can participate. So, teachers do not have to plan additional activities for separate groups of students in the class. This partner work gives teachers a way to structure learning opportunities that address some of the unique learning needs of English learners. It also gives them a way to address the learning needs of other students in the class. Students who have learning disabilities or who are low performers, as well as average and above-average students, will benefit from working with a partner in a structured way if the activities are organized and carried out appropriately. Peer-assisted learning is not, however, a substitute for teacher-led instruction. It is an evidence-based approach intended to replace some of the independent seatwork or round-robin reading that students do, for example, when the intention is to provide practice and extended learning opportunities for students.” (p.29)

1.3. Issues in Assessing English Language Learners: English Language Proficiency Measures and Accommodation Uses. Literature Review (Part 1 of 3). CRESST Report 731. Wolf, M. K., Kao, J., Herman, J., Bachman, L. F., Bailey, A., Bachman, P. L., Farnsworth, T., & Chang, S. M.; 2008; 67 pages; ED502283.

Source: ERIC

(http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/41/72/19.pdf)

This literature review found that “extended time was found to increase the performance of both ELL and non-ELL students when used either alone or simultaneously with another accommodation” though another study “found inconclusive results in their study of extra time and other accommodations.” Additionally, “The literature that is available, however, suggests that English glossaries are preferred over Spanish glossaries, and that English language dictionaries (and glossaries) were the only accommodation found to have a statistically significant and positive average effect size” And, “Six other accommodation strategies were investigated, including bilingual dictionaries and glossaries, but did not show a positive effect (Francis et al., 2006).” (p.35)

1.4. Effective programs for Latino Students. Calderon, M.; 2001;Lawrence Erlbaum and Associates.

Source: Google Books

(<http://books.google.com/books?id=KXYIGEoB0sYC&printsec=frontcover&dq=effective+programs+for+latino+students&lr=&cd=1#v=onepage&q=&f=false>)

Web Description: "The purpose of this book is to present the current state of the art with respect to research on effective instructional programs for Latino students in elementary and secondary grades. Surprisingly, this has not been done before; there are many books on the situation of Latino students in U.S. schools, but none so far have reviewed research on the outcomes of programs designed to enhance the academic achievement of these students."

"The chapters represent a broad range of methodologies, from experimental to correlational to descriptive, and the solutions they propose are extremely diverse. Each examines, in its own way, programs and practices that are showing success. Together, they present a rich array of research-based effective programs that are practical, widely available, and likely to make a profound difference. What binds the chapters together is a shared belief that Latino students can succeed at the highest levels if they receive the quality of instruction they deserve, and a shared belief that reform of schools serving many Latino students is both possible and essential. This is a book filled with statistics, description, and reviews of research--but even more, it is filled with optimism about what schools for Latino students can be, and what these students will achieve. It is a highly relevant and useful resource for educators, policymakers, and researchers who want to use research to inform the decisions they make about how to help Latino students succeed in elementary and secondary schools, and beyond."

Additional Organizations to Consult

- **National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs (NCELA)**

(<http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/>)

The National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition collects, coordinates and conveys a broad range of research and resources in support of an inclusive approach to high quality education for ELLs. To fulfill its mission NCELA supports high quality networking among state-level administrators of Title III programs.

In addition to SEA coordinators, NCELA serves other stakeholders involved in ELL education, including teachers and other practitioners, parents, university faculty, administrators and federal policymakers.

The NCELA website includes a resource guide about accommodations for English Language Learners. In addition, the resource guide also has a Bibliography and Webliography of significant books, articles and web resources. See: (<http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/elpl/>)

- **Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA)**

(<http://www.carla.umn.edu/>)

The Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) is one of the U.S. Department of Education's Title VI National Language Resource Centers, whose role is to improve the nation's capacity to teach and learn foreign languages.

The CARLA has a list of resources for working with English Language Learners in general including links to organizations specializing in instruction, assessment, and teaching tools. See: (<http://www.carla.umn.edu/assessment/index.html>).

Resources on English Language Development in General

- **Success for All.** 2007; *Intervention Report; What Works Clearinghouse; Institute for Education Sciences.*

Source: Institute for Education Sciences

(http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/WWC_Success_All_070207.pdf)

From the Abstract, “*Success for All (SFA)* is a comprehensive reading, writing, and oral language development program for students in pre-K through eighth grade. Its underlying premise is that all children, including those with limited English proficiency, can and should be reading in English at grade level by the end of third grade. (*SFA* can impact Spanish literacy as well, though these outcomes fall outside the scope of this report.) Initial reading instruction is delivered in 90-minute daily blocks to students grouped by reading level, across classes and grades. Certified teachers provide daily tutoring to those students who are having difficulty reading. In addition, Family Support Teams and full-time *SFA* facilitators train teachers, oversee student assessments, encourage parental involvement, work to decrease absenteeism, and assist with decisions about group placement and tutoring.”

- **Practical Guidelines for the Education of English Language Learners: Research-Based Recommendations for Instruction and Academic Interventions.** Francis, D., Rivera, M., Lesaux, N., Kieffer, M., & Rivera, H ; 2006;. (Under cooperative agreement grant S283B050034 for U.S. Department of Education). Portsmouth, NH: RMC Research Corporation, Center on Instruction.

Source: Center on Instruction

(<http://www.centeroninstruction.org/files/ELL1-Interventions.pdf>)

From the conclusion, “This report was written to serve a guiding function, rather than as a “how to” manual. As such, it is intended to serve as one starting point or reference for planning instruction and academic interventions for ELLs. Enabling the nation’s ELLs to reach the highest standards of achievement demands sustained, consistent, and intensive delivery of high quality instruction and academic interventions that target the development of ELLs’ academic language and reading-related skills, such as fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary. Success in this endeavor will be most assured when all educators who have an influence on this population’s achievement participate in the planning and delivery of instruction and interventions.”(page 31)

Key words and search strings used in the search:

ESL or Bilingual Immersion or Bilingual versus ESL or ESL math Scores or Bilingual Math or LEP

Search databases and websites:

Institute for Education Science Sites: Regional Educational Laboratory Program (REL); What Works Clearinghouse (WWC); Doing What Works (DWW); National Center for Education Statistics (NCES); Institute for Education Sciences (IES); IES Practice Guides

Other Federally Funded Sites: The Assessment and Accountability Comprehensive Center; The National High School Center; The Center on Innovation and Improvement; The Center on Instruction; The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality; National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Datasets: K – 12; National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP); Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS); National Longitudinal Studies (NLS-72, HS&B, NELS:88)

Additional Data Resources: The Campbell Collaboration; Data Quality Campaign; Education Development Center; WestEd; American Institutes for Research; Just for Kids; Great Schools; PSK12; Kids Count; School Data Direct; The Education Trust; SRI International; ERIC; EBSCO Databases; Education Index Retrospective; FirstSearch (OCLC); ProQuest; Educator’s Reference Complete; HeinOnline; Education Daily; Government Executive; <http://www.google scholar.com>; <http://www.google.com>; general internet search

Criteria for inclusion:

When Reference Desk Researchers review resources, they consider, among other things, four factors:

1. **Date of the publication:** The most current information is included unless in the case of nationally known seminal resources
2. **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;
3. **Methodology:** i.e. Random control trial studies, surveys, self-assessments, literature reviews, policy briefs, etc. Priority for inclusion is given generally to random control trial study findings; however, 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 in 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?)

4. **Existing knowledge base:** Although we strive to include vetted resources, there are times when the research base is slim or non-existent. In these cases we have included the best resources we could find, which may include newspaper articles, interviews with content specialists, organization websites, etc.

REL Northeast and Islands

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