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POLICY REPORT

Listening to Teachers of English Language Learners: Findings from a Survey of over 5,000 California Educators

According to a new survey of 5,300 California educators, most teachers are ill-prepared to meet the needs of the state's almost 1.6 million children who are struggling to learn English. The study, conducted in collaboration with the Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning (CFTL), the UC Linguistic Minority Research Institute (LMRI), and Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE), found that teachers of English learners face unique challenges and yet receive few tools and little professional development geared specifically to the task of teaching these students. In spite of this, most expressed a strong desire to be able to better teach them.

Teachers who participated in the survey reported that their greatest challenge is communication: they struggle to communicate with both students and their parents. Other challenges teachers often cited include a lack of sufficient time to teach academic content and language skills, and frustration with the wide variety of academic skills and language proficiency among students. Teachers also reported a lack of appropriate teaching materials, including textbooks accessible for English learners and tests for assessing their academic achievement, as well as a lack of quality professional development opportunities.

Mix of abilities in classroom

Rather than clustering English learners by language needs, California's current policy places the great majority of English learners in mainstream classes, thus, abilities within classrooms can vary widely, including students who speak English but lack academic English skills; students who have just entered the country and have little or no English; native English speakers who have good academic preparation; and other students with little formal education. Teachers expressed frustration with this wide range of English language and academic levels in their classrooms, citing the lack of time, appropriate materials, and their own expertise to educate their EL students.

Professional development lacking

Survey results indicate that teachers who had more preparation that focused on English learner education—acquired either through pre-service preparation or in-service professional development—were more confident in their abilities to successfully meet the challenges of teaching these students. In fact, teachers with *any* professional development that focused on teaching English learners

rated themselves as more able to meet the learning needs of these students, than peers with no such training. This is a critical finding in view of previous research linking teachers' self-efficacy beliefs with student achievement.

Despite this evidence of the importance of professional development to teacher efficacy (and student achievement), the study found that the majority of teachers of English learners receive very little professional development on how to teach them. About 43 percent of teachers with 50 percent or more English learners had received no more than one in-service training session on the

instruction of EL students over the last five years; half of the teachers with 25 percent to 50 percent English learners had only one such session or none at all; and only half of new teachers required to participate in in-service training focused on English learners had done so. This finding on the paucity of EL-focused professional development mirrors

“Despite the importance of professional development to teacher efficacy (and student achievement), the majority of teachers of ELs receive very little professional development on how to teach them.”

that of an earlier UC LMRI study, *The Inequitable Treatment of English Learners in California's Public Schools*, which found that teachers of English learners receive an average of only two hours of EL-focused professional development a year.

Teachers in the present study cited four major problems with the professional development they received: presenters with only limited knowledge and experience with English learners; a lack of new information; content not applicable or appropriate for teaching English learners; and sessions either not practical for the classroom or lacking guidance for implementation. When asked to name the areas in which they wanted and needed additional support, teachers most often said they wanted professional development in second language reading and writing, English language development, and instructional strategies.

Finally, the study found that teachers with the most thorough preparation to work with English learners, those with the Bilingual, Culture, Language and Development credential (BCLAD), were the most confident in their ability to teach English learners across all areas of the curriculum, and that they were also the most critical of the instructional program these students receive. Teachers with only the Culture, Language and Development credential (CLAD) or no specialized credential, were less confident of their abilities and also less critical of the education offered to ELs. (*Continued on page 2.*)

Recommendations

Our most important recommendation is that a higher priority be assigned to professional development and credentialing for teaching English learners. Local school districts should give high priority to the professional development needs of teachers of English learners, and the mandatory induction for new teachers should have a more explicit focus on English learner education, especially in schools with large numbers of these students. They also need to develop policies to strengthen professional development for teachers of English learners, taking into account differing levels of teacher expertise and experience.

