
Thank you for your request to our REL Reference Desk regarding evidence-based information about reading curricula and instructional practices when working with English Learners. Ask A REL is a collaborative reference desk service provided by the ten 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.

The information below represents the most rigorous research available. Researchers consider the type of methodology and give priority to research reports that employ well described and thorough methods. The resources were also selected based on the date of the publication with a preference for research from the last ten years. Additional criteria for inclusion include the source and funder of the resource.

Question: *Are there any evidence-based reading curricula or evidence-based instructional practices that might be suitable for ELLs (ages 10-17) provided instruction in a sheltered class provided for a limited duration (i.e., 30-45 mins/day for an average of 55 days)?*

Search Process

Key words and search strings used in the search: *English learner AND reading curricula; new arrivals AND reading instruction; English learner AND adolescent literacy*

Search databases and websites:

1. ERIC: <http://www.eric.ed.gov/>
2. JSTOR: <http://www.jstor.org/action/showAdvancedSearch>
3. Google Scholar: www.google.com/scholar
4. Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Resources: <http://ies.ed.gov>
5. What Works Clearinghouse: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>

Sample Citations Retrieved:

Upper Elementary and Middle School

Carlo, M. S., August, D., McLaughlin, B., Snow, C. E., Dressler, C., Lippman, D. N., & White, C. E. (2004). Closing the gap: Addressing the vocabulary needs of English language learners in bilingual and mainstream classrooms. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 39, 188-215. doi: 10.1598/RRQ.39.2.3

Abstract/Summary: Gaps in reading performance between Anglo and Latino children are associated with gaps in vocabulary knowledge. An intervention was designed to enhance fifth

graders' academic vocabulary. The meanings of academically useful words were taught together with strategies for using information from context, from morphology, from knowledge about multiple meanings, and from cognates to infer word meaning. Among the principles underlying the intervention were that new words should be encountered in meaningful text, that native Spanish speakers should have access to the text's meaning through Spanish, that words should be encountered in varying contexts, and that word knowledge involves spelling, pronunciation, morphology, and syntax as well as depth of meaning. Fifth graders in the intervention group showed greater growth than the comparison group on knowledge of the words taught, on depth of vocabulary knowledge, on understanding multiple meanings, and on reading comprehension. The intervention effects were as large for the English-language learners (ELLs) as for the English-only speakers (EOs), though the ELLs scored lower on all pre- and posttest measures. The results show the feasibility of improving comprehension outcomes for students in mixed ELL-EO classes, by teaching word analysis and vocabulary learning strategies.

Cheung, A. C. & Slavin, R. E. (2012). Effective reading programs for Spanish-dominant English language learners (ELLs) in the elementary grades: A Synthesis of research. *Review of Educational Research*, 82, 351-295. doi: 10.3102/0034654312465472

Abstract/Summary: This review synthesizes research on English reading outcomes of all types of programs for Spanish-dominant English language learners (ELLs) in elementary schools. It is divided into two major sections. One focuses on studies of language of instruction and one on reading approaches for ELLs holding constant language of instruction. A total of 13 qualifying studies met the inclusion criteria for language of instruction. Though the overall findings indicate a positive effect (effect size = 0.21) in favor of bilingual education, the largest and longest term evaluations, including the only multiyear randomized evaluation of transitional bilingual education, did not find any differences in outcomes by the end of elementary school for children who were either taught in Spanish and transitioned to English or taught only in English. The review also identified whole-school and whole-class interventions with good evidence of effectiveness for ELLs, including Success for All, cooperative learning, Direct Instruction, and ELLA. Programs that use phonetic small group or one-to-one tutoring have also shown positive effects for struggling ELL readers. What is in common across the most promising interventions is their use of extensive professional development, coaching, and cooperative learning. The findings support a conclusion increasingly being made by researchers and policymakers concerned with optimal outcomes for ELLs and other language minority students: Quality of instruction is more important than language of instruction.

Denton, C. A., Anthony, J. L., Parker, R., & Hasbrouck, J. E. (2004). Effects of two tutoring programs on the English reading development of Spanish-English bilingual students. *The Elementary School Journal*, 104, 289-305. doi: 10.1086/499754

Abstract/Summary: Spanish-dominant bilingual students in grades 2-5 were tutored 3 times per week for 40 minutes over 10 weeks, using 2 English reading interventions. Tutoring took place from February through April of 1 school year. One, Read Well, combined systematic phonics instruction with practice in decodable text, and the other, a revised version of Read Naturally, consisted of repeated reading, with contextualized vocabulary and comprehension instruction. The progress of tutored students ($n = 51$) was compared to that of non-tutored classmates ($n = 42$) using subtests of the Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests-Revised. Students who received systematic phonics instruction made significant progress in word identification but not in word attack or passage comprehension. There were no significant effects for students in the repeated reading condition.

