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## Newsletters

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## Ensuring Academic Success for English Learners

By Laurie Olsen

Almost half of California students come from non-English speaking backgrounds. Those who are not yet proficient in English are called English Learners (ELs). Numbering close to 1.8 million, ELs comprise almost a fourth of California's K-12 enrollment. English learners face the challenge of mastering a new language, face barriers to accessing the curriculum, and persistently end up in the lowest levels of academic achievement.

Since passage of the federal No Child Left Behind Act, English learners have become an increasing focus of concern as educators struggle to implement instructional approaches and programs to ensure achievement for these students. In most cases, educators are doing so without sufficient knowledge of language development, without access to research on effective practices, and in a climate without consensus about the role of schools in EL education. The purpose of this essay is to provide an overview of research and knowledge that educators can use to create schools in which English learners thrive and achieve at high levels.

### How Are English Learners Faring in School?

While some English learners move quickly to English fluency and academic mastery at all grade levels, many do not. Most English learners make academic progress in the primary grades, but around fourth grade, when academic and cognitive demands require higher levels of comprehension and engagement with text, the patterns change. Many struggle to learn academic English and to access grade-level curriculum which is taught, in most cases, in a language they have not yet mastered. Despite major policy efforts to impact EL achievement, the gap between English learners and English-fluent students has remained virtually constant in the past decade.

English learners are more likely than their English-fluent peers to drop out of high school. Although there are no direct measures of dropout rates by language status, dropout rates for Hispanics provide a reasonable indicator because two-thirds of all Hispanic students, and more than two-thirds of all language minorities, are Spanish-speaking. Nationally, Hispanic students are twice as likely to drop out of high school than White, non-Hispanic students. In California, beginning in 2006, students must pass the California

High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) to earn a high school diploma, even if all other requirements for the diploma have been fulfilled. At the end of the eleventh grade, only 51% of English learners in the senior class of 2006 met CAHSEE requirements, compared to 78% of all students.

### What Do English Learners Need to Succeed in School?

Over the past three decades, a solid body of research has been amassed on second language acquisition, bilingual brain development, effective programs, and "best practices" in instructional strategies. This research provides guidance to schools seeking to create powerful programs for English learners.

The first step in creating an effective program is knowing who the students are and looking beyond the single label "English learner" to understand the very different needs of the students who

arrive at the schoolhouse door. Beyond the shared challenge of an English language barrier, English learners differ in the languages they speak and the degree of fluency in English, in cultures they come from and in the social status they hold, in the type of prior schooling they have had as well as in the experiences of coming to the United States. Particularly relevant "types" include: under-schooled students, newly-arrived highly educated adolescents, and long-term English learners who have been in U.S. schools for six years or more.

As a result of this diversity, no single EL program model fits all populations and contexts. Instead, schools need to craft the particular set of program components and support services that are needed for the specific population of English learners enrolled, based on available resources, capacity, and educational goals. Effective programs begin with understanding their English learner students. A school with large numbers, for example, of newly-arrived students will need to provide orientation and transition services; whereas a school that is primarily serving students who have been in the United States for a long time would not need a newcomer program, but would likely need to emphasize engaging curriculum and individualized interventions.

While there is no single program model that fits all EL

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populations and local contexts, all English learners need a cognitively complex, coherent, well-articulated and meaningful standards-based curriculum taught in a comprehensible manner, and a program that will enable them to learn English quickly enough and fluently enough to participate fully in grade-level academic curriculum.

A comprehensive system of schooling for ELs includes the following nine elements:

### 1. High Quality and Accessible Preschool Education

In this standards-driven era, there is increasing pressure for children to enter kindergarten with a strong foundation for school success. High quality preschool provides such a foundation and can reduce disparities and longstanding achievement gaps among groups of students.

For English learners, these programs must be culturally and linguistically responsive and deliver a developmentally appropriate and language-rich curriculum as the basis for later literacy and successful academic learning. Conceptual language is best developed in the child's home language. Effective early childhood education programs support and build upon a child's home language, and provide intentional support and access to opportunities to learn in both the home language and in English.

While the educational involvement of families is important in children's lives throughout their schooling years, in the early years of development, family culture, home language and family engagement in schooling are absolutely central for healthy development. Young children learn best in a safe, affirming preschool environment that respects and integrates the home culture and language, recognizes the key role of a child's culture and language to her development, and supports young children in bridging across and integrating home and school contexts.

