

UC Berkeley

Newsletters

Title

Summer 2008

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/41d52006>

Author

UC Language Minority Research Institute

Publication Date

2008-06-01



POLICY REPORT SUMMARY

Resource Needs for English Learners: Getting Down to Policy Recommendations

In 2006, California's Governor and Legislature commissioned a set of 24 academic research papers to examine the educational governance and finance systems of the state. The studies, collectively referred to as *Getting Down to Facts*, were intended to form a basis for engaging stakeholders in deep conversations about possible education policy alternatives.

The Policy Report summarized here is an extension of one of those original 24 papers, and is the result of deliberations from several informal meetings and two formal convenings of major stakeholders in the area of English learner education. Based on data examined in the initial report, it suggests a series of policy options the state should consider to strengthen the educational offerings and outcomes for California's burgeoning population of linguistic minority students.

Funding

If the state adopts a weighting system to help in determining funding for education, we strongly support a specific, identified weight for English learner (EL) and linguistic minority students *separate* from the weight for poverty or any other characteristic alone.

We concur with the **Governor's Committee on Education Excellence** that an initial additional 20% above and beyond the weight for poor students be assigned to EL students, assuming there will not be a radical increase in the funding for low-income students.

Recommendation #1: California should set an initial funding augmentation of 20% for English learners, above and beyond the augmentation for poverty, to be applied to a weighted system of pupil funding, an improved categorical system, or any other funding mechanism that the state adopts.

Moreover, we argue that students who attend schools consisting of 50% or more ELs should receive an additional augmentation of 5% that reflects the additional interventions that may be necessary to help them join the English mainstream.

Recommendation #2: The state should also consider an augmentation for linguistic minority students—those whose language backgrounds result in an ongoing need for support to achieve full proficiency in standard and academic English. This would include students who are Standard English learners as

well as those who have been reclassified as Fluent in English, but who still struggle with academic English.

Accountability

We recommend an evaluation plan that would allow school and district personnel to assess the ways in which funds are used and the degree to which student achievement improves in this environment. As better assessments of EL student achievement are developed, this approach would become increasingly informative. Such assessment of expenditures and outcomes could provide important data for developing strengthened practices in the school and more informed accountability about resource uses.

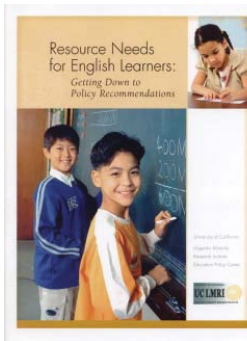
Recommendation #3: The state should develop an evaluation plan that can be used by schools and districts to help them collect data on resource expenditures and EL student academic progress to aid schools in assessing the effectiveness of their resource expenditures. Select data from this evaluation should be reported annually through the school's online report card.

Building the Teacher Infrastructure

There is little debate that highly qualified teachers are students' most critical resource, and that EL students are the least likely to have qualified teachers. In order to improve the quality of teacher preparation for working with English learners we need to combine what is already known together with new knowledge in order to form a comprehensive approach to preparing teachers to work effectively with EL students.

Regional partnerships—drawing on existing state resources to create consortia that share resources, responsibility, and expertise—would serve as incubators for research-based best practices in the preparation and professional development of teachers.

These *Centers for Research and Teaching Excellence for English Learners* would bring together the most knowledgeable teachers, faculty, experts, and researchers to be "in residence" for a period of time at a specific site. Research on critical issues that can be applied to teaching and teacher preparation would occur simultaneously with teacher preparation through an apprenticeship model where prospective teachers hone their skills by working side by side with experts. They would also provide professional development in EL instructional skills for existing teachers.



Recommendation #4: The state should establish several *Centers for Research and Teaching Excellence for English Learners* in key regions where both need and resources converge.

Training and Credentialing at the Secondary Level

The knowledge and skills included in current teacher certifications appear inadequate to prepare teachers to meet the needs of students in secondary settings, based on the exceptionally high dropout rates for English learners in secondary schools, and teachers' expressions of frustration in attempting to meet the needs of these students. We believe that it is critical to develop additional, specific training for secondary teachers of linguistic minority students, and special credentials should be awarded to those teachers who complete this training.

