

CRUCIAL ISSUES IN PREPARING TEACHERS FOR DIVERSITY

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Abstract

In this paper we present a case for the crucial need for more and better-prepared teachers with specialized skills for teaching English language learners (ELs)—students whose first language is not English, and who are not yet English proficient². We provide evidence of teachers' central role in student achievement, both overall and for EL students in particular, and describe the classroom programs designed to serve EL students. We discuss the current approaches to preparing teachers for working with English language learners as well as the shortfalls of these approaches. We report also on what teachers themselves said in a statewide survey about 1) their current level of preparation and in-service, 2) how they rate their own ability to teach EL students, and 3) their particular challenges and the areas in which they need more preparation with regard to teaching English learners. Based on this study as well as the other research cited here we offer recommendations for policy to address the needs of California's teachers and the EL students in their classrooms.

Introduction

California has a higher concentration of English language learners than anywhere else in the U.S. These students have diverse social, academic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds and a wide range of needs. Every day, in the great majority of California classrooms, teachers must meet the challenge of helping these students learn the English and academic skills that will promote their academic success. Yet, by their own admission, many of the state's teachers do not feel prepared to meet this challenge. California cannot realize its full potential until its teachers have the knowledge and skills to facilitate these students' chances to meet theirs.

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² The authors use the terms English language learner and English learner interchangeably, and the acronym EL as an abbreviation for both.

Student Demographics

California is home to one-third of the nation’s English Learners. The state with the next largest percentage of English Learners is Texas with just 12 percent, followed by Florida and New York with 5 percent each³. The growth in this population is also greater in California than the rest of the nation. Because the overwhelming majority of all English Learners in the United States are either of Latino or Asian background, the growth in these populations can be used as a rough proxy for estimating the growth in the EL school population. Currently, roughly half of Latino students enter school as English Learners, and while a smaller percentage of Asian students are classified as English Learners, they are twice as likely as Latinos to be foreign born (LMRI. 2005). Thus, very large percentages of both of these groups are likely to be English Learners at some point in their schooling. And, among the 5 fastest growing states in the nation, California has seen and will continue to see the greatest growth in these two populations (Table 1).

Table 1
Top Five States With the Largest Population, Growth in Asian and Hispanic Origin population: 1995 and 2025 (in thousands)

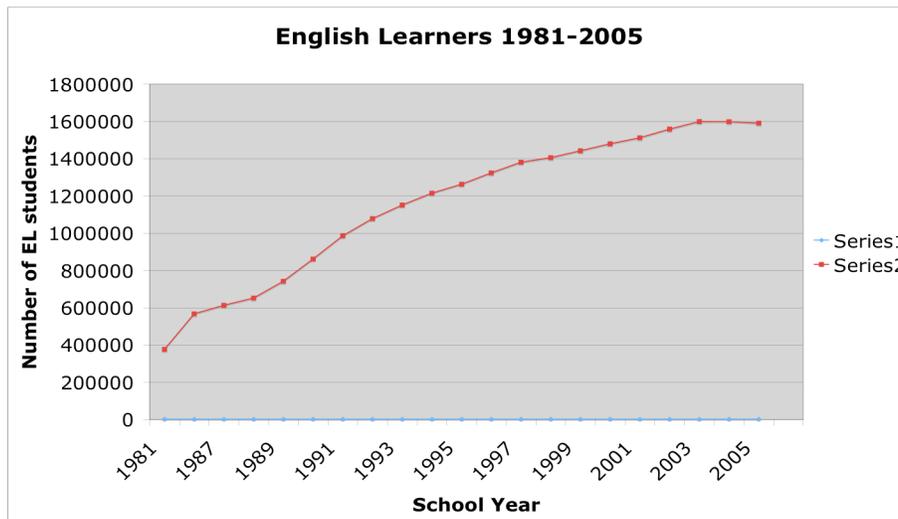
Asian	Hispanic
1995	
CA 3,380	CA 9,206
NY 825	TX 5,173
HI 704	NY 2,541
TX 412	FL 1,955
NJ 357	IL 1,090
2025	
CA 8,564	CA 21,232
NY 1,807	TX 10,230
HI 1,179	FL 4,944
NJ 960	NY 4,309
TX 911	IL 2,275

Source: U.S. Census Bureau www.census.gov/population/www/projections/ppl47.html#tr-race-regional

Over the last two decades the number of EL students increased four-fold. They now account for 1.6 million of California’s nearly 6 million students (Figure 1).

³ Education population statistics available online at [www. http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/](http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/)

Figure 1



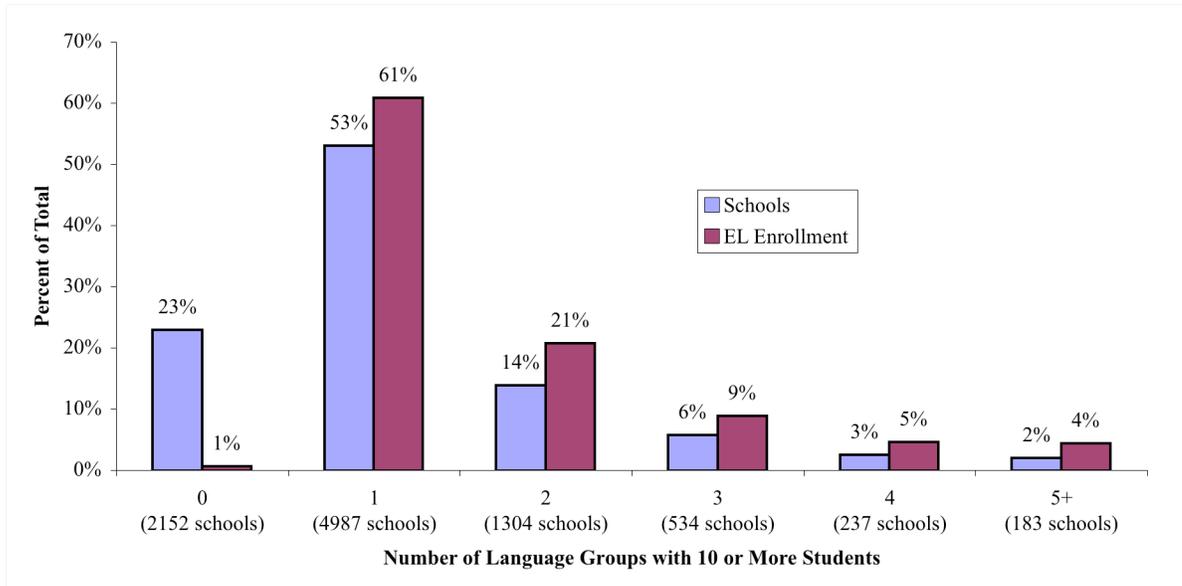
Source: California Department of Education Language Census, 2005

