
THE ELL OUTLOOK Volume 2, Issue 7, October 2003

In this issue . . .

IN THE NEWS: News stories of interest this month.

AT ISSUE

IMPLEMENTING POLICY FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS ENROLLED IN RURAL SCHOOLS: Dr. Bérubé discusses the steps in establishing ELL programs in rural schools.

FROM THE FIELD

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF QUESTION 2 IN MASSACHUSETTS: THE COST OF THE ENGLISH-ONLY INITIATIVE: The second of a tri-part series on the realities of the recent voter-passed ballot initiative in the Bay State.

FROM THE STATES

THE EDUCATION OF ELLS IN MARYLAND: AN INTERVIEW WITH FRANK EDGERTON: Trends, policy, and the realities of educating a rapidly growing population of ELLs.

ELL UPDATE

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE "PROCEEDINGS OF THE FIRST NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR EDUCATORS OF NEWCOMER STUDENTS": Recently released proceedings detail presentations by teachers and educators about newcomer curriculum and program design, testing, and facts and figures.

~~ **IN THE NEWS** ~~

Just cut and paste links into your browser to view stories.

Language immersion is goal

The Indianapolis Star - 9/23/03

High school teacher aims to link students with Hispanic community

<http://www.indystar.com/print/articles/2/076972-9802-016.html>

Bilingual education lags for Vietnamese

The Star-Telegram - 9/25/03

Non-Spanish bilingual education presents problems in Texas

<http://www.dfw.com/mld/dfw/news/6857170.htm>

Parents study the language of learning

Washington Post - 10/6/03

Immigrant parents assisted by Maryland county program

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A49434-2003Oct5.html>

Minority students narrow gap

The Salt Lake Tribune - 10/8/03

Salt Lake City Schools sees improvement in achievement rates of non-Asian minority students, including ELLs

<http://www.sltrib.com/2003/Oct/10082003/utah/99859.asp>

Percentage of non-English speaking Americans surges

The Boston Globe – 10/9/03

Almost one in five Americans speaks a language other than English at home, an increase of 50 percent in the last decade

http://www.boston.com/news/nation/washington/articles/2003/10/09/percentage_of_non_english_speaking_americans_surges/

~~ AT ISSUE ~~

IMPLEMENTING POLICY FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS ENROLLED IN RURAL SCHOOLS

By Barney Bérubé, Ph.D.

ELL Outlook Contributing Writer

Schools in rural communities tend to enroll few of the nation's five million English language learners (ELLs). Small rural schools typically respond to new challenges with few formal procedures. For example, an inquiry on how to help ELLs or how to access an ESL course may be forwarded to a state department of education, and developing a comprehensive plan or policy for ESL in a small school may seem out of place. On the other hand, urban schools have the advantage of a long history of supporting ELLs. There is a need for quality interventions for ELLs who arrive in rural schools without the experiences they might have had in urban schools. Some statistics bear noting:

- National ELL enrollment growth is *greater* in rural than in urban schools.
- Rural areas host 44% of America's ELLs.
- 33% of rural towns in the United States enroll ELLs.
- 30% of states have fewer than 5000 ELLs statewide.
- Rural school administrators, though perhaps well intentioned, do not place ESL policy, budget, and other support mechanisms very high among their priorities.
- Rural enrollments are too low to establish the bilingual education programs offered in urban schools.
- Rural schools often lack credentialed ESL teachers, hiring tutors or aides instead.
- Rural schools cannot boast of national models for ESL programs.
- Rural teachers (who are mostly Caucasian) do not reflect the diversity of most of the United States.

- Urban ELLs transferring to rural schools are unlikely to experience comprehensive programs such as those that might be available to them in urban schools.
- Rural towns lack the political power base that cities enjoy.
- Rural schools have minimal access to federal discretionary grants for ESL; what access they have yields few resources.
- Rural school administrators have minimal access to state funds designated for ESL because their ELL enrollments are too low.
- Teachers in rural schools receive little training in subjects unique to ESL pedagogy.

Most important for educators in rural schools to know is that legal protections for ELLs are not limited by low numbers. One or two ELLs in a school do not have fewer rights or abridged access to appropriate instruction because there are “too few” of them.