Recommendation #5: The California Teacher Credentialing Commission should design and adopt two forms of single subject specialist certifications for teachers in grades 7-12. The content of these certifications would be established by a group of experts in the field, relying on research that might be carried out in the *Centers for Research and Teaching Excellence for English Learners*.

One form of this certification would be an *ELD Specialist* credential/certificate for middle and high school teachers who teach ELD as a content area. A second form of certification could be earned by educators who provide support, mentoring, and/or professional development (including literacy coaching) for the instruction of ELDs.

An Enhanced Role for Bilingual Teachers

The specialized expertise of bilingual teachers (those who have a BCLAD or similar credential) in the instruction of English learners, their ability to communicate with parents, students, and community members, and their ability to informally assess EL students, place them in high demand in schools regardless of the program of instruction offered at the school. However, these teachers are often overburdened because there are so few teachers with the full range of skills to serve EL students available in the schools. It is, therefore, important to acknowledge the advanced skills of these teachers and to allow them opportunities to support their colleagues without having to do so at cost to their own classroom responsibilities. A better-rewarded role could encourage more teachers to join their ranks and reduce their turnover.

Recommendation #6: Bilingual resource teacher positions should be funded at attractive levels, and be offered at every school with EL students and APLE (forgivable loan) awards should be increased for credentialed bilingual teachers from \$11,000 to \$18,000—the level of awards for special education, math, and science teachers.

The Educational Leadership Infrastructure

Many administrators lack the skills needed to provide support and guidance for teachers and programs for English learners. Principals should have the background and knowledge to assess the adequacy of their programs for English learners, so they can make informed choices about expenditures on behalf of these students. Without developing this capacity among administrators we are ignoring a very important means for improving EL education.

Recommendation #7: The state should design and award a *Supplementary Administrative Certification* in EL instructional

services. California's Principal Leadership programs should also adopt content of this certification for all principals in training.

Valid and Reliable Assessment

California should be involved in national consortia that are attempting to develop more responsive assessment, and it should be lobbying the federal government to play a larger role in these efforts, as well as urging test makers to move forward aggressively in this area.

Showing the relationship between California English Language Development Test (CELDT) results and California Standards Test (CST) results, particularly for students in U.S. schools for five or more years, can help educators examine and better understand the relationships between the two tests, pinpoint areas of state standards where students need better instruction, and prioritize teacher professional development and student placement decisions.

Recommendation #8: All schools should report CELDT scores, along with CST scores, in a way that allows policymakers and practitioners to easily evaluate to what extent CELDT is aligned with or predicts CST performance.

While all districts use CELDT and CST, districts vary in the performance levels they set on these assessments. Moreover, they use other, local criteria as well (e.g., grades, district assessments). Recent research examining the effect of reclassification on subsequent test scores suggested little impact for elementary grades, though possibly more impact at secondary level. Conducting similar analyses could be extremely helpful to educators and policymakers in making determinations about optimal reclassification criteria and policies.

Recommendation #9: Require each district to report its reclassification criteria to the state, and make this information available online.

Curriculum and Instructional Materials Strategies

Good and appropriate instructional materials can enhance teaching and learning and excite teachers and students, while poor materials can dampen their interest and yield inadequate and inaccurate learning outcomes; yet most state-adopted programs fail to address the specific needs of ELs. Materials for English learners (and linguistic minority students) should reflect the English Language Development standards in their design and should reflect knowledge of the process of second language acquisition. Additionally, teachers and administrators with expertise in the instruction of English learners should be relied upon to use their best judgment to choose the materials and methods most appropriate for their students.

Recommendation #10: We propose that in schools and districts where current mandated practices are not resulting in satisfactory progress for English learners, those who are willing to partner with an approved technical assistance agency or research organization (such as a university) be given the opportunity to exercise more choice in both materials and practices. We call these "*Zones of Choice*."

Much of this work could take place in a *Center for Research and Teaching Excellence*, as described above. Materials would be developed and used on a pilot basis with careful evaluation of their usefulness and ability to boost student learning. Schools whose EL students are not thriving would be given flexibility to try something

different. Selected schools could be required to develop a comprehensive educational and evaluation plan including a strategy for how they would partner with experts, and would have to show results based on carefully collected data after a reasonable period of time.