Reis, S. M., Eckert, R. D., McCoach, D. B., Jacobs, J. K., & Coyne, M. (2008). Using enrichment reading practices to increase reading fluency, comprehension, and attitudes. *The Journal of Educational Research, 101*, 299-315. doi:10.3200/JOER.101.5.299-315.

Abstract/Summary: The authors used a randomized design to investigate the effects of an enriched reading program, Schoolwide Enrichment Reading Model (SEM-R), with blocks of independent reading on oral reading fluency (ORF), reading comprehension, and attitudes toward reading for students in Grades 3-5. The authors used SEM-R in comparison with basal reading programs to investigate the addition of planned enrichment strategies and independent reading on students' reading achievement. Students and teachers were randomly assigned to either the SEM-R treatment with 1 hr of SEMR and 1 hr of basal instruction or to the control group with 2 hr of basal instruction. The authors found statistically significant differences favoring the SEM-R treatment group in ORF. These results suggest that an enriched reading program that challenges and engages students may produce higher ORF than a standard basal program.

Short, D. J., Echevarria, J., Richards-Tutor, C. (2011). Research on academic literacy development in sheltered instruction classrooms. *Language Teaching Research, 15*, 363-280.

Abstract/Summary: This article describes an extended program of research in sheltered instruction and the effects on the academic literacy development of English language learners. It also highlights the challenges of scaling up an instructional intervention. The intervention was the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model, an approach that teaches subject area curriculum to students learning through a second language using techniques that make the content material accessible and also help develop the students' second language skills. Three successive studies looked at teacher change over time and student achievement on standardized

assessments and researcher-developed measures. Results of the three studies reveal that students with teachers who were trained in the SIOP Model of sheltered instruction and implemented it with fidelity performed significantly better on assessments of academic language and literacy than students with teachers who were not trained in the model. The article offers guidance for strengthening professional development for teachers so the quality of instruction they deliver to English language learners improves and the students strengthen their English language and academic outcomes.

Slavin, R. E., & Cheung, A. (2003). *Effective reading programs for English language learners: A Best-evidence synthesis* (Report No. 66). Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University. Retrieved from <http://www.csos.jhu.edu/crespar/techReports/Report66.pdf>

Abstract/Summary: This article reviews experimental studies of reading programs for English language learners, focusing both on comparisons of bilingual and English-only programs and on specific, replicable models that have been evaluated with English language learners. The review method is best-evidence synthesis, which uses a systematic literature search, quantification of outcomes as effect sizes, and extensive discussion of individual studies that meet inclusion standards. The review concludes that while the number of high quality studies is small, existing evidence favors bilingual approaches, especially paired bilingual strategies that teach reading in the native language and English at the same time. Whether taught in their native language or English, English language learners have been found to benefit from instruction in comprehensive reform programs using systematic phonics, one-to-one or small group tutoring programs, cooperative learning programs, and programs emphasizing extensive reading. Research using longitudinal, randomized designs is needed to understand how best to ensure reading success for all English language learners.

Slavin, R. E. & Cheung, A. (2005). A synthesis of research on language of reading instruction for English language learners. *Review of Educational Research*, 75, 247-284. doi: 10.3102/00346543075002247

Abstract/Summary: This article reviews experimental studies comparing bilingual and English-only reading programs for English language learners. The review method is best-evidence synthesis, which uses a systematic literature search, quantification of outcomes as effect sizes, and extensive discussion of individual studies that meet inclusion standards. A total of 17 studies met the inclusion standards. Among 13 studies focusing on elementary reading for Spanish-dominant students, 9 favored bilingual approaches on English reading measures, and 4 found no differences, for a median effect size of +0.45. Weighted by sample size, an effect size of +0.33 was computed, which is significantly different from zero (p less than 0.05). One of two studies of heritage languages (French and Choctaw) and two secondary studies favored bilingual

approaches. The review concludes that although the number of high-quality studies is small, existing evidence favors bilingual approaches, especially paired bilingual strategies that teach reading in the native language and English at different times each day. However, further research using longitudinal, randomized designs is needed to determine how best to ensure reading success for all English language learners.