So, what are rural schools to do? The legal foundation for providing support to ELLs to ensure equitable access to learning begins with the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Supreme Court opinions, case law precedent, and congressional actions following enactment of this law have strengthened the rationale for assuring that ELLs receive equitable education appropriate to their linguistic and academic needs. With these protections, there is ongoing clarification about the instructional practices that ensure equitable access for all ELLs in America’s schools (Bérubé, *Managing ESL Programs in Rural and Small Urban Schools*, 2000). Legislation passed by the U.S. Congress under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) provides for more accountability for the education of all children, with certain provisions specific to ELLs, especially under Titles I and III of the act. NCLB also provides funds to states, schools, and universities to carry out the law’s intent.

Court Decisions and Federal Legislation Supporting Students of Limited English Proficiency

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act (full text)

<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/cor/coord/titlevistat.htm>

Plyler v. Doe, 1981 (full decision)

[http://www2.law.cornell.edu/cgi-bin/fofiocgi.exe/historic/query=\[group+457+u!2Es!2E+202!3A\]^ \[group+citemenu!3A\]^ \[level+case+citation!3A\]^ \[group+notes!3A\]/doc/{@1}/hit_headings/words=4/hits_only?](http://www2.law.cornell.edu/cgi-bin/fofiocgi.exe/historic/query=[group+457+u!2Es!2E+202!3A]^ [group+citemenu!3A]^ [level+case+citation!3A]^ [group+notes!3A]/doc/{@1}/hit_headings/words=4/hits_only?)

Casteñeda v. Pickard, 1981 (Santee, CA Compliance Policy with Casteñeda)

<http://www.santee.k12.ca.us/BP/Data/6000/BP6141-3.pdf>

Equal Education Opportunities Act of 1974 (full text)

<http://www.law.cornell.edu/topics/education.html>

Office of Civil Rights “Policy Update on Schools’ Obligations toward National Origin Minority Students with Limited-English Proficiency,” 1991

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/lau1991.html>

Executive Order 13166: "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency," 2000 (full text)

<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/cor/13166.htm>

Of course, educational policies created at the national level are integrated statewide and locally. Hence, federal policies affect classroom practice in the micro-interactions that occur between teachers and students (Cummins, *Language, Power and Pedagogy: Bilingual Children in the Crossfire*, 2001). Faced with the task of providing consistent and quality instruction in content areas and English as a second language, teachers and administrators are left to craft policy on their own. Their tasks are uniquely daunting, given the complexity and interaction of the varied social, political, legal, and economic contexts needed to support their ELLs.

Districts must frame policy for serving ELLs that is consistent with statute and approved by their school committees. Below is a synthesis of steps to follow in meeting those federal mandates. These steps help assure that ELLs will have full access to the English language and regular classroom support they need and that the No Child Left Behind Act requires.

Steps for Creating ELL Policy in Rural Schools

1. Cite the legal basis for the policy, such as the citations listed above.
2. Create a language assessment committee (LAC) that will advise on identifying, serving, assessing, and eventually exiting an ELL from a language support system. The LAC is generally made up of an administrator, guidance counselor, academic content teachers, the ESL teacher, and tutor or translator if there is one.
3. Create a system for identifying ELLs using a home language survey (a sample can be found at <http://www.usd253.org/~lschurma/page3.htm>). Then select an assessment tool to determine whether the survey results reveal limited English proficiency. Browse <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/links/publishers/testing.htm> for a listing of publishers of reliable language assessment tools. Be sure to conduct authentic assessments (e.g., student writing samples, portfolios, exhibitions, demonstrations, oral interviews).
4. Create a program, aligned to state and local standards as required by statute, that includes ESL instruction buttressed with regular content classes.
5. Establish criteria for reclassification, transfer, and exit from ESL support. The results of authentic assessments will determine student exit from ESL services.
6. Employ qualified ESL personnel as stipulated in the 1991 Office of Civil Rights memorandum, noted among the URLs above.
7. Set guidelines for monitoring students who are no longer ELLs.
8. Submit the above seven-step policy and plan to the school superintendent for review. The superintendent will then seek school board approval of the plan.

A plan modeled on the steps described above may be found in Appendix A of *Managing ESL Programs in Rural and Small Urban Schools* (pp. 219–232). Details on crafting such a plan or policy may also be found in chapter three of that volume.

Conclusion

As schools, be they rural or urban, follow these steps, they become well positioned to initiate a quality program that assures newcomer ELLs will receive services consistent with the mandates under *Lau v. Nichols* and other legal precedents. More important, perhaps, is that school districts, by following this plan, are systemically

demonstrating their commitment to equitable educational opportunities for students, where *all* really does mean *all*, where no ELLs are left behind.

