

## Attending to the Needs of Long-Term English Learners at the Secondary Level

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## Agenda

- I. Who are long-term English Language Learners\* (LTELLs)?
- II. What type of programming meets the needs of this population?
- III. Which strategies are most effective for LTELLs?

## Defining Characteristics of LTELLs

- Students who have attended U.S. schools for 7 years or more and qualify for language support services (i.e. bilingual education or ESL)
- Strong oral bilingualism for social purposes, limited academic literacy skills
  - Different needs from new arrivals
- Very limited awareness about this population:
  - Few, if any, educational programs exist for them

## LTELLs by Grade in New York City, 2007-2008

*Source: NYCDOE, 2008*

Grade	Number	% of LTELLs
7	2,839	32.5
8	2,365	28.6
9	4,120	29.8
10	3,411	25.6
11	1,825	24.4
12	2,270	35.4

## Study Overview

- Research Questions:
  - What are the characteristics and educational needs of Long-Term English Language Learners in New York City high schools?
  - What, if any, are the benefits of secondary programming focused on biliteracy development and explicit academic literacy instruction for Long-Term English Language Learners?
- Participants
- School Sites

## Study Methodology

- Quasi-Experimental Design
- Pre- and Post-Test Evaluation
  - ALLD Reading Comprehension (Academic Language & Literacy Diagnostic)
  - NYSESLAT (NY State English as a Second Language Achievement Test)
  - Holistic Writing Assessment (also includes mid-point)
- Classroom observations
- Interviews with students, teachers, and administrators
- Demographic surveys
- Document analyses

## Three Groups of LTELLs

- 1) **Transnational Students:** Those who move back and forth between the U.S. and their family's country of origin (though primarily U.S.-educated)
- 2) **Inconsistent U.S. Schooling:** Students who – while attending U.S. schools – have moved in and out of bilingual education, ESL, and mainstream classrooms with no language support programming.
- 3) **Consistent Subtractive Schooling:** Students who attended either ESL or 'weak' bilingual programs that failed to build upon their native language skills and develop literacy in that language.

## Student Profile: “Mateo”

- US-born, whose parents are from Mexico. He had one year of bilingual education, and ESL the remaining years. He reports that he prefers reading and writing in English because, as he explains, he has had little experience learning Spanish in school (except in his Spanish class this year).
- ALLD English Pre-Test Results:
  - Reads 3 grades below level, currently reading at a Grade 6 (middle) level
- ALLD Spanish Pre-Test Results:
  - Reads 7 grades below level, currently reading at a Grade 2 (low) level

ESL

9/16/08

In middle school I thought that highschool was going to be very different. Highschool is similar to middle school because it almost have the same lessons. Also because it challenges you to pass. Also people help each other if they are stuck.

I'm excited about highschool is to meet new people. Maybe learn some more. Have new teachers, have new classes. Have a Diploma from high school. Get a good grade for what I do.

I'm anxious about passing highschool and go maybe to college. Also to get a good work out of it. Move ~~to a better place~~ to a better place to work and use the education from high school.

What I'm fearful about is not graduate from highschool. Staying there and trying and trying again. Probably I ~~won't~~ won't never get out of high school.

19 de Septiembre

Per. 4

Lo que yo creo que va ser igual es que los estudiantes se van a ayudar. Los Maestros van a ayudar si estamos atorados en algo. Tambien los castigos van a ser lo mismo. Como detenciones y suspensiones.

## Student Profile: "Yesenia"

- Studied one year in Mexico, and received inconsistent schooling at the elementary level. She had some bilingual schooling, but since 3<sup>rd</sup> grade has been in ESL only. She reports that she prefers reading and writing in English, and that she struggles with Spanish literacy as she hasn't had much opportunity to develop her Spanish in school.
- ALLD English Pre-Test Results:
  - Reads 5 grades below level, currently reading at a Grade 4 (middle) level
- ALLD Spanish Pre-Test Results:
  - Reads 3 grades below level, currently reading at a Grade 6 (middle) level

Hi, my name is Y. [redacted]  
And I'm going to talk about my  
experiences in middle school. My school  
use to be. Ms 22 in middle school  
in 167 st and high school. Now I  
am proud of myself being in high  
school. I am proud because it make  
me think that I can do it and pass  
to college.

