

*Double the Work:*  
**Challenges and Solutions to Acquiring  
Language and Academic Literacy for  
Adolescent ELLs**

Deborah J. Short, Ph.D.

# Welcome and House Keeping

## ► Discussion/Interactive Format

- Quick Polling
- Type messages into chat area
- Break for responding to chat questions/comments
- Those on just the teleconference can email questions to:  
[eventquestion@wested.org](mailto:eventquestion@wested.org)

# Poll: What's Your Role?

- ☐ District Administrator
- ☐ Site Administrator
- ☐ Classroom Teacher
- ☐ Teacher Educators
- ☐ Staff Development Provider
- ☐ Literacy/Instructional Coach
- ☐ Researcher
- ☐ Other

# Sobering Statistics in the U.S.

- One-third of the students entering 9th grade are reading **two or more grades below level.**
- The average percentage of students meeting 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade NAEP proficiency standards was **<50% in every state.**
- **Almost 50%** of the students of color drop out of high school or fail to graduate within 4 years.

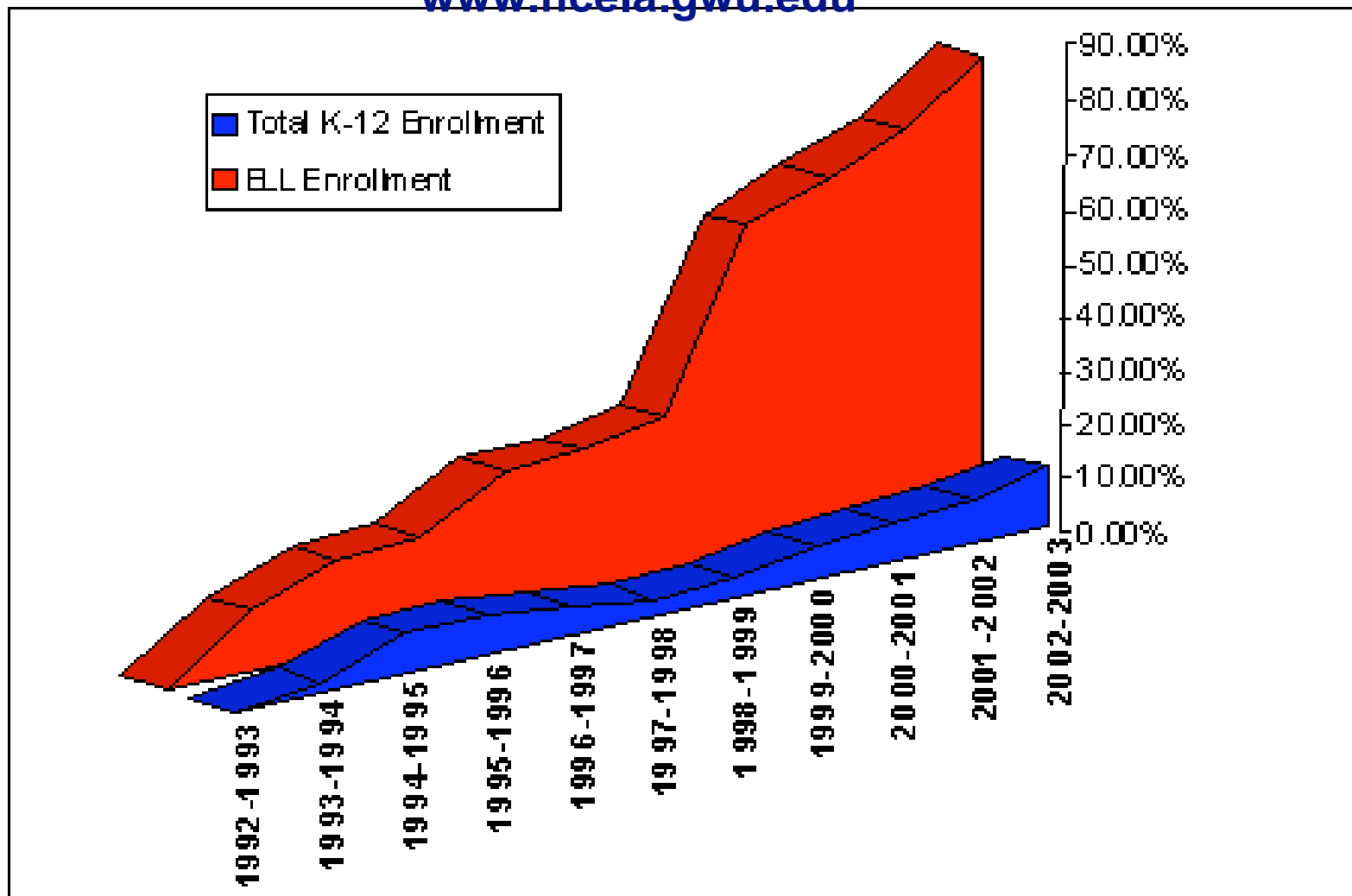




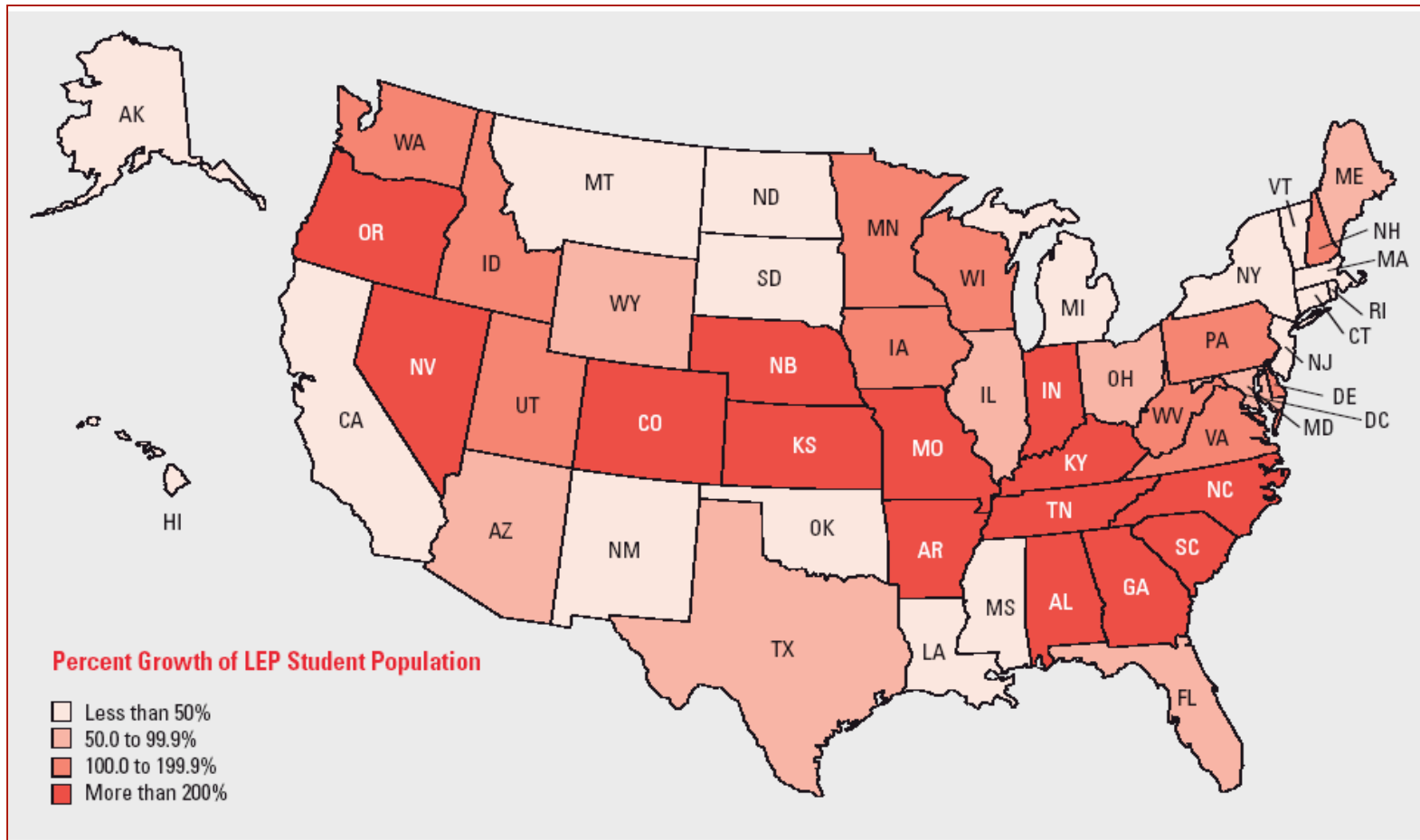
# Relative Growth in ELL and Total Enrollment in U.S. Schools, 1992-93 to 2002-2003

Source:

[www.ncela.gwu.edu](http://www.ncela.gwu.edu)



# Percent Growth of ELL Student Population



# Poll

Are you from

- ▶ A dark red state
- ▶ A dark pink state
- ▶ A pink state
- ▶ A pale pink slate

# Literacy Reform in the U.S.

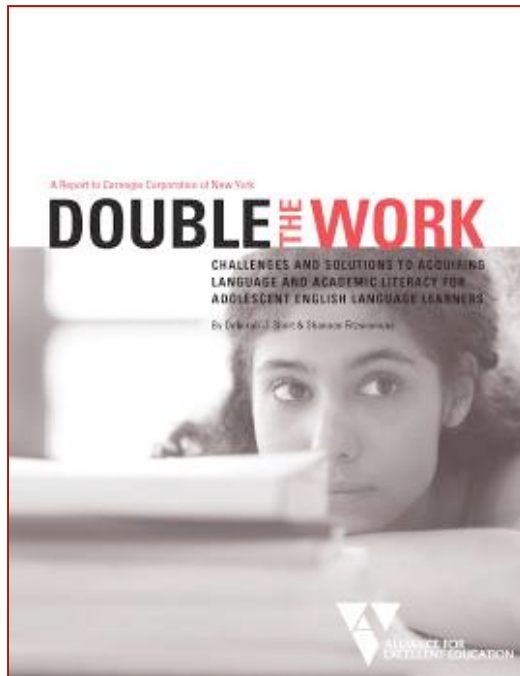
- ▶ Early Reading First (Pre-K)
- ▶ Reading First (K-3)
- ▶ Reading Next (4-12)
  - National Governor's report
  - National Association of Secondary School Principal's report
  - RAND report
- ▶ *Double the Work: Adolescent Literacy for ELLs (Gr. 6-12) sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation of New York*

# Double *the* Work

## Challenges and Solutions to Acquiring Language and Academic Literacy for Adolescent English Language Learners

Deborah J. Short &  
Shannon Fitzsimmons

Alliance for Excellent Education  
© 2006



<http://www.all4ed.org/publications/DoubleWork/index.html>

# Poll

Choose the top 2 challenges to adolescent ELL literacy in your school or district

- ▶ Underprepared teachers to teach ELLs
- ▶ Inappropriate curricula and materials
- ▶ Teaching to the test
- ▶ Testing students in English before they are proficient in English
- ▶ Lack of literacy instruction appropriate to ELLs
- ▶ Not enough time (years) to learn academic English

