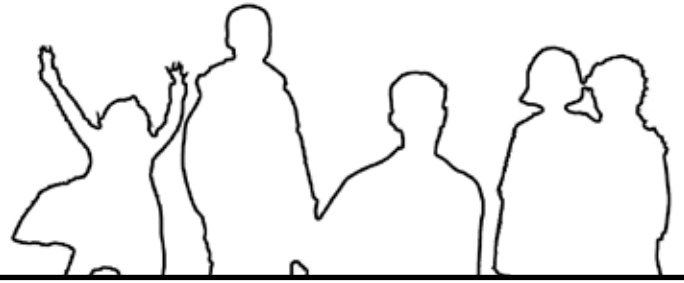
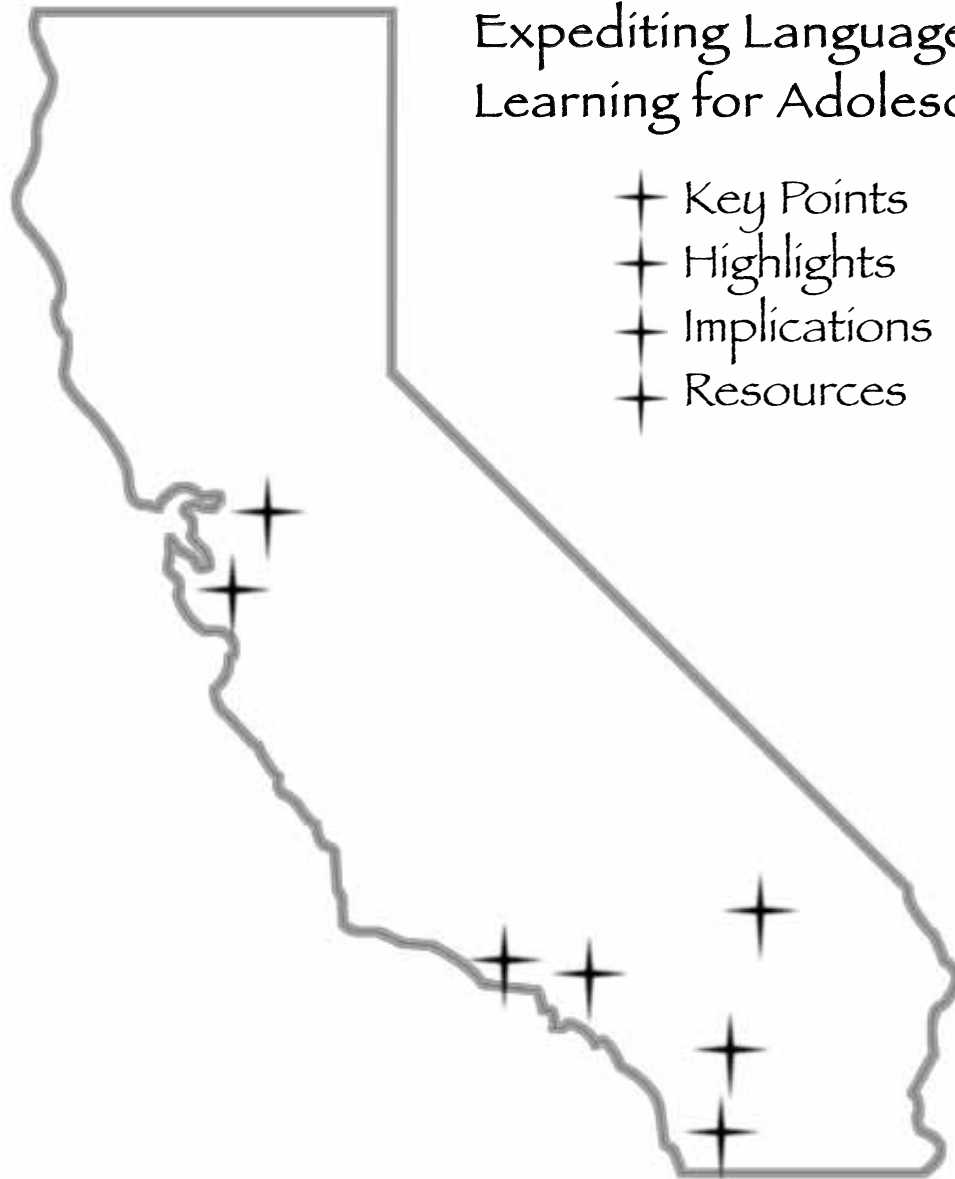