Dr. Bérubé has served as English as a second language specialist with the Maine Department of Education for over 25 years. He has published with TESOL, Inc. and Multilingual Matters, Ltd. among others. He has earned graduate degrees at Columbia University and the University of Maine. He parents three children and two grandchildren, all of whom are raised trilingually.

~ ~ **FROM THE FIELD** ~ ~

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF QUESTION 2 IN MASSACHUSETTS: THE COST OF THE ENGLISH-ONLY INITIATIVE

By Michelle Adam

ELL Outlook Staff Writer

This year belongs to English language learners in Massachusetts—at least according to numerous school districts now required to implement major changes in ELL teaching methods. Already, those Massachusetts school districts with large numbers of ELLs have applied significant funds toward transforming their transitional bilingual education classes into structured English immersion classes, as required under last November’s voter-approved initiative, Question 2.

“This year everyone has to start really looking at the needs of English language learners,” said Paula Sheppard, language support program specialist in Lynn, Massachusetts. “The main thing occurring is that people are changing their mindset toward these kids.”

Many believe that Question 2, which requires that all public school children throughout Massachusetts be taught English and subject areas with English-language books in English-language classrooms, has drawn much more attention to ELLs than ever before. On the other hand, the voter initiative has forced the state’s school districts to implement system-wide changes overnight, conflicting at times with prior laws, and at a price tag of more than a million dollars for some districts.

In Lynn, a district with 16.4 percent ELLs, Question 2 has already cost about two million dollars. Relying primarily on federal grants, Lynn is spending more than \$600,000 on extensive ELL and mainstream teacher training, \$1,485,000 on 27 new teaching positions, \$155,000-plus on new textbooks for ELLs, and additional funds on testing and building new English immersion programs.

“Now that the law has been changed, the district feels this is a great opportunity to implement drastic changes,” said Sheppard. “But we’ve had to jump into it too quickly. Some schools are getting greatly impacted, but are not equipped to deal with it.”

During prior years, Lynn’s ELL students went to feeder schools with transitional bilingual programs, but now they are being sent to their neighborhood schools and placed in sheltered English immersion and mainstream classes. As a consequence, all Lynn teachers are being trained to work with ELLs.

"In our middle and high school we are doing what we've always done, but we are now teaching in English, and the Spanish-speaking students are being mixed in with other students. The bilingual teachers serve as support staff," said Sheppard. Since Lynn already had ELL English classes with native language support in place at the elementary level, it only added additional sheltered English immersion training for teachers and the purchase of new materials for this level.

As with Lynn, the Lawrence school district also had structured English immersion classes in place prior to Question 2. With structured English immersion (SEI) classes available in grades K–2 and transitional bilingual education with auxiliary English components at higher levels, "the changes have not been that big," said Dalis Dominguez, supervisor of the bilingual/ESL program in Lawrence.

Prior to the implementation of Question 2, Lawrence provided extensive training for all teachers to learn how to work with their English language learners, who make up 26.1 percent of the school population. Since passage of the voter initiative, the district has provided training on curriculum and instruction for structured English immersion and has expanded its auxiliary English component of classes to replace transitional bilingual education in upper grade levels. Lawrence also plans to implement language development classes for those students whose parents request a waiver from sheltered English classes (as provided by Question 2), and will soon decide on additional support materials for system-wide language development. Lawrence is still determining the cost of all this, according to Dominguez.

Another district, Chelsea, has already converted all of its native-language classes to sheltered English immersion at every grade level. It has let go 12 to 15 ELL teachers and recently hired numerous mainstream content-area teachers who can effectively work with ELLs. The district has also provided professional development for teaching sheltered immersion, at a cost of approximately \$40,000, and has estimated \$10,000 for new materials for each K–8 classroom and \$12,000 for ELL software at the high school level.

Chelsea schools have been able to maintain their sheltered English classes, which were offered in the past to "low incidence" populations (these are ELL populations that are too small in numbers for schools to establish native-language bilingual classes), and their two-way K–5 Caminos Program. "We had so many things in place, so the changes weren't such a big deal," said Marlene Goodman, director of English Language Learners' Services for the Chelsea schools. "But it was tough to give up our successful native-language programs."