# Adolescent ELL Literacy Project

## Activities

- ▶ **Advisory Panel of researchers, practitioners, and policymakers**
- ▶ **Demographic and achievement research by Migration Policy Institute**
- ▶ **Literature Review**
- ▶ **Site Visits**
- ▶ **Preparation of a policy report and recommendations**

# Double the Work Advisory Panel

- ▶ **Diane August**, President, August & Associates
- ▶ **Gina Biancarosa**, Postdoctoral Fellow, Stanford University
- ▶ **Margarita Calderón**, Research Scientist, Johns Hopkins Univ
- ▶ **Fred Carrigg**, Special Asst to the Commissioner for Literacy, New Jersey Department of Education
- ▶ **Nancy Cloud**, Professor of Special Education, Rhode Island College
- ▶ **Michael Fix**, Vice President and Director of Studies, Migration Policy Institute
- ▶ **David Francis**, Professor of Psychology, University of Houston
- ▶ **Michael Kamil**, Professor of Education, Stanford University
- ▶ **Delia Pompa**, Vice President for Education, National Council of La Raza
- ▶ **Mel Riddile**, Former Principal, J.E.B. Stuart H.S., and Current Principal, T.C. Williams H.S.
- ▶ **Cathy Roller**, Director of Research & Policy, International Reading Association
- ▶ **Maria Santos**, Deputy Chancellor for Instruction, New York City Department of Education
- ▶ **Aida Walqui**, Director, Teacher Professional Development Program, WestEd



# Double the Work Advisory Panel

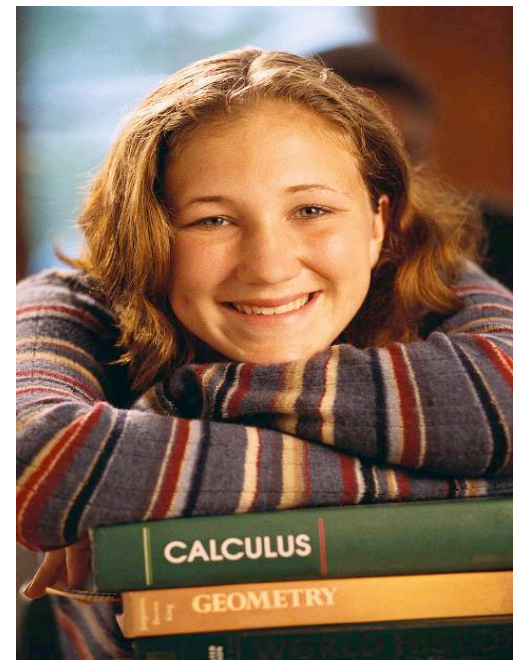
- ▶ **Defined academic literacy**
- ▶ **Called for an examination of available demographic and achievement data on adolescent ELLs**
- ▶ **Identified challenges to acquiring English and academic literacy for adolescent ELLs**
- ▶ **Recommended solutions regarding policies, programs, and practices**

# Definition: Academic Literacy

- ▶ Includes reading, writing, and oral discourse for school
- ▶ Varies from subject to subject
- ▶ Requires knowledge of multiple genres of text, purposes for text use, and text media
- ▶ Is influenced by students' literacies in contexts outside of school
- ▶ Is influenced by students' personal, social, and cultural experiences

# So, students must be able to...

- **read and understand expository prose  
such as that found in textbooks**
- **write persuasively**
- **contrast points of view**
- **take notes from lectures  
and reference materials**



# Open Ended Response



*What knowledge and skills are you  
using to interpret....?*

# Migration Policy Institute's study

- ▶ Examined U.S. Census data for demographic information
- ▶ Analyzed 8<sup>th</sup> grade NAEP scores
- ▶ Analyzed scores on state tests from two traditional immigration states (CA, IL) and two new destination states (CO, NC)
- ▶ Identified state ELL and LEP definitions