[redacted] is so different  
from my middle school because  
in middle we had to do lines to go  
to each class, and in high school  
we are responsible to get in class.  
The similar from my middle school  
is that we had I-2 and H-2 it is

how the school principal know who  
was absent and who wasn't.

In conclusion what I am  
Anxious and fear about is the region  
test and passing to college because  
for me is important to graduate  
from high school. And do my  
future life by knowing that I have  
a good life and that I make  
good money.

The end!!!

Period: I September 18, 2008  
Mo Velez

Hola, mi nombre es Y. [redacted]  
Mi escuela anterior era Ms 22 o  
Jordan L. Mott eso esta en la 167  
en high school Av. Ahora mi escuela  
es 167ra [redacted] high school.  
Y esta en Fordham entre [redacted]  
Avenue. Hoy les voy a escribir  
sobre la diferencia de mi escuela  
anterior y la de ahora y otras  
cosas mas.

Que yo creo que sera igual  
o diferente en la escuela superior  
es lo diferente que en mi escuela  
anterior teniamos lineas para ir  
a clases. Y ahora tenemos la  
responsabilidad de llegar a la clases  
nuestros mismos. Y lo igual de  
mi escuela anterior es que  
tenemos maestros y maestra  
que no enseñan y nos dan pases  
para ir al baño.

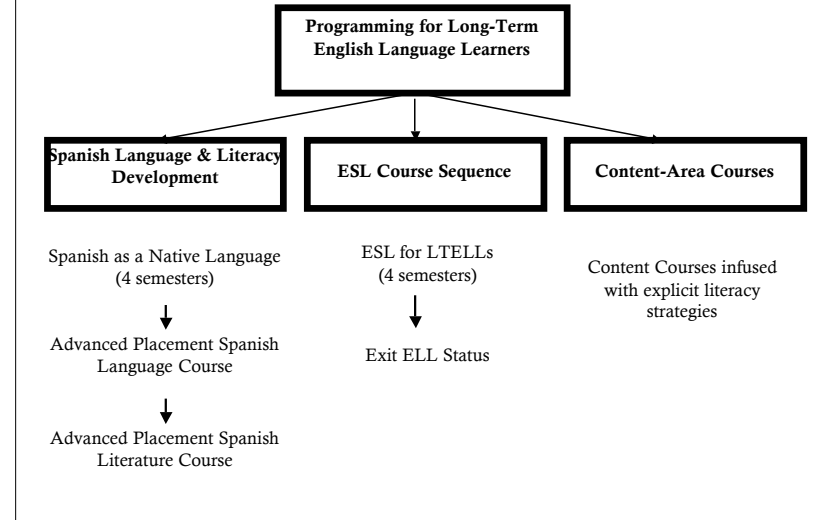
lo puedo hacer para todos los  
materias.

Que me hace sentir ansiosa,  
nerviosa y temerosa pues yo  
me siento abiosa por que no  
quiero esperar a que llegue la hora  
de graduarme por que lo quiero  
salir pa aser mi vida. Algunas  
veces me siento nerviosa por  
que me olviden que los exámenes  
no son faciles y pienso que si  
lo pasare o no lo pasare.