The state has an additional 1,064,578 students, who are considered English proficient, but who come from homes where English is not the primary language spoken. We do not know to what extent these students' learning is also affected by the lack of English models or media in the home. Overall, however, students who speak a language other than English at home, referred to as "language minority students" account for 43% of California's K-12 school population (California Department of Education, Language Census 2005). Furthermore, given the youthfulness of this population, these students will be in California schools for a long time. The majority of English learners (69 percent) are enrolled in kindergarten through grade six with 31 percent enrolled in grades seven through twelve (California Department of Education, Language Census, 2005). Notwithstanding the greater numbers of K-6 English learners, the EL student population is growing most rapidly in secondary schools where we have paid the least attention to their needs, and where we have the least knowledge and instructional expertise in teaching them.

Although California's students speak many languages, the overwhelming majority speak only one: Spanish. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of all English Learners in the U.S. speak Spanish, but 85% of EL students in California are Spanish speakers. The next largest group, Vietnamese speakers, makes up only 2.2% of the state's English learners followed by Hmong, Cantonese, Pilipino (Filipino or Tagalog), and Korean, each with only 1% of the state's EL population. Together these groups make up more than 90% of the state's English learners and no other group exceeds 1% of California's EL students (California Department of Education, Language Census

2005). Thus, while there is great linguistic diversity among the state’s English learners that can complicate instructional strategies in some cases, in the great majority of classrooms, teachers are called upon to address the needs of only one language group, and in two-thirds of schools with 10 or more English Learners, no more than two language groups are represented (Figure 2).

Figure 2
Percent of California Schools and EL Enrollment by Number of Language Groups with Ten or More Students, 2005

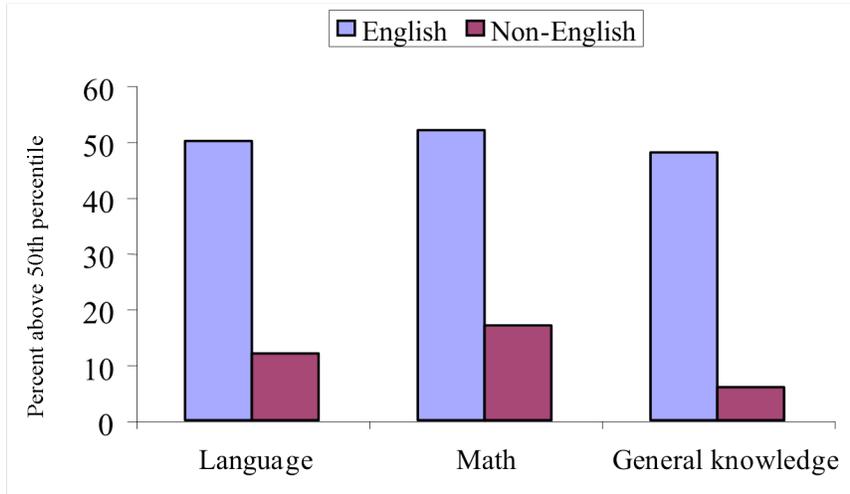


Source: Rumberger, LMRI Newsletter, Spring 2006, www.lmri.ucsb.edu

Academic Achievement of English Learners

English Learners are the lowest performing of all students in California public schools. To some extent this is an artifact of testing these students in a language that they do not understand. Nonetheless, on all measures we have of student performance, even on largely non-verbal tests, EL students trail far behind their English-speaking peers. Moreover, toward the end of their high school careers, they are the least likely of all groups (with the exception of special education students) to pass the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE), and are thus ineligible to receive a diploma. This achievement discrepancy begins early. Data collected from California students for the national Early Childhood Longitudinal Study show that English Learners begin kindergarten far behind their English-speaking peers (Figure 3).

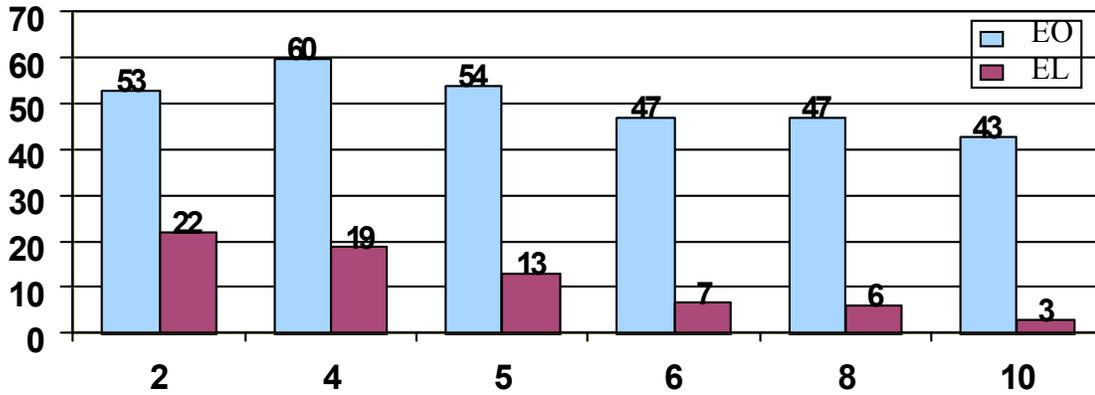
Figure 3
Cognitive Skills of California Beginning Kindergartners
by Language Background, Fall 1998



Note: Results are weighted (C1CW0).
SOURCE: Rumberger, R. analysis of ECLS base year data for California public school kindergartners (N=2826).