In the STARlight



Research & Resources for English Learner Achievement

Issue 6



Expediting Language, Literacy and Learning for Adolescent ELLs

- + Key Points
- + Highlights
- + Implications
- + Resources

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★ Students of ★ Today ★ Achieving ★ Results

In the STARlight

Why depth and breadth of vocabulary for Adolescent ELLs?

- *Vocabulary knowledge correlates with reading comprehension.*
- *Reading comprehension correlates with test results.*
- *Comprehension depends on knowing between 90% and 95% of the words in a text.*
- *To overcome the vocabulary disadvantage, we need to teach vocabulary explicitly on a daily basis.*
- *A high achieving 12th-grader has learned some 15 words a day, per subject area, over 5000 words a year.*

Expediting Language, Literacy and Learning for Adolescent ELLs

The diversity of adolescent English Language Learners (ELLs) requires different types of quality educational approaches and interventions. It's not only a matter of oral language proficiency, but also the levels and skills they have in reading, writing, and subject matter knowledge that should determine their placement and instructional interventions. When math, science, social studies, and language arts teachers teach vocabulary and reading comprehension skills along with their subject matter, all students do better on State tests. ESL and dual language teachers can add to academic vocabulary and knowledge base by working with content teachers in Teachers Learning Communities (TLCs).

Who Are the Adolescent ELLs?

ELLs are a large portion of the 58% of Hispanics who do not graduate from high school. They are also from many other language backgrounds with similar experiences. About 80%-91% of ELLs in middle and high schools were born in the United States. They are second- or third-generation immigrants and have been in U. S. schools since kindergarten. These Long-Term English Language Learners (LT-ELLs) or ELLs in special education classes (SE-ELLs) have a fair command of oral English proficiency but may lack the academic discourse or reading comprehension skills to master subject matter.

LT-ELL = Based on our interviews, an adolescent Long-Term ELL has been in the U.S. since K-1st in schools with inconsistent language policy, inconsistent programs, ineffective instruction, low-level ESL, or no solid reading or content instruction in either language who:

- Was in a K-3 reading program in English with materials that were not developed for ELLs;
- Attended kindergarten in English (L2), then 1st and 2nd grade in Spanish (L1), then placed in English at 3rd;
- Was immersed in English from K-5 with no support in Spanish and was never taught to read in English; and
- Was in all-Spanish instruction in K-4, then immersed in English in the 5th grade.

SIFE = Is a Student with Interrupted Formal Education in grades 6 through 12, who is a newcomer with two or more years of education interrupted in his/her native country, and:

- Needs literacy skills in his/her native language;
- Is reading at least two years below grade level in English;
- Needs academic vocabulary in L1 and L2;
- Needs academic knowledge (basic content concepts); and
- Is unfamiliar with the culture of schooling.

The majority of the 9% to 20% newcomers or refugees entering U.S. middle and high schools each year are likely to be Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE). The New York State Department of Education defines SIFE as "Students with Interrupted Formal Education in grades 4 through 12 who had two or more years of interrupted schooling in their country." Yet, other newcomers have high literacy skills and subject matter knowledge. Their math, geography, literature, and science background usually surpasses that of their U.S. counterparts.

Unfortunately, in spite of this wide-range, ELLs and newcomers are usually placed in the same ESL or sheltered English classes in secondary schools.