**There were over 1.5 million Grades 6-12 English language learners in the U.S. according to the 2000 Census.**

**(Migration Policy Institute, 2005)**

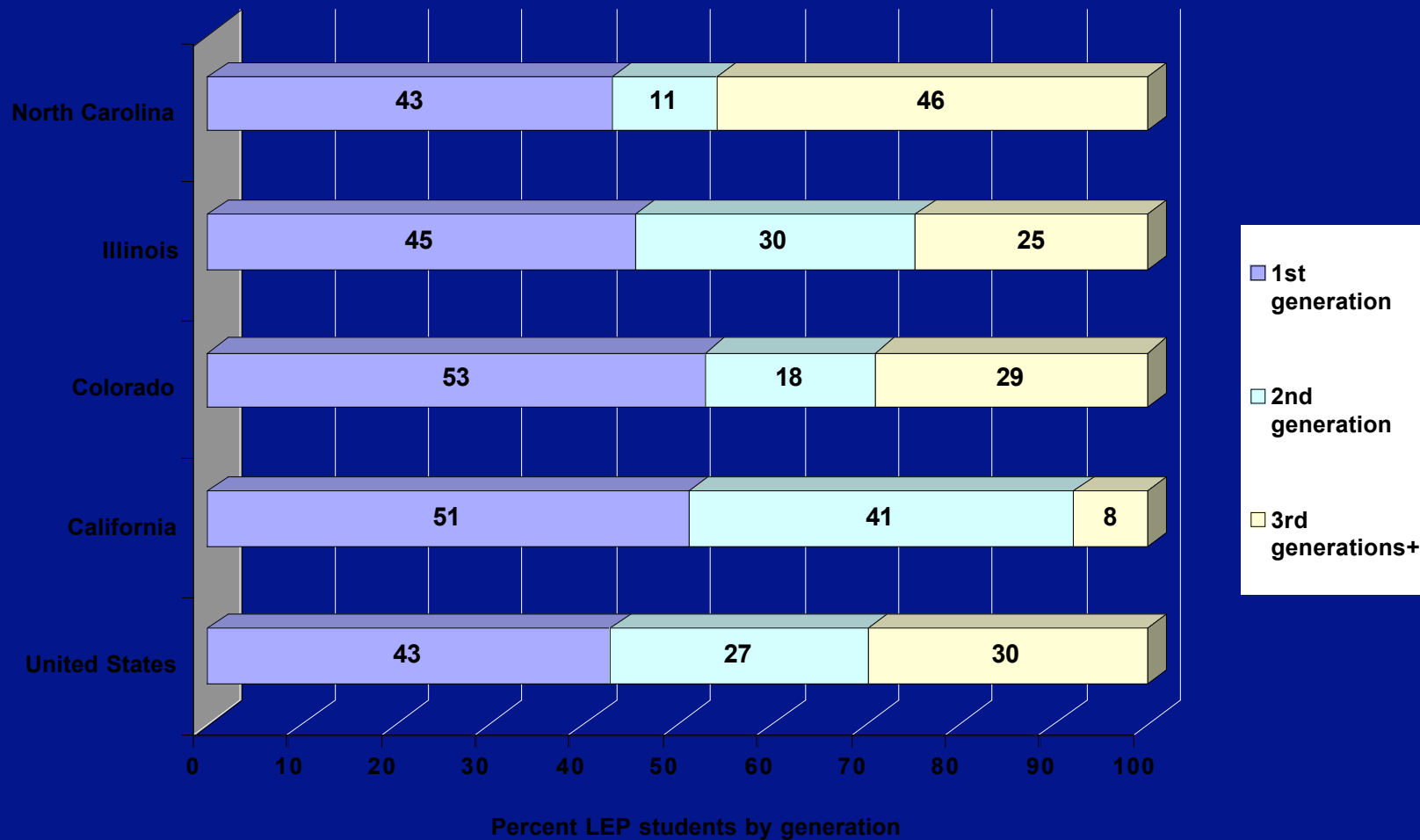


# Languages Spoken by Adolescent ELLs at Home

(Migration Policy Institute, 2005)

United States	Total
Spanish	70.0
Vietnamese	3.3
French	3.2
Chinese languages	2.6
Korean	1.7
German	1.7
Miao, Hmong	1.3
Tagalog	1.3
Russian	1.1
French Creole	1.1
Percent speaking 10 top languages	87.2

## More LEP adolescents are native-born, not foreign born (Migration Policy Institute, 2005)





# NAEP Reading 2005

## Good News

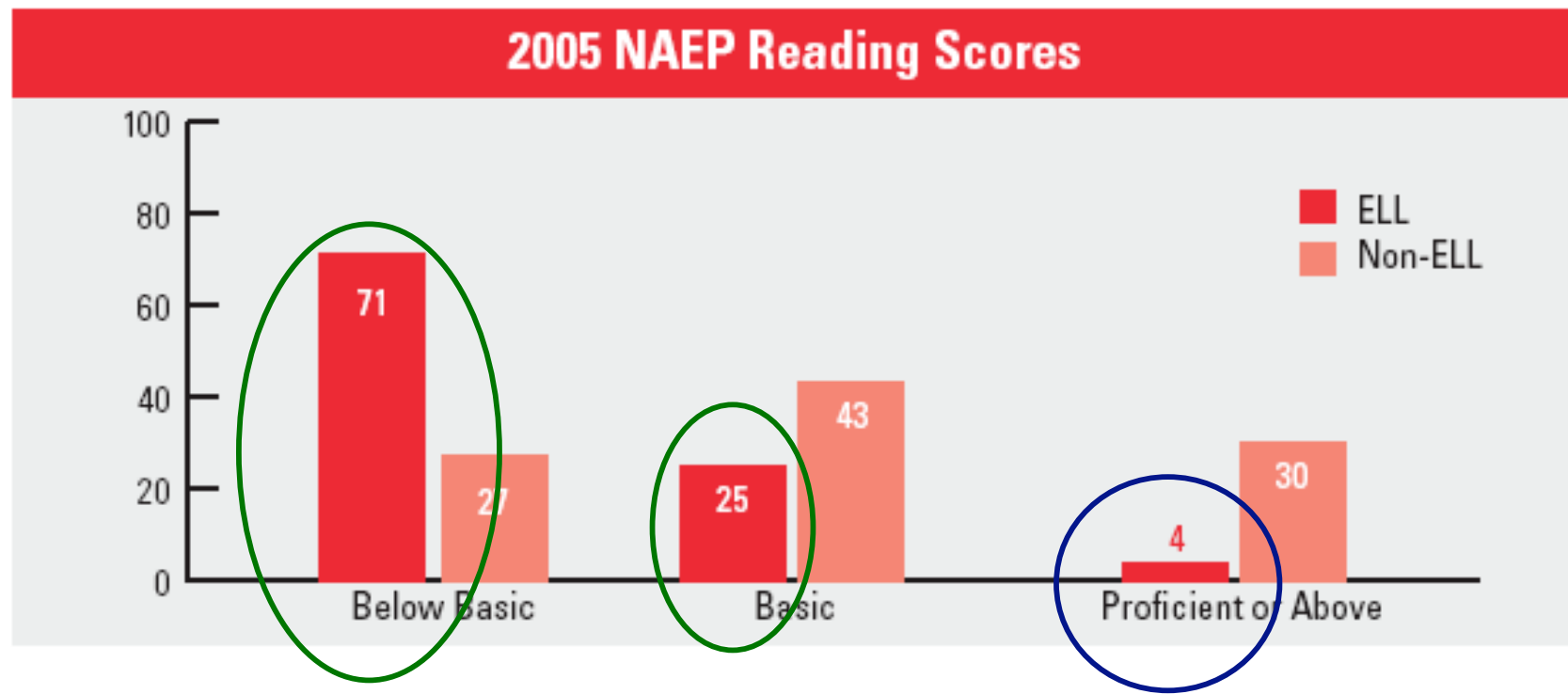
- ▶ 4<sup>th</sup> grade scores went up
- ▶ Achievement gap between Whites/Asians and Blacks/Hispanics was reduced