Achievement data for older students indicate that these discrepancies persist through the grades as exams become progressively more difficult. Figure 4 shows the steep decline in the number of EL students who are able to achieve proficiency on the state’s English Language Arts exam as they progress through the grades. At second grade, a somewhat surprising percentage (22) of students who, by definition, do not speak English with proficiency, are nonetheless able to achieve proficiency in English Language Arts. However, as the demands of the test become greater, students’ performance falls precipitously. By the 10th grade, even though 60% of English Learners score at early advanced or advanced (Levels 4 and 5) on the state’s test of English proficiency (CELDT), only 3 percent are able to meet the standard of proficiency on the English Language Arts exam.

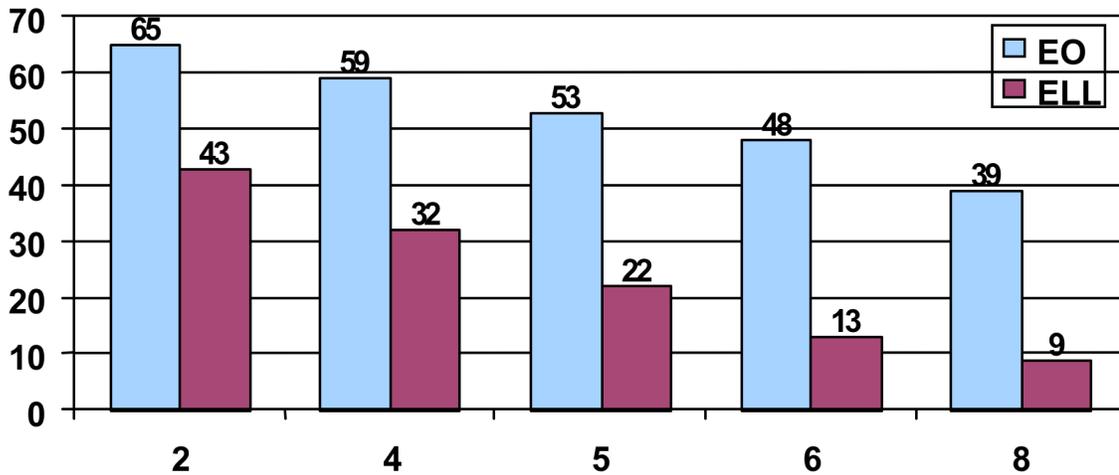
Figure 4
English Only and English Learner Percent Proficient or Above
California English Language Arts Test Grades 2-10, 2005



Source: California Department of Education, 2005. www.cde.ca.gov

Even in the area of mathematics, which is generally considered to be less language dependent, especially in the early grades, English Learners do not perform well. EL students' math test scores mirror the pattern seen in language arts: as the complexity of the material increases, students' scores decline.

Figure 5
English Only and English Learner Percent Proficient and Above
California Math Standards Test, 2005



Source: California Department of Education, 2005. www.cde.ca.gov

It comes as no surprise, then, that fully half of English Learners are unable to pass the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) in both English and Math in order to obtain a diploma, even when they have taken and passed all required courses (Rogers, et al., 2005; Edsource, 2006). The already extraordinarily high drop out rate for English learners (Rumberger, 2004) will almost certainly be exacerbated by this fact. In sum, the low achievement of EL students is reason for grave concern as they come to comprise a larger and larger share of the public school population, and the training of teachers to address these students' needs is critical if the reform objectives of the state are to be met.

Teacher Certification for EL Classrooms

No matter what the program, teaching English learners requires significant expertise beyond that expected of teachers who do not have EL students in their classrooms (Gándara & Maxwell-Jolly, 2000; Darling-Hammond et al., 2001). California's recent approach to providing teachers with this expertise has been via two supplemental credentials designed specifically for teachers of EL students. Most common has been the CLAD (Culture, Language, and Academic Development) credential granted to teachers who have taken a prescribed course of study usually including a class in cultural diversity, another in first and second language acquisition, and a third in pedagogical strategies for teaching EL students in English, or who are able to pass an examination demonstrating competency in these areas. Less common has been the BCLAD (Bilingual, Culture, Language, and Academic Development) credential, which in addition to the CLAD courses requires a course on specific bilingual pedagogical strategies and cultural and linguistic competence in a non-English culture and language. Teachers can also earn the BCLAD by examination. Far fewer teachers have pursued this credential in part because it requires more coursework and competencies. Many BCLAD teachers have come from the language groups in which they are certified to teach bilingually, however most are native English speakers who acquire their non-English language as a second language. One reason for this is that the college-going pipeline of Latinos and some Southeast Asian language groups is exceptionally weak, with many students dropping out of high school and few going on to college. Additionally, a disproportionate percentage of students from these backgrounds have had difficulty passing the teaching examinations, usually due to issues related to English as a second language. Finally, students who are bilingual and who hold college degrees from these groups often have many other attractive job opportunities.

Although the majority of teachers in the workforce have been credentialed under the above conditions, as of spring, 2002, the approach to credentialing CLAD teachers is to “infuse” the required competencies into the standard teacher credential curriculum. The legislation mandating this approach (AB 1059, Ducheny, 1998) laudably aimed to ensure that every California teacher has some knowledge of EL instruction. However, the law could not mandate that teacher education faculty have the knowledge and skills to infuse this content, nor did it set standards of performance or content, or add any instructional time for credential students to gain this expertise. Thus, new teachers are expected to learn these complicated and critical skills from faculty who may or may not have expertise in the area, without adding instructional units or time to their credential studies.

