May 2016

Thank you for your request for **help in determining the best practices to use with (1) various subgroups of ELs and (2) newly arrived ELs.** Ask A REL is a collaborative reference desk service provided by the 10 regional educational laboratories (REL) that, by design, functions much in the same way as a technical reference library. It provides references, referrals, and brief responses in the form of citations on research-based education questions.
Please note that REL Southwest has not done an evaluation of the resources themselves, but offers this list to you for your information only.

BACKGROUND

English learners (ELs) are the fastest growing subgroup of the U.S. public school population, comprising an estimated 4.4 million students.[1] "The five REL Southwest states serve some 18 percent of the ELs in the nation… The English Learners Research Alliance seeks to understand the education problems of practice related to the diversity of English learners and to explore the programs and services that best meet their needs. The initial focus is on Texas but will expand to [the] entire region over time."[2] The following questions were converted to Ask A REL questions from the English Learners Research Alliance's research agenda.

Following an established REL Southwest protocol, we conducted a search for research reports as well as descriptive briefs on effective practices used with (1) various subgroups of ELs and (2) newly arrived ELs. The sources included federally funded organizations, additional research institutions, educational databases, and general Internet searches using Google and Bing. See the methods section at the end of this Ask A REL for additional information on how we identified the following sources.

QUESTIONS

1. **What is known about best practices in service delivery across the country for different subgroups of ELs, including newcomers (i.e., migrant and highly**

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[1] Kena, G., Musu-Gillette, L., Robinson, J., Wang, X., Rathbun, A., Zhang, J., Wilkinson-Flicker, S., Barmer, A., and Dunlop Velez, E. (2015). The Condition of Education 2015 (NCES 2015-144). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC. Retrieved June 6, 2016 from http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch. (See p. 84 of http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2015/2015144.pdf)

[2] From the REL Southwest website http://relsouthwest.sedl.org/research-alliances/english_learners.html.

mobile), long-term ELs, ELs receiving special education services, and refugees?

Ackerman, D. J., and Tazi, Z. (2015). Enhancing young Hispanic dual language learners' achievement: Exploring strategies and addressing challenges. ETS Research Report Series, (1), 1–39. http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ets2.12045/abstract.

From the abstract: "Dual language learners, or DLLs, may have greater school readiness needs due to the key role English oral language skills play in the development of emerging literacy skills in English and their overall academic achievement. This especially can be the case if children's capacity to benefit from classroom instruction and interact with teachers and fellow students is dependent on their English language proficiency. This policy report examines key factors contributing to young Hispanic DLLs academically at-risk status, as well as the emerging research base on strategies for supporting the learning and development of DLLs in preschool and the early primary grades. Also addressed are the practical, on-the-ground implementation challenges to be addressed if early education programs are to incorporate these strategies."

Burr, E., Haas, E., and Ferriere, K. (2015). Identifying and supporting English learner students with learning disabilities: Key issues in the literature and state practice. REL 2015-086. *Regional Educational Laboratory West.* http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED558163.

From the IES abstract. "While the literature on learning disabilities and on second-language acquisition is relatively extensive within the field of education, less is known about the specific characteristics and representation of English learner students with learning disabilities. Because there are no definitive resources and processes for identifying and determining best placement for English learner students with learning disabilities, schools, districts, and states struggle with this issue. As a result, English learner students who may or may not have learning disabilities are both over- and underrepresented in special education. This report aims to inform policymakers interested in developing procedures, including the use of guidelines and protocols, for identifying, assessing, and placing English learner students who may or may not have learning disabilities. The report describes (1) the key issues discussed in the research literature and (2) current state procedures for the 20 states with the largest English learner populations. The following are appended: (1) Methods; (2) Research and policy literature reviewed in this report; and (3) State resources related to assessing and supporting English learner students with learning disabilities. An annotated bibliography of references cited in the report and other references related to English learner students who may have learning disabilities is also included."

Pieretti, R. A. and Roseberry-McKibbin, C. (2016). Assessment and intervention for English language learners with primary language impairment: Research-Based

best practices. *Communication Disorders Quarterly*, *Vol 37*(2), 117-128. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1084724.

From the ERIC abstract: "Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) are experiencing the exciting challenge of serving increasing numbers of English Language Learners (ELLs) in U.S. schools. When ELLs struggle in school, they may be over-referred for speech-language services. SLPs are routinely expected to differentiate a language difference based on cultural, linguistic, and environmental characteristics from an underlying primary language impairment (PLI). This tutorial is designed to guide researchers and practicing professionals in the selection of research-based best practices for assessment and intervention for ELLs with potential PLI."