## Bad News

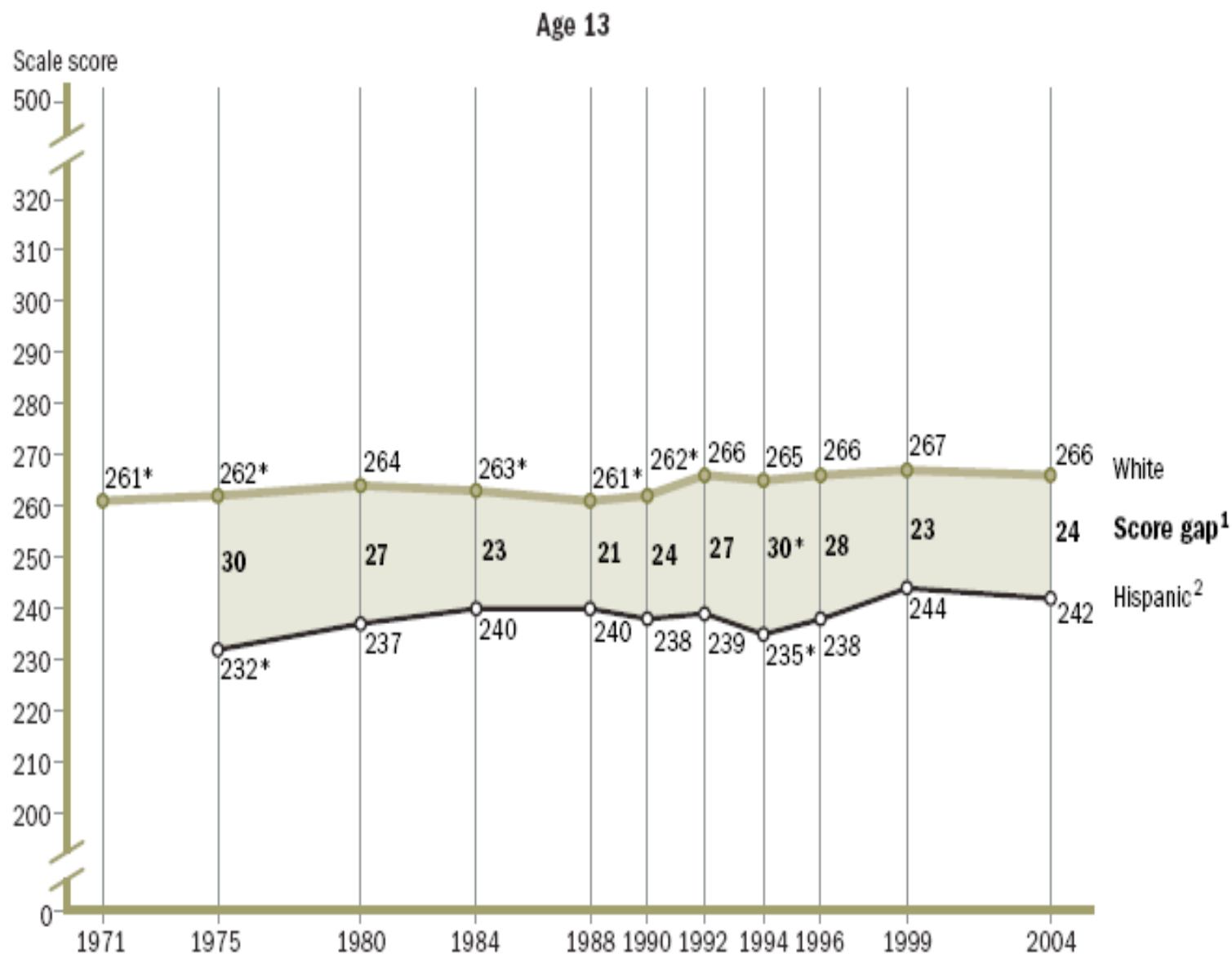
- ▶ 8<sup>th</sup> grade scores stayed flat or went down
- ▶ Achievement gap between Whites/Asians and Blacks/Hispanics stayed wide

# The Achievement Gap

Grade 8 ELL vs. Non-ELL



# 1971 - 2004 Reading NAEP, gap b/w White and Hispanic, age 13



## Keep In Mind

- ▶ **Most ELLs need 4-7 years to learn English before they reach average academic performance levels.**
- ▶ **As ELLs, they are by definition not proficient!**
- ▶ **But they are tested before they are proficient in English.**

# Question and Answer Break

## ▶ Question and Answer Break



# Challenges to Adolescent ELL Literacy

- ▶ **Lack of common criteria for identifying ELLs and tracking their academic performance**
- ▶ **Lack of appropriate assessments**
- ▶ **Inadequate educator capacity for improving literacy in ELLs**
- ▶ **Lack of appropriate and flexible program options**
- ▶ **Inadequate use of research-based instructional practices**
- ▶ **Lack of a strong and coherent research agenda about adolescent ELL literacy**

# Profiles of Some Adolescent ELLs

- 1. Some have strong educational backgrounds, speak two languages already, higher SES, stability**
- 2. Others have weak educational backgrounds, some literacy in first language**
- 3. Still others have interrupted or no education, weak or no literacy skills, high mobility**

# To Help Our Adolescent ELLs, We Need to Know

**CAL** CENTER FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS  
Improving communication through better understanding of language and culture



**Where They Are  
on the Path to  
Academic Literacy**



# Student 1

Krystyna left Poland at 12 where she was a good student. She entered a 7th grade program in Oregon with sheltered content and content-based ESL classes. Within 2 years, she exited the ESL program. She was a top student by 9th grade and developed a Web site for the high school student council.