An important additional aspect of the new California teaching credential is that it requires two years of new teacher induction. During this time, the new teacher is to receive mentoring support from an experienced teacher. This approach addresses the problem of sending inexperienced teachers into the classroom to “sink or swim” on their own, and is supported by a body of research that has shown its effectiveness (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Gold, Y., 1996). However, even this effective practice suffers from the problem that California does not have sufficient numbers of teachers prepared to meet the educational needs of English Learners, to serve as mentors to new teachers. Thus, once again, the opportunity to strengthen teachers’ skills in this area is often forfeited

Looking at the numbers

Currently California school districts employ thousands of teachers who have CLAD certification but far fewer with the more comprehensive, BCLAD. In the 2004-2005 school year, the state employed 306,548 teachers. Information in the California Basic Education Data System (CBEDS), gathered through administration of a teacher self-report of authorization (the professional assignment information form) indicates that 37,870 or 12% of the state’s teachers have a BCLAD⁴ authorization. Another 125,562, or 41%, reported that they have preparation and authorization to teach English Language Development (ELD) and 93,966 or 31% said that they are authorized to teach Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE). The latter two figures include all BCLAD teachers because they are certified to teach both ELD and SDAIE⁵. There is

⁴ Included in this number are teachers who earned an earlier version of the credential, the bilingual certificate of competence.

⁵ Data obtained via personal communication with CBEDS analysts, February 16, 2006.

considerable overlap among teachers who report having SDAIE and ELD training. The Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning reports that a total of 48% of teachers in 2005 held one or more of those designations (Esch, et al., 2005).

Looking behind the numbers

California's teacher work force is not as prepared for teaching English learners as these numbers might suggest. Teachers with CLAD training have many skills for teaching EL students, certainly more than teachers who have not had such training. However, by their own account many feel unprepared to teach English Learners (Gándara et al, 2004) . In 1999-2000 survey of graduates of teacher credential programs in the California State University system (total of 10,512) one-fourth responded that they felt they were only "somewhat prepared" or "not at all prepared" to teach English learners (Office of the Chancellor, 2001)⁶. We note that these are the "cream of the crop" of teachers of English learners- -those who have completed a full credential and in most cases have training at least at the level of the CLAD (Culture, Language and Development preparation (CLAD) credential. Further evidence that new teachers often do not feel prepared, is provided by an analysis of data from the statewide professional assignment report conducted by the Center for the Future of Teachers and Learning. The Center's researchers found that almost 2/3 of the new teachers who earned their credentials after content related to EL instruction was mandated (by AB 1059, Ducheny 1998) to be infused in the teacher education curriculum, are not even aware that they are authorized to teach English learners. "Despite the state's efforts to embed EL training into every new teacher's preparation program, there is some evidence that newly credentialed teachers are unaware or unaffected by this training. In 2004-2005 only 34% of first and second year teachers reported to CDE that they are EL certified" (Esch, et al, 2005, p. 46).

Moreover, the 26, 552 teachers who are authorized to teach EL students via SB 1969/395 (Hughes, 1994) have an even lower standard for preparation than CLAD teachers. To earn SB 1969/395 authorization experienced teachers must complete only 45 clock hours of staff development and those with less experience must complete 90 hours. On the other hand, to earn CLAD certification under the prior credentialing system, teachers were required to take 12 semester

⁶ Office of the Chancellor. (2001). First systemwide evaluation of teacher education programs in the California State University: Summary report. Long Beach, CA, California State University.

or 18 quarter units of upper division or graduate coursework—a far higher, but arguably still insufficient bar.

California schools have far fewer BCLAD than CLAD teachers; only one BCLAD credentialed teacher for every 234 English learners. BCLAD teachers have more skills for working with EL students, are versed in a wider array of instructional methods than CLAD teachers, and can communicate with parents and students in their own language. Moreover, in a recent study we conducted of 5300 educators of English Learners in California (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005) not only did BCLAD teachers indicate significantly greater confidence in their own ability to teach EL students, but those non-BCLAD teachers who did not have the ability to communicate with parents and students in their home language cited this as one of the greatest challenges to their teaching. We also heard from teachers in this study and others (cf. Gándara, 2000), about how bilingual teachers, especially in small districts, serve as the “resident EL experts” and are asked to take on many additional tasks and responsibilities—often at a significant cost to their own classrooms and their personal and professional time.

Because of the way in which data on teachers are collected in California, it is not always possible to know the capacity in which teachers with specific credentials are serving. We cannot now tell how many teachers with CLAD and BCLAD or equivalent credentials currently work in our classrooms. Teacher data are collected by program type in which they serve, rather than by the credentials they hold. These are data that policymakers, schools and school districts need if California is to provide the best education program possible for EL students and to use its teacher resources effectively.

Classroom Programs for English Learners in California Schools

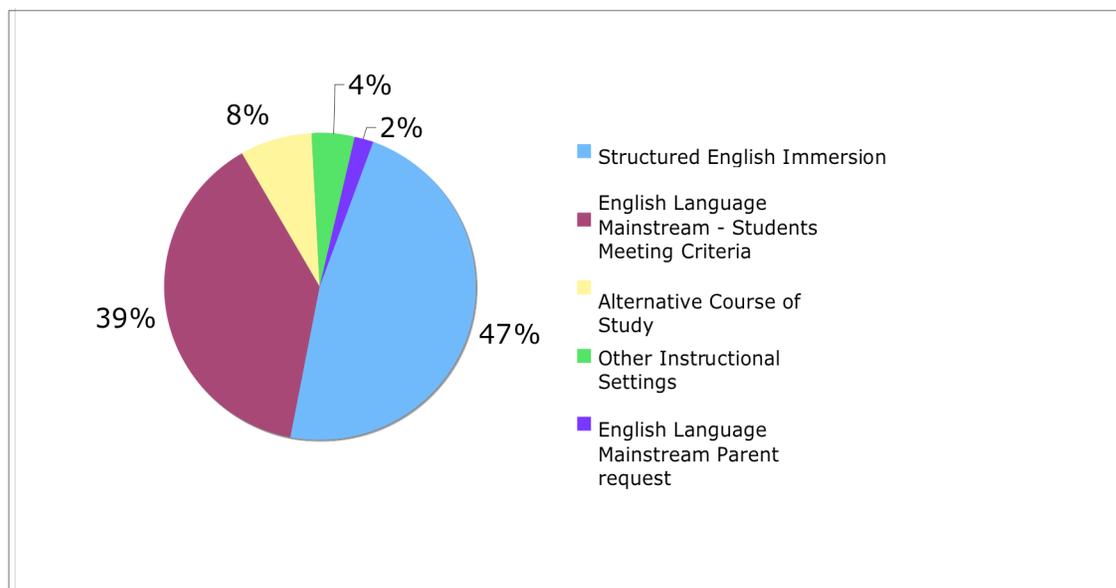
California schools take several approaches to EL education but, no matter what the approach, federal and state law requires that EL students receive educational services designed to meet their particular learning needs. The two-fold goal of these services as delineated in federal law resulting from landmark civil rights court cases⁷, is that EL students: 1) receive instruction that teaches them the English language and 2) allows them to understand the classroom curriculum. The principal educational approach to meeting the first goal is through English language development (ELD) instruction, often through content instruction in English as well as during discrete English