Rogers-Adkinson, D. L. , Ochoa, T. A. and Weiss, S. L. (2012), Chapter 7 English language learners and emotional behavioral disorders, in Jeffrey P. Bakken, Festus E. Obiakor, Anthony F. Rotatori (ed.) *Behavioral disorders: Identification, assessment, and instruction of students with EBD (Advances in special education, Volume 22)* Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 151–171. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED540057.

From the ERIC abstract: "This chapter provides the reader with a framework for understanding the needs of students that have concurrent needs as English Language Learners and Emotionally Behavioral Disturbed. Issues related to effective assessment practices, service delivery, and appropriate intervention are discussed. (Contains 1 table.)"

2. **What are best practices that schools and districts across the country use to respond to academic and social needs of newly arrived EL students?**

Beehler, S., Birman, D., and Campbell, R. (2012). The effectiveness of cultural adjustment and trauma services (CATS): Generating practice-based evidence on a comprehensive, school-based mental health intervention for immigrant youth. *American Journal of Community Psychology, Vol. 50*(155-168). http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1007/s10464-011-9486-2/abstract;jsessionid=484E89548F96BE7D8F1A8558431F312A.f02t04?userIsAuthenticated=false&deniedAccessCustomisedMessage=.

From the A collaborative study of Cultural Adjustment and Trauma Services (CATS), a comprehensive, school-based mental health program for traumatized immigrant children and adolescents, was conducted to generate practice-based evidence on the service delivery model across two school districts. Program effectiveness was assessed by testing whether client functioning and PTSD symptoms improved as a result of 7 separate service elements. An array of clinical services including CBT, supportive therapy, and coordinating services were provided to all students, and an evidence-based intervention for trauma, TF-CBT, was implemented with a subset of students. Greater quantities of CBT and supportive therapy increased functioning, while greater quantities of coordinating services decreased symptoms of PTSD. TF-CBT services

were associated with both improved functioning and PTSD symptoms, although TF-CBT was implemented with fidelity to the overall comprehensive service model rather than the structured intervention model. Results suggest the comprehensive school-based model was effective, though different service components affected different student outcomes. Implications of these findings for immigrant mental health interventions and implementing structured evidence-based practices into community mental health programs are discussed. Suggestions are made for future research on existing mental health practices with immigrants.
https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=-9wABAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA204&dq=related:7Dh57MQoZ6QJ:scholar.google.com/&ots=gghEPMEJaH&sig=xnPxpPpjFayAIMHzBoVayF9D8r4#v=onepage&q&f=false.

White, P. A. (2016). A Qualitative Study of ESL teacher experiences and perceptions of comprehension and scaffolding for refugee students. *Northcentral University,* Retrieved May 27, 2016 from ProQuest, (No. 10092279). http://gradworks.umi.com/10/09/10092279.html.

From the dissertation abstract: "Many ESL teachers have difficulty teaching listening and reading skills to newly arrived refugee students due to the challenges that these students have to overcome in an ESL classroom in the United States. The problem was that ESL classroom listening and reading instructional strategies are often not appropriate or beneficial for refugee students. Many ESL classrooms listening and reading instructional strategies may not target the needs of newly arrived refugee students such as psychological, academic, and developmental needs. The purpose of this qualitative survey study was to explore effective ESL teacher experiences and perceptions with comprehension and scaffolding for listening and reading to K12 refugee students from all over the world in public school districts in New York State. A qualitative survey was used to explore the ESL teacher experiences with these instructional strategies with a final purposeful sample of 10 ESL teachers who were members of TESOL International Association and employed in New York State, a state which contained a global refugee population considered as a low-income and high poverty population. Data were collected with a qualitative open-ended survey and data analysis utilized Dedoose to analyze data for pattern matching and thematic content analysis to address the constructs. Five major themes from both research questions were (a) higher level questioning, (b) builds reading comprehension, graphic organizers as a strategy, (c) monitoring comprehension for informal assessment, (d) tools for informal assessment (e) benefits of comprehension and scaffolding strategies and two minor themes were (a) underlining as a strategy tool and (b) use of pre-reading activities to build comprehension. Recommendations for practice included (a) ESL teacher professional development, (b) ESL teacher additional planning time, (c) ESL teacher access to current resources. Recommendations for future research included (a) a quantitative descriptive study to explore themes 1, 2, 3 and 4, (b) a qualitative phenomenological study to explore minor theme 1, and (c) a qualitative case study to explore theme 1 for research question 2."

ADDITIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND RESOURCES TO CONSULT

We also searched for appropriate organizations and resources that may be useful. We have not done an evaluation of these organizations or the resources themselves but offer this list for reference only.