This proposal shares some similarities with a recommendation from the **California Dropout Research Project Policy Committee Report, Solving California's Dropout Crisis**, which proposed establishing "lighthouse" districts that would adopt proven school reform practices, including those targeting English learners, and evaluate their effectiveness, in exchange for the use of categorical funds and temporary waivers from state and federal accountability requirements.

—Patricia Gándara, Julie Maxwell-Jolly,
and Russell Rumberger

The full UC LMRI Policy Report "Resource Needs for English Learners: Getting Down to Policy Recommendations" is available as a free pdf download on the UC LMRI web site.

21ST ANNUAL CONFERENCE

UC LMRI's 21st annual conference, co-sponsored with Arizona State University's Mary Lou Fulton College of Education, was held in Sacramento, California May 2-3, 2008. The theme was, "*Restrictive Language Policies and Educational Outcomes for English Learners: 10 Years After Proposition 227.*"

UC LMRI, along with two partners, the **Civil Rights Project (Proyecto Derechos Civiles)** at UCLA and UC **ACCORD**, commissioned ten papers from scholars across the U.S. to examine the evidence on whether restrictive language policies have delivered on their promise of improving the English acquisition and academic achievement of English learners. Four additional papers submitted for the conference also focused on this issue.

Keynote speaker **Alan Bersin** (*California State Board of Education*) opened the conference on Friday with: "*ELL / ALL: The Future is Not What it Used To Be.*"



Keynote Speakers Alan Bersin (left) and Carlos Garcia

Carlos Garcia (*Superintendent, San Francisco Unified School District*) closed the conference on Saturday afternoon with his keynote presentation: "*A New Vision for Educating San*

Francisco's English Language Learners: 25 Years After Lau v. Nichols."

More than 100 people—including guests from the Senate Education Committee—attended the conference. Also attending was **Education Week's Mary Ann Zehr**, who subsequently wrote an article on the findings presented at the conference, published in the May 14, 2008 edition of EdWeek (http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2008/05/14/37ell_ep.h27.html?mp=1911185360).

SAVE THE DATE: The 22nd UC LMRI annual conference will be held May 1-2, 2009 in Riverside, California. The conference theme will be "**Preparing 'Highly Qualified' Teachers of English Learners.**"

The 2009 Conference **Call for Commissioned Papers** has been issued, with **proposals due by September 1, 2008**. Visit the UC LMRI web site for further information and to download this year's official conference program. A number of conference presentations from this year's conference are also available.

UC LMRI GRANT CALL: DEADLINE OCTOBER 1, 2008

In fiscal year 2008-09, UC LMRI will continue to offer funding for Dissertation and Individual grants; however, UC LMRI is discontinuing its Teacher and Collaborative grants for the near future. Two new grant categories have been added: Proposal Preparation grants and Travel grants. See below for details.

The main focus for all UC LMRI grant proposals should be on striving to improve the schooling outcomes of linguistic minority students.

- **Dissertation Grants:** One-year grants for UC Graduate Students. Funding up to \$15,000. Intended to identify and support promising doctoral students who are conducting such research.
- **Individual Grants:** One-year grants for UC Researchers. Funding up to \$20,000. The purpose and focus of individual grants is (1) to generate valuable research findings from small-scale or pilot projects, and (2) to provide seed money for projects that will seek funding from other resources. Preference will be given to applicants who have not previously received a grant award from UC LMRI, and to junior faculty members.
- **NEW! Proposal Preparation Grants:** Short-term grants for UC faculty. Funding up to \$10,000. Proposal preparation grants are intended to support faculty in applying for funding for large, multi-year research projects. It is expected that the funds will be used for employing a research assistant to ease the task of writing a major grant proposal (e.g., help with literature reviews). Funds can also be used for course buy-outs.
- **NEW! Travel Grants:** One-time grants for UC Graduate Students. Funding up to \$500. Intended to help fund travel expenses for graduate students in the UC system to present research papers on linguistic minority students and related issues at any national or international conference.