### 2. Supports for Newcomers to Meet Needs of Transition

Many English learners are immigrants. They enroll in U.S. schools where the rules of behavior, expectations, types of activities, and relationships are foreign. English learners, walking into this culture for the first time, need support as they learn the rules of their new land. In the first year, newcomers would benefit from an array of services to address the culture shock and transitional issues that will impact their participation and success in school. Transition services should include:

- Comprehensive home language and English assessments, evaluations of prior educational backgrounds, and health screening with referrals to linguistically accessible and culturally appropriate services to meet the needs of students and families.
- A welcoming orientation system and materials designed for positive integration into the school system.

- Individualized placement and pacing in a curriculum that allows for entry at various levels, regardless of age, and for entry at any point in the school year, with the flexibility to move into the regular semester curriculum when ready.

- Special intensive literacy and accelerated programs for under-schooled immigrants who arrive with large gaps in their prior education.

- Culturally appropriate and linguistically accessible counseling and support services related to culture shock, Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome, and the stresses of family separation and integration.

To support a smooth transition, assessment, placement, referral, and orientation services can be centralized for an entire district or be housed in high impact schools.

### 3. A Comprehensive Program of English Language Development

By definition, English learners need to learn English and are not able to access the English-taught curriculum without supports. In the words of the landmark *Lau v. Nichols* Supreme Court decision: "There is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbook, teachers and curriculum, for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education."

In 2006, the National Literacy Panel on Language Minority Children and Youth released a long-awaited comprehensive synthesis of research on literacy attainment. It concluded that approaches to reading and literacy that are effective with English-fluent students are *not sufficient* for teaching language minority students to read and write proficiently in English, and that those approaches must be adjusted to have maximum benefit for language-minority students.

English learners need a comprehensive, dedicated and standards-aligned English Language Development (ELD) curriculum, strategies to promote English skills throughout the academic curriculum, and intentionally designed opportunities to use English with their peers for social and academic purposes.

A quality program:

*Actively develops all domains of language.*

Students need structured opportunities to learn, engage, and use English in all four domains (reading, writing, listening, speaking). A strong foundation and development in each domain strengthens the others. Students at lower levels of fluency particularly need a very strong program of oral language development.

*Addresses varying levels of English fluency.*

English learners vary in their mastery of English. Some have had no prior exposure to English. The sounds, words and

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communicative formats of English are truly foreign to them. Others may have been born in the United States, exposed to English from an early age through siblings and television, and have some fluency. All are in the process of learning the language. Along the continuum from non-English proficiency to fully-English-proficient, students have different needs. Quality ELD differentiates curriculum and instruction by the English fluency level of the student, and provides students with the specific skill development and scaffolding needed to move to the next level of English fluency.

*Develops age-appropriate and context-appropriate language, including an emphasis on academic English.*

Language fluency is defined by the purposes of communication and the context in which language is used. What is considered English fluency for a five-year-old on the playground is different from the English fluency expected of a teenager in a history debate. ELD should be geared towards the grade and age level of the student, and include an emphasis on academic English as well as social language. Academic English is the vocabulary of specific academic disciplines, and the rhetorical processes of academic discourse—how things are organized, discussed, and written about in those disciplines. Students cannot succeed in academic curriculum unless teachers integrate English Language Development strategies for reading, writing, vocabulary, and discourse into the teaching of academic content. To do this, teachers must be knowledgeable about the processes and practices of second language development. Teachers need to identify the language demands of the content they are teaching, identify key vocabulary, define the kind of reading or writing skills or listening and speaking tasks that will be required, and then systematically teach that academic language.

*Includes opportunities for English learners to interact with native-English-speaking peers.*

English learners need to interact regularly with students and teachers who are good English-language role models, so they hear the language used in daily life. If students have to use English to work together for authentic learning tasks (as well as social interactions) they become more motivated to learn the language. Attention must be paid both to the need to group students by language fluency for targeted instruction, and to create time and mechanisms through which ELs interact with English-fluent peers.

*Creates a supportive learning environment for language learning.*

A safe, effective environment in classrooms and on the school campus enables English learners to take risks to use and develop their new language. English learners are commonly misunderstood, laughed at, or not responded to because they speak

English with an accent or incorrectly. These experiences exert a powerful influence on how well and how quickly students learn English. Teachers need to establish norms of inclusion and respect in the classroom, and use instructional strategies that enable an EL to participate. For example, extended wait time after asking a question gives ELs an opportunity to find the words and construct their response. Cooperative learning strategies support positive social interactions, a sense of community in the classroom, and promote English use, as students communicate with each other to complete their assignments.