⁷ *Lau v. Nichols* 414 U.S. 563 (1974); *Castañeda v. Pickard* (5th Cir. 1981)

language lessons designed for English learners. To meet the second goal, teachers can facilitate student understanding of the core academic curriculum using a number of specialized English language teaching strategies (SDAIE), the students' primary language, or a combination of both.

The majority of California's English learners receive instruction through ELD, SDAIE, or both (Gándara, 2000; Gándara et al., 1999; American Institute for Research, 2006) in either mainstream or structured English immersion classrooms. In general, mainstream classrooms include non-EL students and EL students who have intermediate or advanced proficiency in English. Structured English immersion (SEI) on the other hand, is intended as a one or two year program for EL students who have beginning or early intermediate English language proficiency. SEI classrooms do not include non-EL students⁸. Nonetheless, some classrooms may include students at both levels and incorporate both programs in the same classroom. A very small percentage of the state's students, approximately 8% are enrolled in bilingual programs, which include at least some content instruction in students' primary language and/or SDAIE, as well as English language development instruction (Figure 6).

Figure 6
English Learners By Program

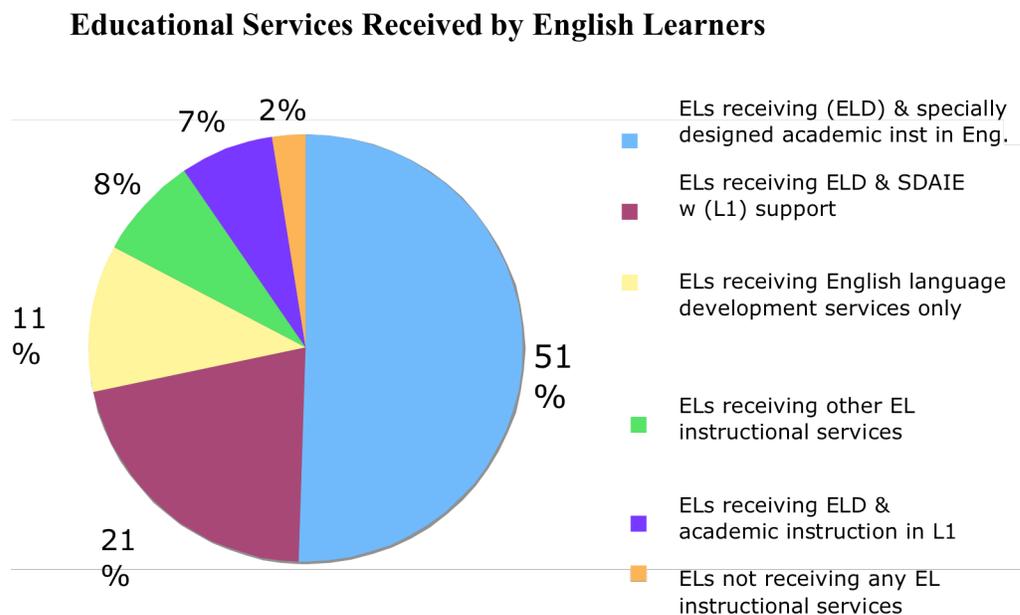


Source: California Department of Education Language Census, 2005.

⁸ Non EL students might be those whose first language is English and who do not speak another language at home, students who were bilingual and already proficient when they entered school (IFEP), and students who began school as English learners, but have met the academic and English language criteria to be re-designated as fluent English proficient (RFEP).

It is much more instructive to consider English learner education from the perspective of the services students receive than the programs in which they are placed. English language learners need—and are entitled to—English language development as well as instruction in academic subjects that is designed to facilitate their understanding of the content (SDAIE), no matter what the program in which they are enrolled is called. This “services” perspective is critical because there is significant variation among schools with regard to program nomenclature—one school’s SEI program might be another’s bilingual. Figure 7 illustrates the education services received by California’s English learners.

Figure 7



Source: California Department of Education Language Census, 2005

In our recent survey of California teachers of EL students, we asked participants how English learners receive educational services (Gándara, et al., 2005). We learned that the EL students of more than half (55%) of the over 5,000 teachers we sampled are removed from their

regular classrooms to participate in “pull-out” instruction from a resource teacher or paraprofessional for some part of the school day, often because the regular classroom teacher is not adequately prepared to provide EL students the type of instruction they need. This practice was even more prevalent among teachers in smaller districts and those with fewer EL students. This prevalence of pullout instruction is reason for concern because research consistently finds this type of instruction to be among the least successful strategies for teaching EL students and is not generally recommended by experts in the field. Reasons include students’ lost opportunities to learn what their classmates are exposed to while they are out of the class, instruction that is inconsistent with what students who remain in the classroom are learning, and valuable time lost in transitions (Lucas, et al., 1990; Ovando & Collier, 1998).