Focus of Research and Findings

The four-year study Expediting Reading Comprehension for English Language Learners (ExC-ELL) was funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York to develop a professional development program for middle and high school math, science, social studies and language arts teachers with the wide range of ELLs. A curriculum program for SIFE and SE-ELL (for Response to Intervention Tiers 2 and 3) called RIGOR (Reading Instructional Goals for Older Readers) was developed using science and social studies books for teaching phonics, basic reading comprehension skills, through science and social studies topics aligned to standards.

Students in the experimental groups have consistently outperformed control cohorts and made AYP. The schools in New York received an "A" on their report card. Middle School MS 319 was recognized this year as the top middle school in the city, and 2nd top school from all middle and elementary schools. The high school in Kauai has sustained its excellent status since the pilot. ELLs in special education classes, as compared to control groups, gain six to nine months in reading above their counterparts. For more information on the study, instructional features, and professional development see *Teacher Resources below*.

Implications for Teachers

The diversity of adolescent English language learners requires a comprehensive instructional approach that includes:

1. Lesson designs for integrating subject matter content, language, reading and writing skills;
2. Teachers parse text and select important standards-based information;
3. Explicit teaching of depth and breadth of words before, during and after reading the selected content;
4. Collaborative-text-based reading to engage students, and rich discussions where the new words are used again and again.
5. Explicit teaching of reading comprehension strategies (e.g., main idea, cause and effect, inferences, comparing/contrasting) and teacher think alouds (e.g., self-correction, rereading a sentence, decoding a word, summarizing, questioning), partner reading for applying those strategies, and debriefing (e.g. metacognitive, metalinguistic, social and cooperative skills).
6. Explicit teaching of the different writing genre required by each content area and technology.
7. Consolidation of content and skills throughout the lesson to anchor knowledge, check for understanding and assess individual student learning.
8. Student assessments in a variety of formats to gauge progress on literacy and content.
9. The quality of teaching and learning is assessed with specific observation protocols; coaches and administrators are trained to observe this type of instruction; and
10. Systematic and comprehensive professional development and Teachers Learning Communities to support teachers and sustain success (*for detailed strategies of the 10 components see the book Calderón, 2007a below*).

Teacher Resources

- Calderón, M. E., (2007a). *Teaching Reading to English Language Learners, Grades 6-12: A Framework for Improving Achievement in the Content Areas*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Calderón, M. E. (2007b). *RIGOR! Reading Instructional Goals for Older Readers: Reading Program for 6th – 12th Students with Interrupted Formal Education in English and Spanish*. New York: Benchmark Education Co.

Publications

- August, D., Beck, I. L., Calderón, M., Francis, D.J., Lesaux, N. K., & Shanahan, T. (2007). Instruction and professional development in August, D. & T. Shanahan (Eds.), *Developing Reading and Writing in Second-Language Learners. Lessons from the Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth*.
- Calderón, M. E. & R. Wasden, (2008). Preparing Secondary School Teachers to Teach Reading, Language and Content to English Language Learners in J. Coppola & E. Primas (Eds.) *English Learners: Reaching the Highest Level of English Literacy* Washington, DC: International Reading Association.
- Short, D. & D. Fitzsimmons (2007). National Panel on Literacy for Adolescent English Language Learners. *Double the Work: Academic Literacy for Adolescent English Language Learners*. New York: The New York Carnegie Corporation.

Research On-line

- www.CAL.org
www.margaritacalderon.org

Reading to Learn

- English language learners (ELLs) are learning English at the same time they are studying core content through English. They must perform double the work of native speakers to keep up, and at the same time be accountable for AYP (Carnegie Panel on ELL Literacy).
- Without explicit instruction on reading each subject area, students cannot learn math, science, social studies and literature.



STUDENTS OF TODAY ACHIEVING RESULTS

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Questions for Reflection

1. Do we have appropriate instructional interventions for each type of learner needs to ensure they graduate from high school?
2. What dual-language assessments have been employed?
3. Have the students and their parents been interviewed?
4. Is it a matter of interrupted education or a learning disability?

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