*Recognizes the role of primary-language development.*

Literacy skills are not language specific; they can be learned in one language and transferred to another language, drawing upon a common cognitive base. English learners enroll in schools with a home language that should be developed and built upon as a foundation for literacy in English. It is easier and more efficient to learn to read and write in one's strongest language because the oral foundation and vocabulary already exist.

The National Literacy Panel on Language Minority Children and Youth concluded that oral proficiency and literacy in the first language facilitates literacy development in English:

*“The research indicates that instructional programs work when they provide opportunities for students to develop proficiency in their first language. Studies that compare bilingual instruction with English-Only instruction demonstrate that language minority students instructed in their native language as well as in English perform better, on average, on measures of English reading proficiency than language minority students instructed only in English.”*

#### **4. A Program Providing Full Access to Challenging Curriculum**

In addition to a comprehensive program of English language development, schools need to provide English learners with a well-articulated and age-appropriate curriculum that is cognitively complex, coherent, and challenging.

Typically, schools select from among the following options for providing access to the core academic curriculum: primary language instruction, Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) with supplemental primary language support, SDAIE without primary language support, or dual immersion. The appropriateness and effectiveness of approach is related to the English fluency of the students being served, the composition of students in a particular school, and the capacity of the school to deliver a quality program of instruction.

The composition, flow, concentration, and number of English

***Students cannot succeed in academic curriculum unless teachers integrate English Language Development strategies for reading, writing, vocabulary, and discourse into (their) academic content.***

learners differ from school to school and year to year. Designing an appropriate program and set of services requires assessing the needs of students who enroll and taking into consideration the configuration of the EL enrollment to determine the appropriate student grouping, language of instruction, structures, and use of resources. For example, a school with a large Spanish-speaking population will be able to consider providing primary language instruction, but a school with small numbers of many different language groups would not.

English learners at lower levels of English fluency cannot understand or access an academic curriculum taught only in English. For these students, instruction in their home language provides the most direct access. A “simultaneous” program combining ELD with academic content classes in the student’s primary language is the most efficient and direct means of ensuring access to high-level academic content.

Although a great deal of controversy exists about the use of primary-language instruction, a number of recent reviews of research studies based on rigorous, randomized experiments have found that English learners who received bilingual education performed at least as well, and often better, on standardized tests in English than similar children taught in English-only programs.

Many educators and parents elect all-English instruction because they feel urgency about helping their students develop English proficiency as quickly as possible. They mistakenly equate *more time* in English with *faster progress* in English. Academic outcomes are not directly correlated with amount of time spent in English instruction; beyond a threshold, there is no added benefit. Access to the curriculum through home language instruction for students at lower levels of English proficiency, if accompanied by a strong ELD program, does not compromise the rate of progress towards English proficiency.

As students become increasingly English-fluent, they are more able to understand and participate in an English-taught curriculum, but still need significant adaptations of instructional approach. For these students, SDAIE with home language support is effective (e.g., primary-language assistance, tutors, reference materials, texts).

Schools that serve primarily ELs at the higher end of English fluency, with multiple language groups, with small numbers of ELs, or lack of teachers to provide primary-language instruction, can usually mount a program of SDAIE instruction with primary-language supports. Programs without the capacity or will to provide any primary-language instruction or support essentially offer a “sequential” program that immerses English learners in English academic instruction from the start. Because it takes four to seven years until students are sufficiently fluent to gain full access to English-taught curriculum, careful monitoring and accelerated interventions are needed to avoid the accumulation of academic

deficits in the years before students have gained English fluency.

The success of any program is correlated with consistency and depth of implementation. A recent evaluation of California’s Proposition 227 (which severely limited bilingual education) found that a major factor impacting English learner achievement was the degree of schoolwide focus on English learners, and shared priorities related to delivering a consistent program. Too often, English learners are bounced from program to program each year, experiencing fragmented and inconsistent schooling. For academic success, they need a coherent and well-articulated program with consistency in approach across the school day and from year to year.

For an English learner to have full access to the core curriculum, ALL courses must be available and designed to address the language needs of this group. In secondary schools, this includes college preparatory and advanced level classes. Sharing bilingual teachers across campuses, using technology to access on-line resources in other languages, providing college-age tutors, and ensuring high-level home language resource materials, are also useful strategies.

### 5. High Quality Instruction and Materials

The quality of instruction is a major determinant of whether English learners actually access and learn the curriculum. This is true whether the instruction is in primary language or in a second language, but it is particularly so for ELs instructed in English.