We also recommend that:

- 1.) The governor and legislative leadership convene a statewide summit to address the issues raised by the survey, including the retention of bilingual teachers.
- 2.) County offices of education collaborate with a local college or university to develop a clearinghouse of resources to help teachers.
- 3.) The California Department of Education create a tool kit for evaluating the quality of local programs for English learners.
- 4.) Further research be commissioned to examine questions ranging from how teaching and learning time for English learners is organized to how the needs of rural areas and small districts with limited resources can be met.

—Julie Maxwell-Jolly, Patricia Gándara, and Anne Driscoll

This article is based on a recent report, "Listening to Teachers of English Learners," a joint collaboration with CFTL and PACE, and a corresponding technical report. Both reports are available on the UC LMRI web site.

FINAL GRANT REPORT ABSTRACTS

Correction: Peter Kuhn's Final Grant Report abstract, as printed in the Winter 2005 (Vol. 14, No. 2) newsletter, was incorrect. The correct information follows. We apologize for the error.

Language, High School Leadership and the Postsecondary Outcomes of Hispanic Students

PI: PETER KUHN, *UCSB*

CO-PIs: FERNANDO A. LOZANO AND CATHARINE WEINBERGER, *UCSB*

INDIVIDUAL GRANT #03-03CY-09IG-SB

COMPLETED FEBRUARY 2005

This paper asks whether high school leadership activities play an important role in the educational success of Hispanic students. In particular, can differences in these activities help explain the Hispanic college-completion gap?

This paper addresses two specific questions: first, do Hispanic high school students participate in high school leadership activities at the same rate as their non-Hispanic counterparts? Second, do Hispanic students benefit as much from high school leadership activities as non-Hispanic students, in terms of both the type of college first attended, and in the probability of obtaining a four-year degree?

This analysis considers the role that English language fluency plays in a Hispanic student's leadership probability and in the student's future educational success. The main results in this paper

are: first, after controlling for demographic and school characteristics, there are no major differences in high school leadership activities between Hispanics and non-Hispanics; second, high school leadership activities predict higher college attendance rates for all demographic groups; and third, high school leadership activities predict a higher probability of attaining a college degree among Hispanic students whose first language is not English. Importantly, this relationship is stronger among students whose first post-secondary institution is a two-year college.

Latent Growth Mixture Modeling of Language-Minority Latino Children's Growth in Mathematics Achievement

PI: SEHEE HONG, *UCSB*

CO-PI: SUKKYUNG YOU, *UCSB*

INDIVIDUAL GRANT #03-03CY-10IG-SB

COMPLETED APRIL 2005

The challenge of serving language minority students in U.S. schools is a major focal point in educational research. It is not surprising to find that much of the research on the issue of language minorities has focused on Latinos because they compose the largest number of language minority students. Latinos have been the fastest growing minority group in the school-age population over the last several decades. However, Latino children represent the poorest and least educated of minority groups and are associated with underachievement in U.S. schools.

In this study, we tested if there are distinct growth patterns (e.g., high, middle, and low groups) in Latino children's mathematics growth using the newly released Early Childhood Longitudinal Study dataset. Latent growth mixture analyses show that there are four different mathematics developmental profiles: 7% of students are classified as belonging to Class 1 (the highest performing group) and 24% to Class 2, 52% to Class 3, and 17% to Class 4, respectively. Further, we attempted to identify important factors that are positively or negatively related to successful outcomes in mathematics achievement among Latino children.

Results show that when the language of instruction and home language is English, the probability of being in the highest performing group increases.

A Collaborative Partnership: An Investigation of the Effects of Implementation of Bilingual Cultural Pedagogy and Authentic Assessment on Deaf Children's Literacy (Year 2)

PI: TOM HUMPHRIES, *UC SAN DIEGO*

CO-PI: BOBBIE ALLEN, *UC SAN DIEGO*

TEACHER GRANT #02-02CY-01TG-SD

COMPLETED MAY 2005

The purpose of this investigation was to establish a collaborative partnership with teachers who taught deaf and hard of hearing children in San Diego County, pre-service teachers in the Master's program at the University of California, San Diego's (UCSD) Teacher Education Program, and UCSD faculty, for a second year.