Several Massachusetts districts, such as Holyoke and Lowell, have had a harder time adopting Question 2. While trying to adhere to the new law, they remain under the "Lau plan," an educational plan resulting from a Supreme Court decision, which requires districts to provide bilingual education classes that teach non-English speakers in their native languages while easing them into English.

"It is hard to follow everything in front of us," said Holyoke Superintendent Dr. Eduardo Carballo. "We are following the new law to the extent that we can without becoming schizophrenic." Carballo plans to meet with attorneys in order to comply with areas of Question 2 that may be in conflict with the court order. Meanwhile, his district, with 24.6 percent ELLs, is providing all teachers with professional development to effectively support ELLs and has developed teams that will decide on

methods of implementing Question 2. "We expect training for a couple of years, which will require a lot of money, between one million and one and a half million dollars a year," said Carballo.

Under the Lau plan, parents can choose the right program for their children, just as they can sign waivers under Question 2 for their children to receive bilingual classes. With these options in place, Carballo said, "no matter how much time a student needs in a native language, they will get it."

Lowell, a district with 15.9 percent English language learners, has also faced the challenge of implementing Question 2 while adhering to the court-ordered Lau plan. Fortunately for Lowell, however, the district has experienced a decline in students enrolling in bilingual programs during the past few years and already had English immersion classes in place. Currently, all ELLs in the remaining bilingual programs have been placed in English immersion classes with native language support. Meanwhile, tutors have been hired for additional support, and more than 500 teachers have received training from ELL experts. The total cost for all this has amounted to approximately \$410,000, which includes a large sum of federal grant monies spent on consultants, teachers, training, testing, and classroom materials.

"For an unfunded mandate, we've done the best we can. It's been a lot of continuous work," said Jean Franco, Lowell assistant superintendent for student support services.

Franco was determined, as were ELL staff in so many districts we interviewed, to take advantage of the fact that finally—regardless of teaching methodology—everyone is focusing on the needs of English language learners. As she concluded, "We are now getting the support at the highest level of administration. This would be my dream come true if the kids do great!"

~ ~ **FROM THE STATES** ~ ~

THE EDUCATION OF ELLS IN MARYLAND: AN INTERVIEW WITH FRANK EDGERTON

In a long phone conversation, Frank Edgerton (Specialist, ELL Program, Office of Administration and Curriculum, Maryland State Department of Education) and I discussed recent trends in the education of ELLs in Maryland, including bilingual education, vocational education for ELLs, and the necessary success of every ELL in the state. Mr. Edgerton has worked in the Maryland Department of Education for two and a half years. Before that, he was a supervisor and an administrator in Baltimore County and a classroom teacher in French, German, and Spanish.

Maryland has experienced a dramatic increase in ELL enrollment. In 1987, when ELL enrollment data was first compiled, there were only about 7,000 ELL students in Maryland public schools. It took a dozen years to add 10,000 more to that total. However, in the last four years, an additional 10,000 ELLs have enrolled in the state of Maryland, bringing the current total to 27,423. The two districts with the largest ELL enrollments are Montgomery County and Prince George's County, which together educate almost 70 percent of the state's total ELL population.

For the most part, ELLs in Maryland are educated in an English-only environment (although not in one-year structured English immersion programs such as those

found in California, Arizona, or Massachusetts). Although Edgerton noted that there are a few dual-language programs in the state, there are very few bilingual programs available (Edgerton noted that there are a few dual language programs in the state), so ELLs are generally educated in content-based ESL programs before they transition to mainstream subject area classrooms. Depending on the size of the county in which an ELL is educated, the student could be offered classes in a center-based situation, in a pull-out setting, or in an ELL classroom. For the most part, Edgerton said, "ELLs in smaller districts are taught in an ELL classroom or a pull-out setting, whereas ELLs in larger districts are often taught in a center-based situation."

In general, Edgerton said, he would "prefer to see an English-language acquisition specialist work in an inclusion model with a grade-level teacher." The main goal is "to make ELL courses content-based. . . . Our students are assessed in academic English and need to be prepared accordingly," he added.

Although some bilingual language assistants are used, "we don't emphasize the use of bilingual helpers, whether they are aides or tutors. . . . We don't see that as something we want to push forward; we don't see that as equitable." Explaining further, Edgerton said that he believes strongly that "we can't show preference for one language group over another." Instead, he went on, the "biggest push in my state is for all teachers to become aware of best practices for all learners." In Maryland, emphasis is placed on teaching ELLs through modified and differentiated instruction and on linking classroom practice to current research in second language learning.