**Academic English Literacy**

# Student 1

Krystyna left Poland at 12 where she was a good student. She entered a 7th grade program in Oregon with sheltered content and content-based ESL classes. Within 2 years, she exited the ESL program. She was a top student by 9th grade and developed a Web site for the high school student council.

—————→ Academic English Literacy

# Student 2

Joaquin, from Puerto Rico, came to Pennsylvania at age 4. He spoke Spanish at home and had kindergarten and 1st grade in Spanish. In 2nd grade, he was switched into an English classroom. His family moved and 4th grade was in a Spanish classroom. In 6th grade, he speaks a mixture of Spanish and English, but isn't making academic progress.

**Academic English Literacy**

# Student 2

Joaquin, from Puerto Rico, came to Pennsylvania at age 4. He spoke Spanish at home and had kindergarten and 1st grade in Spanish. In 2nd grade, he was switched into an English classroom. His family moved and 4th grade was in a Spanish classroom. In 6th grade, he speaks a mixture of Spanish and English, but isn't making academic progress.



Academic English Literacy

# Student 3

Carlos attended Montessori at 3 and 4. In Kindergarten, he entered a two-way immersion program in New Mexico. 50% of his day was in Spanish, 50% in English. He studied the grade-level curricula throughout elementary school this way but took state tests in English. In middle school now, he continues with advanced Spanish language arts and literature classes.

**Academic English Literacy**

# Student 3

Carlos attended Montessori at 3 and 4. In Kindergarten, he entered a two-way immersion program in New Mexico. 50% of his day was in Spanish, 50% in English. He studied the grade-level curricula throughout elementary school this way but took state tests in English. In middle school now, he continues with advanced Spanish language arts and literature classes.

→ Academic English Literacy

# Student 4

- ▶ Aziza attended school in Somalia for 1 year when she was 8. Then she stayed home to help. At 14, her family went to a refugee camp, where she learned some basic English. At 16, her family came to Minnesota and she enrolled in high school. After 3 months, she is struggling with her adjustment to school, English, and content subjects.

**Academic English Literacy**

# Student 4

- ▶ Aziza attended school in Somalia for 1 year when she was 8. Then she stayed home to help. At 14, her family went to a refugee camp, where she learned some basic English. At 16, her family came to Minnesota and she enrolled in high school. After 3 months, she is struggling with her adjustment to school, English, and content subjects.



**Academic English Literacy**



# What's the Difference in Terms of Literacy Development?

## Adolescent ELLs v. Young ELLs

## ELL Adolescents v. Non-ELL Adolescents

# What's the Difference in Terms of Literacy Development?

## Adolescent ELLs v. Young ELLs

L1 proficiency (esp. oral skills)