English learners who have a threshold level and good foundation of English can access grade-level curriculum taught in English if teachers effectively use a repertoire of SDAIE instructional scaffolding strategies, and have resource materials and instructional support in the home language that students can use to assist in comprehension. SDAIE strategies are structured, paced, and delivered

based upon the specific English fluency levels of students. What might be sufficient to enable a fully proficient English-speaking student to understand a new idea may not provide the English learner with enough exposure, scaffolding, time, or explicit language development to succeed.

SDAIE strategies:

*Systematically access and activate students’ prior knowledge.*

All students learn through making connections between what they already know and the new experiences, perspectives, and information they encounter. Making connections to students’ lives is a major component of effective instruction that helps students develop a schema of how ideas fit together. This purposeful bridging of the familiar to the unfamiliar improves both comprehension and engagement in learning.

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*Provide explicit instruction in meta-cognitive tasks.*

Student achievement is facilitated when students understand how to approach new content and tasks. Instruction in learning is particularly important for English learners for whom the new language and the cultural context are “foreign.” Students who learn to consciously monitor their own comprehension and who have a tool kit of strategies to draw upon when comprehension is a problem, do better than students who do not have those meta-cognitive skills.

*Offer visual and context clues.*

Providing visual and context clues, graphic representations for organizing ideas, making physical models, using manipulatives, and modeling all help students who are challenged by the linguistic demands of the academic content. Another form of helping students access the content is to provide linguistic clues through paraphrasing and amplification.

SDAIE strategies are most effective when students are grouped so that instruction can be aimed towards specific levels of English fluency, providing the level of scaffolding and type of academic language development that English learners require.

Good instruction is bolstered by appropriate standards-aligned instructional resources. For English learners, texts in English need to be designed with the graphics, linguistic accessibility, and formats to enable students to engage with text in a language they have not yet mastered. In addition, home language resource materials, academic texts, and other instructional resources are needed for students studying academic content and developing literacy to advanced levels in that language. Access to school libraries, science laboratories and equipment, and technology are important to student success. Generally, English learners do not have access to a wide range of technology and print resources outside of school, and depend upon the school as the source of access. The quality and scope of available materials is critical.

## **6. Inclusive and Affirming School Climate**

The context and climate of schooling impacts outcomes for students in many ways. When students feel they do not belong, or feel unsafe, it is difficult to learn. English learners face language and cultural barriers to participation in schools, and are often on the margins of activities. A positive school environment is consistently cited in the research as a mark of effective schools for ELs.

In a culturally inclusive environment, teachers recognize that how students learn—and the knowledge base and language they bring to school—is a reflection of his or her culture. The role of a teacher is to create the conditions in which students can maximally draw upon their own cultural resources, where they feel respected and that it is safe to participate. In this environment, teachers treat all students equitably, students’ home languages and cultures are

incorporated into the curriculum, parents actively participate in their children’s education, and students are supported to be active seekers and producers of knowledge.

An inclusive and affirming school environment goes beyond the classroom: schools actively impart the value of diversity through mission and values statements; by creating a faculty that reflects the communities of the students; through activities that bring students together across differences; by being aware of how location on campus communicates who is on the margin and who is not; and establishing clear, bottom-line, zero-tolerance policies about harassment, prejudiced remarks, and discrimination.

## **7. Valid, Comprehensive, and Useful Assessments**

High quality instruction and public accountability both rely upon having valid assessments that measure how students are doing. The most effective schools for English learners build and

implement valid and comprehensive assessment systems designed to promote reflective practice and data-driven planning in order to improve academic, linguistic and socio-cultural outcomes for English learners.

This requires that administrators and teachers understand the assessment measures and how valid and reliable they are for English learners, that they have timely access to clean data, and are supported with the training and back-up to analyze and make sense of the data. The most effective schools make data-based inquiry a regular part of professional development, professional dialogue, and planning—and administrators commit the time and resources to make that possible.

## **8. Strong Family and Community Partnerships**

Schools in which English learners achieve to high standards are typically characterized by active parent and community engagement, supported with programs that build leadership capacity and that draw upon community funds of knowledge to inform, support, and enhance teaching and learning for English learners; parents and community members are active in the classroom, and help teachers bridge and connect to community resources for learning.

English learner parents face language, cultural, and economic barriers to such involvement. Many are unaware of the expectations and ways of doing things in U.S. schools. Many do not have a strong educational background in their own lives. Many parents work long hours and several jobs, making participation in school difficult. Lack of transportation and lack of translators add to these challenges.