Edgerton noted that, in Maryland, increasing numbers of ELLs are coming from Mexico and Central America. In Frederick County, for example, the building industry has attracted large numbers of Spanish-speaking workers, resulting in a substantial increase in the ELL enrollment in that county.

The diversity of the languages that ELLs bring to the state is increasing rapidly, with 191 language groups currently represented. Spanish- and Korean-speaking ELLs continue to be the largest groups in Maryland.

In addition, an increasing number of ELLs with interrupted or limited formal schooling are enrolling, according to Edgerton. The challenge, Edgerton said, is that "a 14-year-old coming to us with limited formal schooling finds it difficult to graduate within four years." He has seen students become frustrated with the academic rigors of school, wanting only to learn the skills necessary to enter the job market. Some of these students become dropouts. Therefore, Edgerton believes that more vocational programs for ELL students should be offered. "We will not stifle the dreams of any child—we simply need to have more choices available."

What is most important for an educator to do for ELLs, Edgerton said, is to "encourage each child to set high goals and to work diligently to achieve them."

~ ~ **ELL UPDATE** ~ ~

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE "PROCEEDINGS OF THE FIRST NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR EDUCATORS OF NEWCOMER STUDENTS"

In September of 2002 the First National Conference for Educators of Newcomer Students was held in Washington, D.C. The U.S. Department of Education, the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA), and the Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE) sponsored the event. Over 250 teachers and administrators attended the conference. Below are some of the highlights. The full text of the proceedings can be downloaded and printed at <http://www.cal.org/projects/newcproceedings.pdf>.

Introduction

A newcomer program “educates recent immigrant students—who have very limited English proficiency and who often have had limited formal education in their native countries—in a special academic environment for a limited period of time” (“Proceedings of the First National Conference for Educators of Newcomer Students,” p. 2). Two primary goals of newcomer programs are accelerating “the students’ English language and literacy skills and their content knowledge” and guiding “the students’ acculturation to the school system in the U.S.” (p. 2).

Research findings from a four-year study called “Newcomers: Language and Academic Programs for Recent Immigrants” conducted by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) indicate that in the 1999–2000 school year:

- there were 115 newcomer programs located in 29 states and the District of Columbia;
- 76% of these programs were located in urban areas, 17% in suburban areas, and 7% in rural areas;
- almost 15,000 students were served by newcomer programs;
- 56% of newcomer programs were full-day, 17% were half-day, 6% were less than half-day, 2% were after-school, and 19% were a combination;
- 53% of newcomer programs enrolled students from more than one school, 38% enrolled students at one school, and 2% enrolled students from more than one district.

Teaching Newcomers to Read in English

In his keynote address, Alfredo Schifini presented some approaches for meeting the needs of newcomers with interrupted former schooling.

Among the memorable parts of his speech reproduced in the conference proceedings is this advice he gave to educators of newcomers: “If I were king of the world, I would say some things like ‘Be interested in what they bring.’ I am amazed that newcomer kids are treated as a *tabula rasa*. Be interested in them as human beings. Get as much information through newcomer centers and intake centers as you can about these learners. . . . I think that the broad brush approach to intake—finding out about habits, cultural information, interests, anything that the community can give us that will allow us to capitalize on students’ interests and strengths when planning our instruction—is the best approach we can follow” (p.5).

He went on to discuss five basic skills necessary for newcomers to become good readers (pp. 6–9):

1. “A working understanding of how sounds are represented alphabetically.”
2. “Sufficient background knowledge and vocabulary to render written tests meaningful and interesting.”

3. "Control of procedures for monitoring comprehension and repairing misunderstandings."
4. "Sufficient practice in reading to achieve fluency with different kinds of texts."
5. "Continued interest and motivation to read for a variety of purposes."

How to Establish Newcomer Programs

Deborah Short, from the Center for Applied Linguistics, discussed a checklist for establishing newcomer programs that she and Beverly Boyson developed in *Creating Access: Secondary School Programs for Newcomer Students* (in press). The checklist divides the process into three stages (explanation, planning, and implementation); it can be found in Appendix D of the conference proceedings.

Assessing ELL Learning Disabilities

Elizabeth Franks and Barbara Tedesco, from Abraham Clark High School in Roselle, New Jersey, presented some steps to determine whether an ELL is really learning disabled or if his or her difficulties are part of the language learning process. (These steps can be found on pages 50 and 51 of the conference proceedings.)

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