Vocabulary

Less risk taking

Time pressure

Out-of-school literacies

Home responsibilities

Motivation varies

## ELL Adolescents v. Non-ELL Adolescents

Limited L2 oral skills

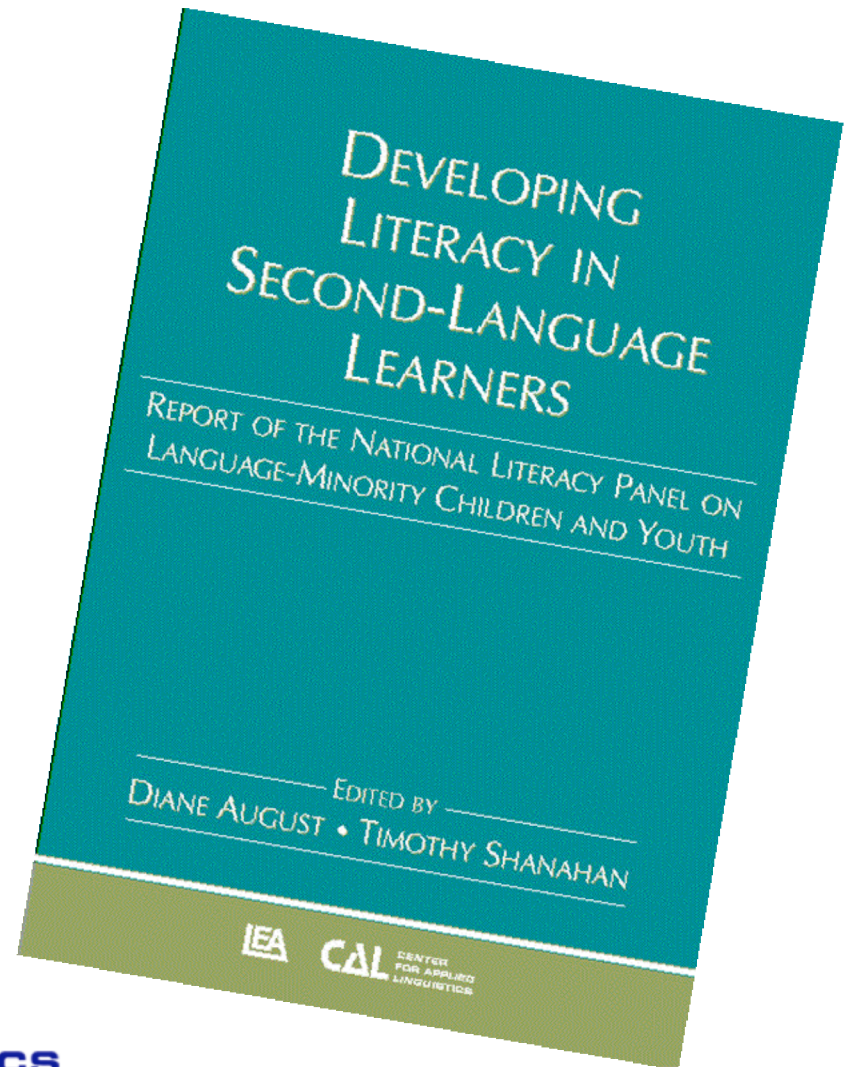
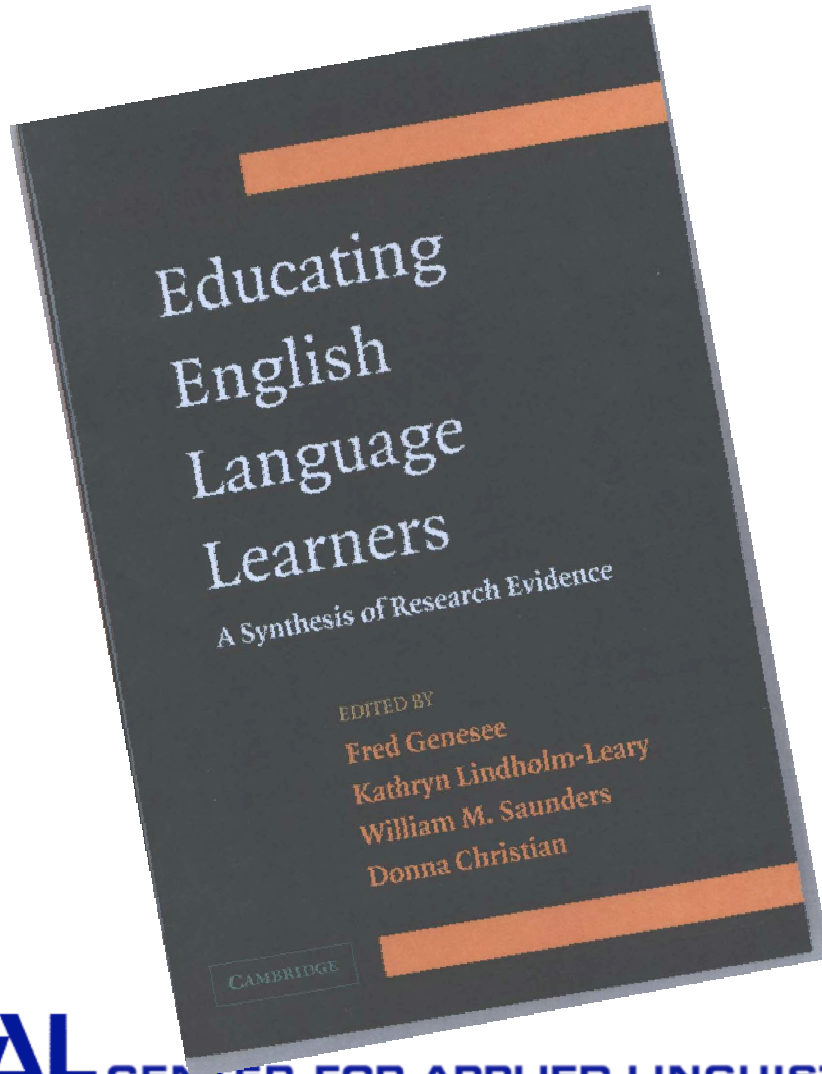
Possible semi-literacy in both languages

Steady progress, not a history of failure

Limited background knowledge

Motivation & choice

# Reviews of Research



# Adolescent ELL Literacy

## Research Findings

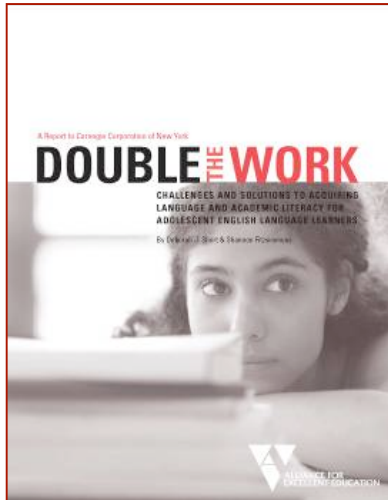
- ✓ Age
  - ▶ Years in U.S./Generational Status
- ✓ L1 literacy background
- ✓ L2 (English) oralcy
- ✓ Socioeconomic status
- ✓ Parental education/expectations
  - ▶ Ethnicity
- ✓ Mobility

# Adolescent ELL Literacy

## Research Findings

- ▶ L1 literacy is not necessary for L2 literacy, but beneficial
- ▶ Oralcy and literacy can develop simultaneously
- ▶ L1 transfers phonemic awareness, comprehension and language learning strategies, and L1 and L2 oral knowledge
- ▶ Choice aids adolescent motivation
- ▶ Vocabulary development is a must

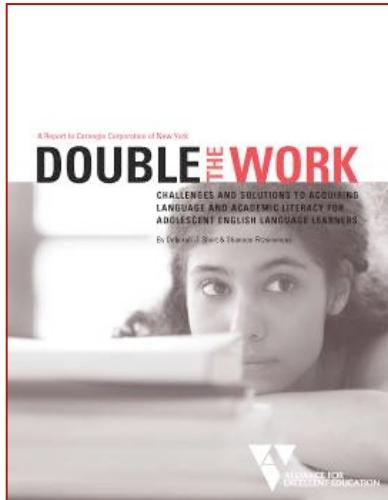
# How Can ELLs Catch Up?