Schools need to intentionally create inclusive, welcoming and supportive conditions for English learner families, address barriers to engagement, embrace two-way partnerships in which power is shared related to shaping the education of students, and

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ensure that parents are given the information needed to monitor their children's schooling and advocate effectively.

### 9. Schools Structured to Meet the Particular Needs of English Learners

English learners face challenges to success in school related to their life circumstances—challenges that can be addressed by structuring schools in new ways.

One challenge is academic. In fact, English learners face a double academic challenge: not only do they need to master grade-level academic curriculum like their English-fluent peers, they need to master English. For the 90% of English learners in California who are not receiving content instruction in their home language, they struggle to access and master the academic content in a language they do not understand. As a result, the majority amass academic gaps that need to be overcome before the fixed deadline of high school graduation.

The structure of U.S. schools can present a problem for English learners; most are based on a fairly rigid age-grade system, defined as a 12-year program after kindergarten, with the expectation that students will graduate at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> year. English learners—particularly those who enter as newcomers in adolescence—often need more time than they are granted: time to master English; time to overcome academic gaps; time to master the curriculum. Schools can structure innovative ways to create extra time and enhance the opportunity for English learners to successfully complete their K-12 education. Strategies for increasing time in the system include the use of extended day programs, summer intensive programs, fifth or sixth year of high school options, night school, and year-round enrollment.

In secondary schools, longer blocks of time (block scheduling) allow teachers to see fewer students each day for longer periods of time, facilitating stronger relationships between students and teachers, and more possibility of the interactive, project-based and intensive teaching that is most effective with ELs. Smaller learning communities or small autonomous schools allow for a degree of personalization that can benefit English learners in becoming part of the school community.

Another challenge is social. Many English learners are part of trans-national families, moving back and forth across national borders as family and economic needs dictate, spending time in the schooling systems of both nations. This means that many English learners reside in two cultures, two distinct language communities, and two different national schooling systems. While this can be an enriching experience, it can also exact a high academic price. If the school systems in both nations fail to support the development of biliteracy and biculturalism, or to align and coordinate curriculum, the schooling experience in one nation becomes detrimental to

successful achievement and participation in the other. Moreover, travel and migration do not necessarily coincide with the semester schedules of U.S. schools. In elementary schools, this can result in missed curriculum and gaps in academic skills and knowledge. In secondary schools, it also means failure to amass needed credits towards graduation.

Effective strategies include adjusting the yearly school calendar to accommodate migration patterns, independent study options, curriculum kits that can be used to complete units, and transcript and curriculum alignment across nations.

### Policies Needed to Facilitate English Learner Success

A sufficient knowledge base exists for how to create, implement, and deliver effective schooling for English learners. The greatest challenge is how to make that knowledge base known, and how to support educators in implementing what is known to be effective. Many schools that could and should be addressing the needs of ELs have been significantly undermined by insufficient resources, unprepared teachers, ignorance or lack of attention to the research on effective models, political battles over the education of immigrants and English learners, and lack of will. These are issues of policy.

The success of English learners in California schools requires a commitment of leadership, political will, and district and state level action to address the following four policy goals:

#### **Invest in building a qualified educator workforce.**

The knowledge and skill required for teachers to implement the curriculum, instruction, and learning environments discussed in this paper are significant. Teachers *need* to be well prepared to provide instruction that reflects an understanding of second language development, to integrate language development and content instruction, to teach in ways that create connection across diverse cultures and languages, and to be able to communicate with students and engage with students' families.

Policies are needed that provide the leadership, resources, and facilitative supports to mount high quality professional development. Effective professional development builds communities of practice, is long-term and site-based, and is built in to the daily life of schools. It focuses on the skills, understanding, and instructional strategies that teachers need to effectively teach English learners. It includes workshops, readings, and presentations to deepen content knowledge; opportunities for application, mentoring, and classroom coaching; peer observation; ongoing participation in learning communities; classroom demonstrations; teacher inquiry and reflection; self-assessment; and hands-on planning.

Administrators need coaching, leadership development, and learning community networks in order to be able to systematically,

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efficiently, and pro-actively lead their schools toward developing the structures, policies, programs, instruction, support services, and climate that are needed for English learner success.

### **Build a meaningful accountability system for English learners.**

The past decade has seen major reforms to build accountability systems that will ensure all students have educational access. Strong content standards explicate what students should learn at each grade level. Data-driven accountability has focused educators powerfully on achievement gaps and a push towards annual progress in closing those gaps. California needs a valid assessment that can inform parents, students, teachers, and community about what English learners know and can do.