The collaborative partnership's combined efforts were effective in accomplishing the goals of the project: (1) implemented effective American Sign Language (ASL)-English teaching practices that fostered the acquisition of two languages: English and ASL; (2) conducted training in the use of an authentic assessment tool that

provided a systematic way to collect data and determine students' literacy achievement; (3) developed and field tested the ASL Scale of Development that was "teacher friendly" as well as useful and beneficial in determining ASL fluency of deaf children within classroom settings; (4) conducted on-going professional development with discussions focused on student work and outcomes that informed teaching and planning for next steps; (5) identified and described "novice" and "break-through" reading and writing strategies/behaviors used by deaf children using ASL as their primary language; and finally, (6) increased understanding of deaf and hard of hearing students' development as readers and writers.

When Grades Don't Matter: Comparing Schooling and Family Experiences of College and Non-College Latinas and Latinos

PI: MARIA ESTELA ZARATE, *UCLA*
DISSERTATION GRANT #04-04CY-01DG-LA
COMPLETED MAY 2005

The underrepresentation of Latinas and Latinos in colleges and universities persists, even as the Latino population increases in the U.S. Although we know that socio-economic status, parental encouragement, and academic achievement predict college enrollment in most cases, we don't know exactly why some Latinos/Latinas go to college and others don't.

Using data from a 15-year study of randomly recruited Latino/a immigrant youth, I identified factors that predicted college enrollment. The statistical analysis revealed that academic achievement, parental factors, and language acquisition were the most significant predictors of Latinos' college enrollment, but not for Latinas. Surprisingly, teacher-rated classroom performance—beginning in kindergarten—and college counseling contact in high school predicted enrollment plans for Latinas.

Non-academic factors appear to hamper college enrollment for some Latinas whose achievement levels are equal to female counterparts who enroll in college. Beginning in elementary school, college girls felt teachers were more accessible and provided individualized instruction; whereas teachers did not seem to play an impressionable role for the non-college girls.

I interpreted elementary school relationships as the opportunity to establish trust between students and teachers. I argue that for the non-college girls, lack of meaningful relationships with teachers in elementary school inhibited the development of effective and instrumental relationships in high school.

I propose that further study is needed to more fully understand how different community contexts influence the schooling experience of Latinas.

CONFERENCE RECAP

UC LMRI held its 18th Annual Conference May 6-7, 2005 in San Francisco, CA. The theme was *Language Rights and the Education of English Learners*.

The annual conference serves as one opportunity for recipients of UC LMRI research grants to present their findings to an audience of researchers, practitioners and policy makers. This year, nine of the 20 conference speakers were presenting findings from their UC LMRI-funded research grants.

UC LMRI Director **Russell Rumberger** greeted conference participants at the opening session and presented Associate Director **Patricia Gándara** (UC Davis), who premiered a new study surveying teachers of English learners in California (*see cover story, this issue*).



UC LMRI Associate Director Patricia Gándara addresses the 2005 Conference Opening Session

Rachel Moran (UC Berkeley) gave the Friday afternoon keynote, "Undone by Law: The Uncertain Legacy of *Lau v. Nichols*" (*see cover story, UC LMRI newsletter Vol. 13, No. 4*).

On Saturday, following morning sessions, participants gathered for lunch and to hear keynote speaker **Harold Schiffman** (University of Pennsylvania) close the conference with his presentation on "Language Rights and Language Policy in a Multilingual World."

UC LMRI's web site features video files of both 2005 keynote presentations, as well as a selection of handouts, photos, and programs from this and past conferences, and updates on next year's conference (May 5-6, 2006).