## Biliteracy Program Features

- Explicit literacy instruction in English and Spanish
- Academic Oral Language Development
- Native Language Arts
- Coordinated content-area literacy emphasis
- Professional Development (language & literacy)
  - Secondary teachers, esp. content area

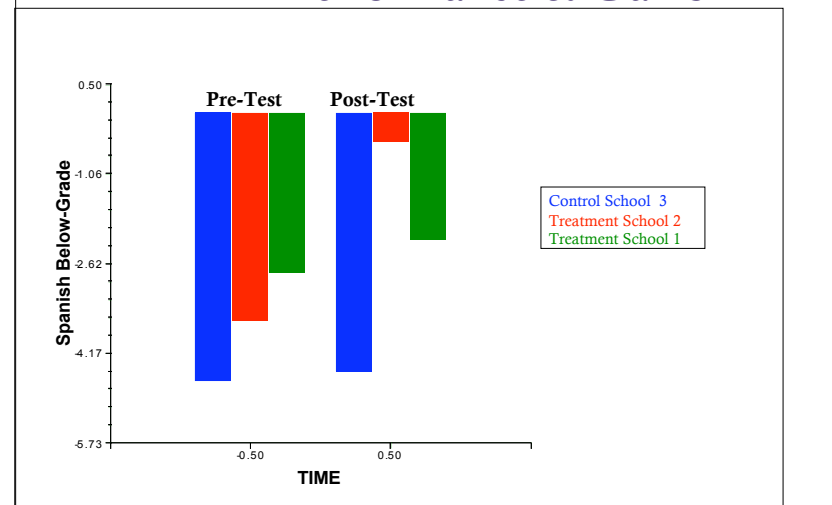
## Programming Sequence



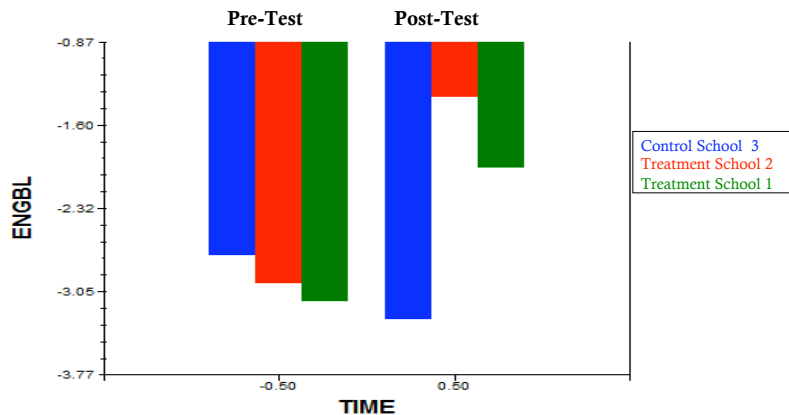
## A Reminder About the Research

- “Teaching students to read in their first language promotes higher levels of reading achievement in English” (Goldenberg, 2008: 14; see also August & Shanahan, 2006)
- Threshold theory posits there may be a certain degree of language proficiency student must reach to reap the full benefits of bilingualism (Toukoma & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1977; Cummins, 1978, 2000)

## Program Outcomes in Spanish: ALLD Performance & Gains



## Program Outcomes in English: ALLD Performance & Gains



## Strategies for LTELLs and a Caveat

- Effective Strategies (an area needing further research)
  - Activating Prior Knowledge
  - Oral Academic Language Development - couched in metalinguistic awareness
  - Attention to Vocabulary
  - Active Read Alouds
  - Teacher Collaboration
- Strategies alone are not enough! They must be implemented in high-quality programs with coherent language policies, that involve explicit literacy instruction and native language development.