For English learners, tests of academic achievement in English are currently inadequate. The creation of primary-language achievement tests in the major languages of the state are needed for students who cannot be reliably assessed in English. Linguistic modifications of achievement tests in English are needed to reduce linguistic complexity and increase the opportunities for English learners to demonstrate what they know.

Neither students nor schools should be penalized for the failures of English learners to demonstrate academic achievement on tests in English that are inadequate. The accountability system should include measures of inputs that can assess whether students have been provided the opportunity, conditions, and supports to learn material they are expected to learn.

### **Assure that educators have the materials they need to deliver high quality English Language Development.**

Policymakers, educators, the courts, parents, and students are in virtually unanimous agreement that schools need strong effective programs to help students learn English. The state's English Language Development Standards are still not widely known or implemented, and there is confusion in schools and in policy circles about whether ELs need a specific curriculum and set of materials to learn English. In many classrooms, teachers do not have English Language Development materials. A recent study found that across the grade levels, teachers identified the need for better ELD materials as a top priority. Investment in professional development institutes to support teachers in aligning teaching to the standards and using appropriate English Language Development materials would affirm and support stronger ELD practice.

### **Demonstrate new models of successful schools for English learners.**

Research has identified many areas of best practices in EL education, but there are few schools that comprehensively and coherently demonstrate the full complement of components needed for English learners to make accelerated progress towards English proficiency and achieve to high levels. Such models are needed to inform program and school design, and to support professional development of administrators and teachers in a laboratory setting.

## **Conclusion**

There is no time to waste. Ensuring the academic success of the state's burgeoning population of English learners will not only improve the lives of these students, but will help ensure the economic and social welfare of the state.

*Dr. Laurie Olsen is the Executive Director of California Tomorrow, a non-profit research and technical assistance organization committed to building a fair and inclusive multicultural society. Her career spans three decades of work throughout the nation as a researcher, writer, speaker, advocate, and provider of professional development and technical assistance to communities and educators on creating equitable, high achieving schools that meet the needs of English learners, immigrants, and language/cultural minority communities—preschool through higher education. Her dozens of books, videos, and articles include the award winning Made in America: Immigrants in U.S. Schools, "We Speak America," and a series of publications for equity-centered school reform. She is currently providing technical assistance and leadership training on issues related to small schools and English learners statewide. Dr. Olsen holds a Ph.D. in Social and Cultural Studies in Education from U.C. Berkeley.*

## **Further Reading**

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# Call for Proposals: UC LMRI Individual and Dissertation Grants

**Deadline: October 1, 2006**

## Individual Grants:

\* For UC Researchers \* One-year awards up to \$25,000

## Dissertation Grants:

\* For UC Graduate Students \* One-year awards up to \$15,000

Funding priority is given to proposals focusing on biliteracy, educational achievement, and California. For more information visit: <http://www.lmri.ucsb.edu/research/lmri-grants/call.php>

# Open Call for Papers: UC LMRI and ASU College of Education Conference

**Conference Dates: May 3-5, 2007 • Submission Deadline: December 1, 2006**

The University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute (UC LMRI) and the Arizona State University Linguistic Minority Research Initiative (ASU LMRI) of the Mary Lou Fulton College of Education announce a Call for Papers on the topic of *“Immigrants, Education, and Language.”*

More than 10 million school children in the United States are first or second generation immigrants. One of the traditional functions of U.S. public schools has been to help prepare immigrants for successful integration into American society. This not only includes teaching them English, but also providing academic and social supports to meet the increasingly high standards for subject matter competency, high school graduation, and college access. Yet the achievement of immigrant students, even those who have mastered English, lags behind those of other students

UC LMRI and ASU LMRI are accepting papers addressing important issues of policy and practice concerning the education of immigrant students, with a focus on language to be presented in Phoenix, Arizona at the 20th Annual Conference. Papers may address such questions as:

- What are the educational challenges in meeting the needs of immigrant students?
- To what extent are those needs related to language versus other factors?
- What educational practices are most effective in meeting those needs?
- What skills and competencies do teachers need to successfully educate these students?
- What educational policies are needed to promote effective practices?

For more information visit: [http://www.lmri.ucsb.edu/events/07\\_conf/](http://www.lmri.ucsb.edu/events/07_conf/)

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### 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.

Complete copies 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 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.

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