Teacher Impact on Student Achievement

Providing adequate numbers of teachers with the skills they need to work with English learners is a critical part of the formula for improving the achievement of these students. Although we cannot assign teachers either all the credit or all the blame for student achievement, teachers play a central role in students’ education. This is particularly true for youth who are extra vulnerable such as English learners. Thus our discussion of teacher preparation for English learners warrants mention of the growing research on the importance of the impact of teachers on student learning overall. Briefly, this research finds that teachers with good preparation and skill (Haycock, 1998; 2001), a quality education (Ferguson, 1991; Ferguson & Womack, 1993), and full certification in their field (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002; Darling-Hammond, Chung & Frelow, 2002; Darling-Hammond et al., 2005) make a difference in student achievement. Furthermore, these gains in student learning are stable over time. The converse is true as well. It takes a significant amount of time with good teachers to overcome the effects of one who is ineffective (Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Sanders & Horn, 1995).

The evidence suggests that this is equally true for teachers of English learners. That is, teachers who have a greater amount of specialized preparation for working with English learners can more effectively promote these students’ success. A recent study conducted in Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)—where 20% of the state’s English learners attend school-- investigated the relationship between English learner student achievement gains and the credentials held by the teachers who taught them in 29 schools and 177 classrooms with large numbers of EL students. Researchers found that "state/district authorization of teachers does have an impact on

student outcomes (Hayes and Salazar, 2001). For example, Model B⁹ students of teachers holding no state or district authorization achieved largely negative or very small positive. . . . adjusted gains in reading and language" (pp. 37-38; Table 1). A follow up study of grades 1 – 3 classrooms in the same schools during the subsequent school year found again that “students of credentialed teachers out-performed students of emergency permitted teachers” (Hayes, Salazar & Vukovic, 2002, p. 90). Unfortunately, research on the distribution of such highly qualified teachers in California indicates that this shortage is particularly acute in the schools with the most EL students (Gándara & Rumberger, 2003; Esch et al, 2005).

Table 2
Actual and Adjusted Gains by Teacher Authorization
Grade 2, Selected Schools, LAUSD

	Reading		Language	
	Actual Gains	Adjusted Gains	Actual Gains	Adjusted Gains
BCLAD	1.8 (n=142)	1.6 (n=142)	4.1 (n=148)	2.4 (n=148)
CLAD/LDS	2.0 (n=32)	2.7 (n=32)	1.0 (n=34)	0.4 (n=34)
SB1969	*	*	*	*
A Level@	1.8 (n=155)	1.6 (n=155)	0.3 (n=155)	-1.5 (n=155)
No Authorization	-2.4 (n=74)	-2.9 (n=74)	0.5 (n=93)	-1.8 (n=93)

*Actual and adjusted gains were not reported here due to the small sample size.
 @ LAUSD certifies language competencies of its teachers if they do not already hold a BCLAD; A Level indicates fluent bilingual.
 Source: Hayes & Salazar (2001), page 36

What Teachers Say

The evidence is clear that teachers’ knowledge and skill is key to students’ learning and that many teachers in California have inadequate preparation for the job we are asking them to do. A fundamental premise of the survey research we conducted was that we cannot provide real guidance about how to best help teachers improve their EL teaching skills without knowing what they consider to be their greatest challenges and needs. What we learned from our study highlights the crucial need for more and better preparation for teachers to work with English learners. In general, we found that although teachers expressed a wide range of concerns, and that teachers in different grade levels had different needs and placed different emphasis on the importance of various

⁹ LAUSD divides its Structured English Immersion classes into two types: Model A, which is English only and Model B, which allows some primary language support. Data are more difficult to interpret for Model A because cell sizes are smaller and the authors report a lack of confidence in these small numbers.

concerns, overall their responses centered on a few key challenges¹⁰. Among the most-cited teacher challenges were teachers' inability to communicate with students and their families and a lack of the skills and tools necessary to meet the widely variable needs of the students in their classrooms—both of which could be improved through greater teacher preparation.

With regard to the challenge of communication, teachers working in grades K-6 placed the most emphasis on their need to communicate with families while seventh-12th grade teachers more frequently mentioned communicating with students--often in order to motivate and encourage them--as the greatest challenge they face. If “challenging without discouraging” students is difficult when teachers and students speak the same language, consider how much more difficult this is when they do not. Other work that we have done (Gándara et al, 2003; Gibson, Gándara & Koyama, 2004) has given us insight into why secondary teachers may find motivating these students such a thorny problem: including an impoverished curriculum, limited access to the resources of the schools, and isolation that many English learners feel in American high schools. High drop out rates also reflect the extent to which these students recognize the limitations of their high school curriculum. Even those students who hold a high value for schooling can be discouraged when they cannot follow what is going on in the classroom.

Having the necessary instructional skills and tools to address widely variable student needs—both among their EL students and between ELs and fluent English speakers was also critical for teachers. This included the need for guidance regarding how to apply several commonly used curricular packages realistically and successfully with their EL students. As California policy increasingly favors mainstreaming English learners, classroom teachers receive greater numbers of students at all grade levels who have widely varying skills in English and in academic subjects. The same teacher might have orally proficient EL students who need to make significant gains in their academic English skills, students who just entered the country and have little or no English, some native English speakers who have superior academic preparation, and other students who have little formal education, all in the same classroom.

Other challenges that teacher cited, although not as directly connected, are also related to their level of preparation. For example, teachers said they have too little time to meet their students' needs, a challenge that teachers with specialized skills are more equipped to meet as they can use time more effectively than teachers who do not have these skills. Teachers also mentioned the

¹⁰ We found this somewhat surprising given that this section of the survey was open-ended, inviting teachers to express the challenges they face, rather than providing them a pre-determined set of challenges from which to choose.

challenge of determining what their students know and don't know in order to provide the best instruction. Although this has much to do with the lack of appropriate assessment instruments for EL and bilingual students, teachers can learn skills—including the primary language of their students-- that allow them to better diagnose their EL students' learning needs.