Primary Grades

Kamps, D., Abbott, M., Greenwood, C., Arreaga-Mayer, C., Wills, H., Longstaff, J., Culpepper, M., & Walton, C. (2007). Use of evidence-based, small-group reading instruction for English language learners in elementary grades: Secondary-tier intervention. *Learning Disability Quarterly, 30*, 153-168. doi: 10.2307/30035561

Abstract/Summary: This experimental/comparison study of secondary-level, small-group instruction included 318 first- and second-grade students (170 ELL and 148 English-only) from six elementary schools. All schools served high numbers of ELL students with varying school SES in urban and suburban communities. Experimental schools implemented a three-tier model of intervention. In addition to primary-tier reading instruction, the second-tier, small-group experimental interventions included use of (a) evidence-based direct instruction reading curricula that explicitly targeted skills such as phonological/phonemic awareness, letter-sound recognition, alphabetic decoding, fluency building and comprehension skills; and (b) small groups of 3 to 6 students. Students at comparison schools were not exposed to a three-tier reading program but received (a) an ESL intervention using balanced literacy instruction with a focus on word study, group and individual story reading, and writing activities; and (b) small groups of 6 to 15 students. The ESL/balanced literacy intervention was generally in addition to primary reading instruction. Results indicated generally higher gains for ELL students enrolled in direct instruction interventions. Implications for research and practice are discussed.

Linan-Thompson, S., Vaughn, S., Hickman-Davis, P., & Kouzekanani, K. (2003). Effectiveness of supplemental reading instruction for second-grade English language learners with reading difficulties. *The Elementary School Journal, 221-238*. doi: 10.1086/499724

Abstract/Summary: The effectiveness of an intervention that involved both English as a second language strategies and effective reading practices (based on research with monolingual English speakers) for English language (EL) learners at risk for reading problems and learning to read in English is described. 26 second-grade students who were both EL learners and at risk for reading difficulties were identified and provided an intensive reading intervention in English. Students received 13 weeks (58 sessions) of supplemental reading instruction daily for 30 minutes per day

individually or in groups of 2 or 3. Students' oral reading fluency, phoneme segmentation fluency, nonsense word reading, and reading comprehension were assessed prior to, immediately after, and on 2 subsequent occasions following intervention (4 weeks and 4 months). Students made significant gains from pre- to posttest on the outcome measures: word attack, passage comprehension, phoneme segmentation fluency, and oral reading fluency. The largest standardized mean differences in scores at posttest were for passage comprehension and oral reading fluency. Scores at 4-week follow-up increased significantly for word attack, passage comprehension, and phoneme segmentation fluency. Long-term follow-up (over 4 months) indicated significant gains for oral reading fluency and significant losses for phoneme segmentation fluency.

Vaughn, S., Mathes, P. G., Linan-Thompson, S., & Francis, D. J. (2005). Teaching English language learners at risk for reading disabilities to read: Putting research into practice. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 20*, 58-67. doi:10.1234/12345678

Abstract/Summary: The purpose of this article is to describe features of interventions that are empirically validated for use with first-grade students at risk for reading disabilities who are English language learners (ELLs) and whose home language is Spanish. The empirical evidence supporting these interventions is summarized. Interventions for improving oral language and reading abilities with struggling readers who are ELLs taught in either Spanish or English are described as a means to assist school districts and teachers in defining and implementing effective interventions for ELLs at risk for reading difficulties. The interventions described may be useful to educators seeking information about Response to Intervention as a means of identifying ELLs who require services for learning disabilities.

Referrals

Organizations:

- TESOL International Association: <http://www.tesol.org/>
- The National Association for Bilingual Education: <http://www.nabe.org>
- Center for Adult English Language Acquisition: <http://www.cal.org/cae>
- Center for Applied Linguistics: <http://www.cal.org/index.html>
- Colorín Colorado: www.colorincolorado.org

Federally Funded Resources:

- Institute of Education Sciences (IES), public search engine available at: <http://ies.ed.gov/pubsearch/>
- What Works Clearinghouse: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>
- Office of English Language Acquisition: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/index.html>
- National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition: <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu>
- Center for Applied Linguistics, Development of Literacy in Spanish Speakers: <http://www.cal.org/delss/>
- Center on Instruction: <http://www.centeroninstructon.org>

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