IN THE NEWS

UC LMRI Awards Post-Doctoral Fellowship

Maricela Correa-Chávez (BA, Anthropology and Psychology, UCLA; PhD, Developmental Psychology, UC Santa Cruz), has been awarded UC LMRI's fourth one-year post-doctoral fellowship. Because she was additionally awarded an AERA/IES post-doctoral fellowship, UC LMRI will therefore jointly co-sponsor her post-doctoral research beginning in September 2005 with Dr. Kris Gutiérrez at the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Sciences.



Correa-Chávez

Dr. Correa-Chávez's dissertation focused on cultural variation in how U.S. middle class children and Guatemalan Maya children pay attention to events that are not addressed to them.

Her fellowship research will include examining how migration and transnationalism may play a complimentary part to family schooling in how children observe. The study compares third-party attending among Mexican-heritage children whose families have extensive or basic schooling. It also examines the families' familiarity with U.S. middle-class cultural norms based on patterns of migration.

Additional Fellowships for UC LMRI Dissertation Grantee

Brenda Arellano-Anguiano (*UCSB*), who was awarded a UC LMRI dissertation grant in February 2005 (#05-05CY-04DG-SB), has since been awarded three additional dissertation fellowships: one from the AERA/IES (American Educational Research Association/Institute for Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education) Dissertation Grants program; one from the AERA Research Grants program; and one from the Ford Foundation Diversity Fellowship program.

Due to funding guidelines, she is unable to fully accept all of these awards, but will be considered a joint Ford Foundation/AERA/IES/UC LMRI dissertation fellow.

Education Policy Center News

UC LMRI established an Education Policy Center at UC Davis in 1997 to disseminate research findings to policymakers. The Center sponsors research and colloquia on policy issues in the education of English learners.

Secondary English Learners Topic of Two Conferences

With the sponsorship of the **Hewlett Foundation**, the UC LMRI Education Policy Center hosted two conferences on Secondary English Learners this spring. The first (April 7-8, 2005) focused on promoting academic English for English learners. **Edmund Hamann** (Univ. of Nebraska), **Linda Harklau** (Univ. of Georgia), and **Mary Schleppegrell** (Univ. of Michigan), were the invited presenters. The second (May 12, 2005) focused on policy and practice, and featured discussion of a paper by **Norman Gold** (consultant, formerly with U.S. Dept. of Education) on "The Schools We Need for Secondary English Learners," as well as commentary from **Laurie Olsen** (Executive Director, California Tomorrow) and panels of practitioners and policy makers.

Legislative Advocate Sponsors Bill for English Learners

The Policy Center has been working with **State Senator Martha Escutia's** office to design a bill to develop pilot projects in four districts to collect longitudinal data on English learners. On April 27, 2005, **Patricia Gándara** testified in the California Assembly Education Committee on behalf of SB 368, sponsored by Escutia. The bill is continuing to work its way through the legislature.

Biliteracy Network News

The last 2004-05 Biliteracy Network meeting was held in Davis April 28, 2005. Discussion centered around English learner results on measures of English and academic achievement, and why performance on the CELDT is not an indicator of EL students' preparation for academic tasks. Meetings for 2005-06 are scheduled for: September 29, December 1, February 2, and April 27. Sample topics are: the use of data for analyzing EL achievement; EL secondary education; and parent-teacher relations. Please contact the coordinator of the Biliteracy Network, **Sandra Mercuri**, mercuri@fresno.edu, if you would like to join us.

Collaborative Effort Provides Credit for U.S./Mexican Students

We continue to work with the Mexican government on a project sponsored by the **Irvine Foundation** to provide Spanish-dominant high school students with college preparatory math and science curricula. Students taking these courses would simultaneously receive high school diploma credit in the U.S. and Mexico (or other Spanish speaking countries), and meet U.S. college prep requirements. The ultimate objective is to encourage these students to stay in school, graduate, and go on to college.

Contact Patricia Gándara for more information on the Center: pcgandara@ucdavis.edu

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Reports in This Issue

Complete copies of 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 Database at: <http://www.lib.umi.com/dissertations/fullcit/9993004>.

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

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