Teachers' Self-rated Ability in English Learner Instruction

The importance of adequate teacher preparation to EL students' success is underscored by extant research on the connection between teachers' effectiveness and their belief in their own ability (self efficacy). This was reinforced in our exploration of the relationship between teacher preparation and self-efficacy. There is a significant body of literature on the positive relationship between self-efficacy and instructional effectiveness (Armour et al, 1976; Rosenholtz and Simpson, 1984; Woolfolk, et al., 1990; Goddard, et al., 2000; Goddard, 2001), and on self-efficacy, optimism, and the will to create change (Bandura, 1993, 1995; Farber, 1991). This research led us to ask teachers to rate their ability to teach English learners effectively. We found that the more extensive the preparation of the teachers, the more confident they felt of their ability to successfully teach English Learners—in all subject areas. Furthermore, teachers with certification designed to prepare them in the primary language of their students felt, by far, the most prepared to teach in that language (Table 3).

Table 3
Elementary and Secondary School Teachers' Self-rated Ability to Teach ELs by CLAD/BCLAD Credential¹¹

Subject Area	Elementary School Teachers			Secondary School Teachers		
	Neither	CLAD	BCLAD	Neither	CLAD	BCLAD
Pedagogy	2.66	2.84	3.09	2.51	2.92	3.14
ELD	2.85	3.00	3.16	2.40	2.74	3.13
Read	2.89	3.03	3.15	2.49	2.81	3.14
Write	2.70	2.88	3.00	2.48	2.77	3.09
Read-1 ^o	1.84	1.84	3.16	1.74	1.71	3.06
Write-1 ^o	1.80	1.79	3.06	1.71	1.66	3.03

¹¹ Differences between “Neither” and BCLAD were statistically significant in every area at P<.001

We also found that teachers –at both the elementary and secondary level—who had professional development related to the teaching of English learners during the previous five years, rated themselves significantly more able to teach these students across all categories of instruction than teachers without such training (Table 4).

Table 4
Elementary and Secondary School Teachers’ Self-rated Ability to Teach ELs with and without EL Focused Professional Development

	Elementary		High School	
	Any	None	Any	None
Pedagogy	2.87*** ¹²	2.67	2.83***	2.51
ELD	3.01***	2.86	2.68***	2.37
Math	3.10* ¹³	3.00	2.33	2.31
Science	2.66	2.65	2.23*	2.03
Social Science	2.72	2.68	2.45***	2.13
English reading	3.03*	2.95	2.77***	2.43
English writing	2.87	2.80	2.75***	2.37
Primary language reading	2.06	2.03	1.86	1.71
Primary language writing	1.99	2.01	1.82	1.68

Teacher Participation in Professional Development

Despite what we know about the importance of teacher knowledge and skills to EL achievement, and what we learned about teachers’ desire for such assistance, we found that too few teachers had had professional development for working with English learners. For example, 43% of teachers with 50% or more English Learners in their classrooms had received only one in-service workshop that focused on the instruction of English Learners (or none at all) during the last five years. Moreover, while this one in-service consisted of multiple hours for some teachers, for others it was limited to a single before or after school workshop, and ranged in quality from helpful to not helpful at all. For those teachers with 25 to 50% English Learners in their classes, half had received only one, or no in-service designed to help them address the learning needs of these students. Furthermore, only half of the brand new teachers in the sample, those required by law to participate in some EL focused in-service as part of their induction and progress toward a clear credential, did so. Given earlier work indicating that teachers in California, on average, received only about two hours of in-service training annually that was focused on English Learner issues (Gándara et al, 2003), this small amount of training is not surprising. It is, however, disconcerting. Teaching

¹² Statistically significant at P<.001

¹³ Statistically significant at P<.05

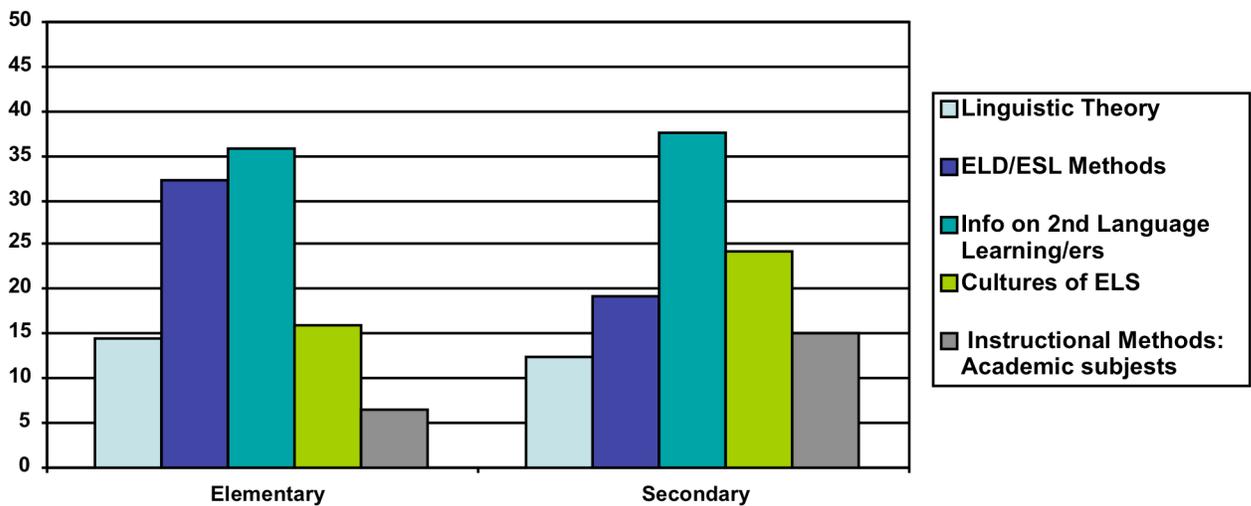
English learners is a complicated challenge that requires significant skill. Even the best teacher pre-service programs cannot cover all the knowledge and skill required by an effective EL teacher: teachers need appropriate professional development opportunities to gain the skills necessary for teaching EL students in a particular school and classroom context.