For grant applications and further information, please visit the UC LMRI web site.

UC LMRI News

Director Scheduled for Sabbatical

UC LMRI's Director, **Russell Rumberger** will take a one-year sabbatical beginning October 1, 2008. Assistant Director **Laura Romo** will serve as Interim Director during this time.

Newsletter Takes the Summer Off

Due in part to ongoing budget concerns, publication of next quarter's newsletter—Volume 17, Number 4—has been cancelled. Volume 18, Number 1 is currently scheduled for production in fall 2008.

Newsletter Survey

UC LMRI is conducting a survey, asking subscribers their opinions about the newsletter. If you are interested in taking this quick 10-question survey, we welcome your responses (see: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=oe4atYggq8FCpCPHa1RYQA_3d_3d). You can also email us any thoughts you may have about the newsletter at: lmri@lmri.ucsb.edu.

Faculty Steering Committee

UC LMRI Faculty Steering Committee member **Laura Sterponi**, representing the UC Berkeley campus since 2006, has given birth to a baby girl, **Zazie**. UC LMRI wishes Laura and her husband Gaspard all the best.

New Contracts & Grants/Business Officer

UC LMRI has hired a new Management Services Officer, **Shawndel Malcolm**. Shawndel will be UC LMRI's contact for all contracts and grants matters, and takes over as the annual conference coordinator. Additionally, his responsibilities include managing all of LMRI's fiscal operations, travel and events, and coordinating the daily operations of the office.



Shawndel Malcolm

Shawndel joined the UC LMRI staff on March 24, 2008. He has worked on the UC Santa Barbara campus for 10 years, most recently for Extended Learning Services as the Accounts Payable Coordinator. Prior to that, he worked for UCSB's Housing and Residential Services.

Born in Montana, Shawndel lived in Germany for four years and attended school there as a boy. He and his family have lived in Lompoc, CA—where his wife was born and raised—for more than twenty years. For the past seven years he has been able to fulfill his dream of working with children by coaching youth football.

Newsletter Production Team

Russell W. Rumberger Editor-in-Chief
Beverly Bavaro Editor
Ventura Printing Print Production

UC LMRI Headquarters Staff

In alphabetical order:
Beverly Bavaro Editor/Web Manager
Jacob Jaffe Student Tech. Assistant
Shawndel Malcolm Management Services
Laura Romo Assistant Director
Russell W. Rumberger Director

Faculty Steering Committee

Jamal Abedi UC Davis
Adalberto Aguirre Jr. UC Riverside
Joseph Castro UC San Francisco
Margaret Gibson UC Santa Cruz
Kris Gutiérrez UC Los Angeles
Jin Sook Lee UC Santa Barbara
Paula Levin UC San Diego
Robert Ochsner UC Merced
Robin Scarpella UC Irvine
Laura Sterponi UC Berkeley

Ex Officio Members:
Patricia Gándara (*Assoc. Director, Policy*) UCLA
Dante Noto UC Office of the President
Jeannie Oakes UC ACCORD (UCLA)
Laura Romo (*Asst. Director*) UC Santa Barbara
Russell W. Rumberger (*Director*) UC Santa Barbara

Reports in This Issue

The UC LMRI Newsletter features abstracts from UC LMRI Research Grant/Award recipients and—as they are completed—the abstracts from their Final Grant Reports.

A searchable database of UC LMRI-funded Final Grant Reports can be found on the UC LMRI web site. (Abstracts featured in the newsletter are edited for space considerations.)

Dissertation Grant Reports can be found on the UMI ProQuest Digital Dissertations and Theses Database (<http://www.proquest.com/products.cgi/dissertations/pqdt.shtml>). Dissertations are available free from this site if your library is a Digital Dissertation subscriber.

Back Issues: Newsletters from 1992 to the present are archived on the UC LMRI web site. A limited number of hard copies are available by request.

How To Contact Us

Email: lmri@lmri.ucsb.edu
Phone: 805.893.2250
Fax: 805.893.8673
Web: <http://www.lmri.ucsb.edu>

University of California Santa Barbara
Linguistic Minority Research Institute
4722 South Hall
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-3220

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Santa Barbara, CA
Permit No. 104