## Activating Prior Knowledge

- Rationale: Increasing student interest
- A Classroom Example:
  - Ms. K writes 'Pourquoi Stories' on board*
  - Ms. K: What do you think this means? (Nobody answers)*
  - Ms. K: Does it look like a word in Spanish?*
  - Students in unison: ¡por que!*
  - Ms. K: So what do you think it means?*
  - Students: Why!*
  - Ms. K: So what do you think these stories are about?*
  - Students: Why! Why things happened...*
  - Ms K writes on board: French word for 'why'; stories that explain why or how something is in the world.*

## Oral Language Development - couched in metalinguistic awareness

- Rationale: LTELs have strong *social* oral language, but lack *academic* language. Explicit academic oral language instruction has been found to support reading and writing learning (August & Shanahan, 2006; Calkins, 2001).
- A Classroom Example:
  - We did a court trial for Macbeth and that was all oral. They had to write down their arguments, but it was presented orally and one of the big things that they were graded on was: Were you talking like a lawyer? Were you using lawyer-ly language? Were you using professional language? ... That language changes is something both Mr. N and I have really tried to get them to understand, how much language changes based on where you are, who you are, and who you're with. - Ms. S/ELA (English Language Arts)*

## Attention to Vocabulary

- Rationale: LTELLs tend to rely on basic, non-academic words in their language usage.
- A Classroom Example:

*What we're going to do today is find words to replace our tired words. Examples of tired words such as sad, mad, nice and smart were given. Next students received a "Stepping up the Vocabulary" handout where they were instructed to use the thesaurus to change 'tired' words in a paragraph to more exciting words. Students were not allowed to just use any word as a replacement, but they had to 1) know what it meant and 2) know the part of speech it came from.* -Ms. S/ELA

## Active Read Alouds

- Rationale: Active Read Alouds allow teachers to model reading approaches and scaffold for understanding.

- Example: Active Read Aloud of "Night" by Elie Wiesel:

*S(student): Miss, you'll be reading the book, right?*

*S: What's all this Miss?*

*Ms. S: There's an introduction and a foreword.*

*S: Miss, this really happened?*

*Ms. S: Yes, that's why it's called an autobiography.*

*Ms. S: For reading with a purpose I want you to look at how things are changing and how setting affects change, how things like place and environment can change everything. (teacher starts reading)*

*S: Miss, what's the err thing?*

*Ms. S: It's to make a mistake. (teacher continues reading)*

*Ms. S: What do you think that means, "Everyone has their own door"?*

*S: Their own choice, everyone understanding things differently.*

*Ms. S: Right, everyone gets into things in different ways. (teacher continues reading)... Usually one of my strategies is to visualize, but when I read this my camera basically shuts off.*

## Teacher Collaboration

- Rationale: Collaborative planning (and team-teaching) aligns curricula, and fosters metalinguistic awareness and skills transfer across languages.
- A Teacher's Perspective:

*Students were reintroduced to the writing process in Spanish. This lesson is a review of what has been done in ELA (English Language Arts), to connect students' understandings of the writing process to NLA (Native Language Arts). - Ms. C/NLA*

## Implications for Educating LTELs

- **Student Characteristics:** All teachers and administrators must become aware of the LTELL population and their academic needs.
- **Programming:** We recommend that high schools create programs for LTELs, which:
  1. teach literacy explicitly across the content areas,
  2. have focused ESL classes that develop their academic literacy skills, and
  3. offer classes to improve students' native language literacy skills.



## Implications for Educating LTELLs (cont'd)

- **Strategies:** Embed effective strategies in all content areas.
- **Language Policy:** We can likely decrease the numbers of high school students who become LTELLs by offering at the earlier grades:
  - Greater coherency in school language policies
  - Programs that develop native language literacy skills (e.g., through 'strong' bilingual education programs such as dual language programs)

## Remaining Questions

- Do all or only some high school LTELLs benefit from native language classes? (especially if their native language literacy skills are at a low level)
- Are our strategies effective for all students, all emergent bilinguals and/or LTELLs in particular?
- What are the longitudinal outcomes of biliteracy programming for LTELLs?
- How can content teachers (i.e. math, science and social studies) take on the role of literacy teachers?

## For further information...

The CUNY Graduate Center RISLUS  
LTELL website:

<http://web.gc.cuny.edu/dept/lingu/rislu/projects/LTELL/index.html>



Research Institute for the Study of  
Language in Urban Society