Teachers’ Views Regarding Usefulness of Professional Development Experiences

Across the board teachers most often cited professional development focused on how to teach a second language and on the learning, developmental and other factors unique to second language learners as that which had provided them the greatest assistance. In all other areas, teachers at the elementary and secondary levels differed substantially with regard to the professional development subjects that they found most useful. This need for different instructional skills to address different challenges among students of varying ages and backgrounds was a theme in teachers’ responses.

Figure 8

Most Useful Type of EL-focused In-service Completed by Classroom Teachers



Teachers also said that they learned best and most through certain approaches to professional development. These included observing more expert teachers working with EL students, participating in a mentoring relationship with a more knowledgeable teacher, and collaborating with

other teachers at the school in order to address problems across grades and subjects rather than in working in isolation.

Summary

- There is a critical need for more teachers with professional preparation to work with English learners based on the demographics of the state-- 25% of public school students are ELs-- and on current policy-- a larger than ever portion of the state's EL students are in mainstream classrooms. Estimates are that between 75-85% of all teachers have at least one English learner in class.
- Teachers who are well prepared with the specialized skills they need to teach their students can and do make a difference.
- The “on paper” numbers of teachers with professional preparation for working with EL students can be misleading. First because very few of these teachers have the most rigorous preparation, earned through BCLAD certification, and these are stretched too thin. Second, because the other types of credentials, although generally considered equal for hiring purposes, vary in their rigor and in the amount of actual teacher preparation they provide. And third because teachers themselves say that even their CLAD certification, although helpful, does not provide them with many of the skills they need—and could learn-- to work with their EL students.
- The current approach of embedding EL instructional skills in all credential programs and assuming that this constitutes adequate teacher preparation for effective instruction of English learners, although well intentioned needs to be carefully evaluated. This is due in part to a lack of teacher education faculty across institutions and subject areas who have the expertise in this area themselves, to pass on to the teacher candidates in their credential programs.
- The current system does not accurately track the credentials that teachers hold and does not facilitate access by the public, parents, teachers and policymakers to this information¹⁴.
- Teachers receive very little professional development designed to help them improve their EL instructional skills. And this is despite what we know about the importance of teacher preparation, the lack of teacher preparation for working with ELs, teachers' desire for more

¹⁴ This situation should improve when the California longitudinal pupil achievement data system (CALPADS) mandated by SB 1453 (Alpert, 2002) is implemented.

knowledge in this area, and teacher induction and professional development intended to improve teacher effectiveness.

Recommendations

There are many potential avenues to alleviating these problems for teachers and their EL students. Based on what we have discussed here, we recommend pursuing the following solutions:

1. That districts make structural changes to employ BCLAD teachers more effectively.

We recommend that districts find the ways that allow BCLAD teachers to share their expertise with school/district students, parents, and their colleagues, while providing them adequate opportunity for professional growth, and personal time. We also suggest a study to determine the best ways for districts to do this including exploration of what incentives and rewards for BCLAD teachers might encourage them to take on this extra work in a formal capacity. In addition it would explore what factors might attract more such teachers to a district, might stimulate more local college students to go into bilingual education (particularly those from the home culture of EL students), and what kinds of support would prevent new teachers with bilingual skills from leaving the field.

2. That induction programs for new teachers focus much more on EL instructional skills.

California currently has an extensive teacher induction program that provides new teachers with professional development and mentoring opportunities. We recommend that for all teachers (who do not have an EL specialist credential) whose classrooms have a threshold percent of English learners, this induction include a significant focus on teaching EL students. This will require that the state make a serious investment in providing existing teachers with the skills necessary to help their inductees.

3. That professional development overall include a greater focus on EL teaching.

California provides many professional development opportunities for its teachers thus we recommend that for all teachers (who do not have an EL specialist credential) whose classrooms have a threshold percent of ELs, this professional development include a significant focus—with regard to time and content-- on teaching EL students. A bill currently working its way through the legislature, AB 1988 (Coto) would help to address

this need by shifting some of the current professional development resources into the development of state-wide teams of professional educators to deliver services to districts.

While the above recommendations could begin to show results rather quickly, longer-term strategies for increasing the numbers of prepared teachers and the level of their preparation for EL instruction are needed as well. Among such strategies we recommend:

4. Concentrating efforts to find and train new teachers who are familiar with EL issues where the target population is found in greatest numbers: at the community colleges.

Currently, we lose most of these students before they complete a Bachelor's degree. Among the most prominent reasons for this loss are financial pressures, inadequate career counseling, and lack of a focused goal of their studies. Thus, we recommend state and federal policies that would foster teacher preparation programs that begin at the community colleges, with focused coursework and counseling, and forgivable loans for educational and other expenses of the student's education. As a part of this program, a specialized Associate degree awarded to these students at the completion of their community college coursework could prepare them to work as classroom aides, serving the objective of helping students to acquire needed experience and supplement their incomes while they continue their studies. This includes support for students who are already in the college pipeline, who have special knowledge of minority communities and languages, and who have demonstrated an interest in teaching. They should be eligible for forgivable loans sufficient to ensure that they complete their undergraduate degrees and credentials in a timely manner, and quickly enter the teaching force. This recommendation is a matter of degree not innovation. Forgivable loan opportunities already exist but it is our suggestion that to be maximally efficient such programs should provide students enough support through these loans to allow them to forgo other work and focus solely on their teacher preparation studies.

5. Increasing the infrastructure of teacher educators who are prepared to train future teachers to work with EL students.

As part of this effort, we recommend that schools of education and other teacher preparation programs find ways to increase their capacity to prepare new teachers to teach English language learners effectively. As one avenue to such increased capacity, we recommend that teacher preparation institutions take greater

advantage of the Mexican government's program that provides "teacher trainers" from Mexican universities to come temporarily to US schools of education to prepare our teacher education professionals to work with EL students.

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