QUESTION #1

Baker, S. *et.al.* (2014) Academic content and literacy to English learners in elementary and middle school. *Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE)*, *Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.* http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practice_guides/english_learners_pg_040114.pdf.

From the practice guide's abstract: "The goal of this practice guide is to offer educators specific, evidence-based recommendations that address the challenge of teaching English learners in the elementary and middle grades: building their English language proficiency while simultaneously building literacy, numeracy skills, and content knowledge of social studies and science. The guide provides practical and coherent information on critical topics related to literacy instruction for English learners, and is based on the best available evidence as judged by the authors."

Canales, P. and Harris, J. (2004). Migrant Service Coordination: Effective Field-Based Practices, Chapter 5 in Scholars in the field: The challenges of migrant education.[3] http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED481639.

From the ERIC abstract: "Migrant students and their families have a wide range of academic and social-economic needs. Long-term observation of numerous migrant programs in south Texas and elsewhere suggests that the school districts that are most successful in meeting those needs and the goals of the Migrant Education Program tend to share six recurrent practices. First, many successful districts recruit outreach teams to address the academic and support service needs of the entire migrant community. Such migrant service coordination teams reflect the diversity of the community; possess a sound knowledge base, reinforced by trainings on important topics; and are driven by a strong commitment to migrant students. Second, the teams carry out a comprehensive assessment of needs in their migrant community. In addition to drawing on national and state data, the teams develop practical local questionnaires and conduct group interviews with migrant parents and students. Third, effective teams develop strong working relationships with a wide array of community organizations and service providers. Fourth, community support and advocacy for migrant students and families are promoted through professional development sessions for educators and various types of media coverage and publicity. Fifth, self-advocacy and empowerment are encouraged among migrant students and parents through information sessions, leadership training, and parent train-the-trainer workshops. Finally, successful districts

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[3] This is an older resource. However, it includes effective academic and social practices to use with migrant students.

regularly evaluate their migrant service coordination practices and reflect on potential improvements."

Candal, C. S. (2015). Massachusetts charter public schools: Best practices serving English language learners. White Paper No. 140. *Pioneer Institute for Public Policy Research.* http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED565728.

From the ERIC abstract: "In recent years many charter public schools in Massachusetts have increased the number of English language learners (ELLs) that they enroll. A 2010 amendment to the charter school law has made it easier for charter schools to recruit English language learners. The success that many charter schools have had with this subset of students defies critics who claim that charter schools "cream" students, attracting and retaining only those who are "easiest to teach." Case studies of high-achieving charter schools with large and sometimes culturally and linguistically diverse populations of English language learners reveal common best practices. These practices include but are not limited to: individually tailored curricula that emphasize inclusive teaching practices; intentional and continuous use of high-quality formative assessments; language-enriched learning environments; recruitment and retention of teachers with knowledge of the communities that the school serves; and efforts to engage parents and community that are attuned to relevant cultural and linguistic contexts. The following report highlights three high-performing charter schools, detailing the common best practices that they continue to use and refine and highlighting the subtle but important ways each school caters to its specific student population. The case studies make clear that the autonomies that these schools enjoy because of their charter status allow them to be nimble in serving a changing student population. The same autonomies also enable these schools to design and refine approaches to serving English language learners that enhance student learning and achievement."

Echevarria, J., Frey, N. and Fisher, D. (2015). What it takes for English learners to succeed. *Educational Leadership*, *Vol 72*(6), 22-26. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1062916.

From the ERIC abstract: "A growing number of students in U.S. classrooms have spent more than five years in U.S. schools but have not yet attained fluency in English. These students account for 30 percent to 70 percent of English learners, and most have been in U.S. schools since kindergarten. Through research and their own experiences, Jana Echevarria, Nancy Frey, and Douglas Fisher have found a variety effective practices that can lead these students to fluency in English. These strategies can be divided into four areas: Access--The core curriculum needs to be made accessible to English learners through such strategies as differentiated instruction, teacher modeling, and visual representations of content. Climate--The classroom and school environment needs to show that diversity in culture and language are valued. Expectations--Students should be expected to complete rigorous grade-level work, with supports. Schools should foster students' aspirations by exposing them to a variety of career and college choices. Language instruction--Students should receive explicit instruction in academic English, even after they have become proficient in spoken English. The authors note

that these four areas are equally important and interdependent and that educators need to consider all four areas if they are to help English learners succeed."

Johnson, J. F., Jr., Perez, L. G. and Uline, C. L. (2013). Teaching practices from America's best urban schools: A guide for school and classroom leaders. *Eye on Education.* http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED538917.

*From the ERIC abstract: "*Discover the teaching practices that make the biggest difference in student performance! This practical, research-based book gives principals, teachers, and school administrators a direct, inside look at instructional practices from top award-winning urban schools. The authors provide detailed examples and analyses of these practices, and successfully demystify the achievement of these schools. They offer practical guides to help educators apply these successful practices in their own schools. "Teaching Practices from America's Best Urban Schools" will be a valuable tool for any educator in both urban and non-urban schools-schools that serve diverse student populations, including English language learners and children from low-income families."

Li, N. (2013). Seeking best practices and meeting the needs of the English language learners: Using second language theories and integrating technology in teaching, *Journal of International Education Research, Vol 9*(3), 217-222. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1010923.

From the ERIC abstract: "A noticeable national trend in schools today is the rapid increase in the number of the English language learners. The widespread use of technology in classrooms is another trend today. In combining these two trends, this paper discusses the best practices that teachers can use in classrooms to work effectively with English language learners (ELLs) by integrating technology combined with second language theories. Specifically, the paper focuses on three aspects of the discussion. First, it provides the background information on the ELL school population and the growth. Second, it discusses four practices working with ELLs. These four practices are increasing comprehensible input, encouraging social collaboration, relating to the real world and providing supportive learning environments. Each is discussed with integration of technology combined with second language (L2) theories. Finally, the paper urges educators to acknowledge the two trends and see best instructional practices to meet the needs of the ELLs and all students."

Martínez, R. S., Harris, B., and McClain, M. B. (2014). Practices that promote English reading for English learners (Els). *Journal of Educational & Psychological Consultation, Vol 24*(2),128-148. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1030136.

From the ERIC abstract: "Schools are becoming increasingly diversified; however, training and professional development related to working with English language learners (ELs), especially in the area of English reading, is limited. In this article, we identify three "Big Ideas" of effective and collaborative practices that promote English reading achievement for EL students: (a) foster academic English at all stages of second-

language acquisition by explicitly teaching vocabulary, emphasizing cross-linguistic transfer strategies, and supporting ongoing oral language development; (b) adopt a schoolwide collaborative approach to conduct frequent formative reading assessments and use the data to drive instruction by providing accommodations that promote English reading; and (c) implement a variety of grouping strategies to deliver reading instruction within a welcoming and sensitive learning climate. In addition, we discuss how school professionals may proactively instruct ELs and collaborate within a multidisciplinary framework to improve the English reading ability of students who are simultaneously learning the English language."

- Article at United Federation of Teachers website. Fernandez, M. (2011). Helping ESL students in science class. *United Federation of Teachers*. Retrieved on May 27, 2016. http://www.uft.org/teacher-teacher/helping-esl-students-science-class.

- National Science Teachers Association Position Paper "Science for English Learners" at http://www.nsta.org/about/positions/ell.aspx.

QUESTION #2

- Links to three Texas migrant education websites: www.esc17.net/users/0210/docs/MEP_Additional_Links.pdf.

- Arkansas Migrant Education Program at http://www.migrant.k12.ar.us/.

- The Office of Migrant Education at the Colorado Department of Education website: https://www.cde.state.co.us/migrant federally funded under Title I, Part C of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. The Migrant Education Program (MEP) provides supplemental support to eligible migrant children and youth.

- Colorin! Colorado website http://www.colorincolorado.org/ A bilingual site for educators and families of English language learners. An article on migrant student practices can be found on the site at: http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/migrant-students-what-we-need-know-help-them-succeed

- Report at National Education Association (NEA) website: http://www.nea.org/home/40444.htm.

METHODS

Keywords and Search Strings Used in the Searches:

(English learners (ELs) best practices, effective EL programs, effective EL practices, newcomers, newcomer practices, newly arrived EL students, migrants).

Search of Databases and Websites
- Institute of Education Sciences (IES) website (http://www.ies.ed.gov) and IES sources: Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Program, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), National Center for Education Research (NCER), What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)
- ERIC database (www.eric.ed.gov)
- Google Scholar (scholar.google.com)
- Google (www.google.com)
- Bing (www.bing.com)

Criteria for Inclusion

REL Southwest selected resources that provide research on (1) various subgroups of ELs and (2) newly arrived ELs. When REL Southwest staff reviewed resources, we considered – among other things – three factors:
1. Date of Publication: The most current information (primarily published from 2011 to the present) is included.
2. Source and Funder of the Report/Brief/Article: Priority was given to publications written in relevant, peer-reviewed journals or reports or produced by well-known research organizations.
3. Methodology: sources include reported studies, literature reviews and policy reports.