## Research-based Instructional Principles:

- ▶ Integrate listening, speaking, reading and writing skills *from the start*
- ▶ Teach the components and processes of reading and writing
- ▶ Teach comprehension strategies
- ▶ Focus on vocabulary development

# How Can ELLs Catch Up?



## Research-based Instructional Principles:

- ▶ *Build and activate prior knowledge*
- ▶ Teach language through content and themes
- ▶ Use native language strategically
- ▶ Pair technology with existing interventions
- ▶ Motivate ELLs through choice



# Double *the Work*

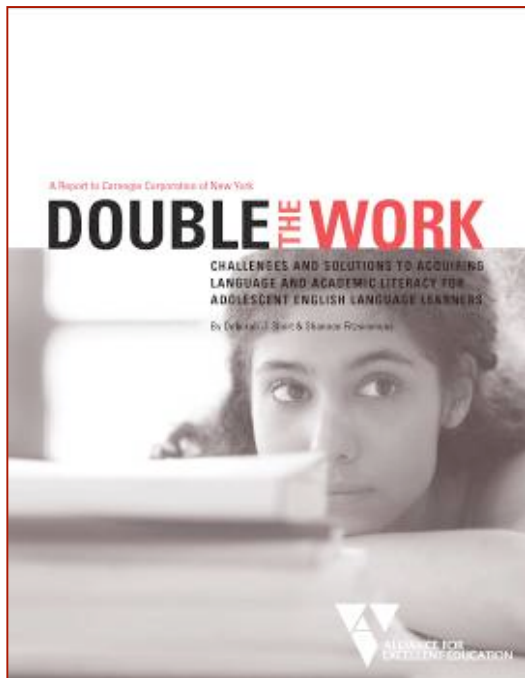
**CAL** CENTER FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS  
Improving communication through better understanding of language and culture

## Promising Sites





# Open Response: Feedback Break



- ▶ Tell us of good practices at some promising sites you know that promote academic literacy among adolescent English language learners.

# J.E.B. Stuart High School (VA)

- ▶ 5 levels of ESL proficiency, including 3 levels of beginners
- ▶ Series of content classes in science and social studies move from content-ESL to sheltered to mainstream, plus accelerated arithmetic/pre-algebra courses
- ▶ 5- and 6-year high school plans available to low literacy students
- ▶ Algebra options: Double or single block, 2 years or 1 year (2 math credits possible)
- ▶ Options for ESL courses to receive core language arts graduation credit

# Union City School District (NJ)

- ▶ **Fiscal resources applied strategically for student achievement**
- ▶ **Smaller class sizes for lower proficiencies**
- ▶ **Extended time for learning (in school, after school, weekends, summer)**
- ▶ **High school bilingual program**
- ▶ **Support staff provide in-class and out-of-class interventions and monitor students**
- ▶ **Port-of-Entry program for newcomers with career exploration**

# Hoover High School (CA)

- ▶ **Multi-year commitment**
- ▶ **Professional development (regular, spiraling curriculum, mandatory, teacher supported)**
- ▶ **Seven literacy development instructional strategies used across the curriculum**
- ▶ **Frequent, common assessments (Gates-MacGinitie, CA standards, course level)**
- ▶ **University & community partnership support**

# Hoover's Literacy Strategies

- ▶ Anticipatory activities
- ▶ Read aloud/shared reading
- ▶ Note taking and note making
- ▶ Reciprocal teaching
- ▶ Graphic organizers
- ▶ Vocabulary instruction
- ▶ Writing to learn

(Fisher & Frey, 2004)

# Policy, Program & Practice Recommendations

**CAL** CENTER FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS  
Improving communication through better understanding of language and culture



# Policy Recommendations

- ☑ Identify and distinguish adolescent ELLs using common criteria and track their performance.
- ☑ Develop appropriate assessments and assessment protocols.
- ☑ Advance educator capacity for improving literacy in ELLs.

# Policy Recommendations

- ☑ Design appropriate and flexible program options.
- ☑ Require use of research-based instructional practices.
- ☑ Develop a strong and coherent research agenda on adolescent ELL literacy.
- ☑ Make adolescent literacy a priority.



# Common Criteria for Identifying ELLs and Tracking Their Academic Performance

- ▶ **Tighten the existing definition of LEP and former LEP students in NCLB so states use identical criteria.**
- ▶ **Establish consistent data collection and disaggregated reporting across states: grade level, LEP status, FEP status, interrupted schooling, gifted and special education.**
- ▶ **Monitor the assignment of students to ELL, special education, and accelerated programs.**

# Appropriate Assessments

- ▶ Use diagnostic assessments in both languages.
- ▶ Develop large-scale assessments in the native language, perhaps as consortia.
- ▶ Utilize a language threshold measure.
- ▶ Provide testing accommodations for ELLs consistently.
- ▶ Invest in data systems that supply ELL and former ELL information.

# **Educator Capacity for Improving Literacy in ELLs**

- ▶ **Set national teacher education policy so all teacher candidates learn about second language/literacy acquisition, reading across content areas, and ESL/sheltered instruction methods.**
- ▶ **Require districts that serve ELLs to provide meaningful, ongoing, on-the-job training for administrators, coaches, and teachers within content area, literacy, and ESL instruction.**
- ▶ **Modify the highly qualified teacher definitions in NCLB and state criteria, so content-area teachers in schools with high percentages of ELLs demonstrate competence in working with them.**

# Appropriate and Flexible Program Options

- ▶ **Base program designs on appropriate and effective language development practices, determined by student data.**
- ▶ **Adjust/develop sheltered curricula for high school content courses and establish core credit for these courses.**
- ▶ **Allow greater flexibility in the use of learning time and encourage schools to provide ELLs with extended or extra opportunities for literacy instruction beyond the classroom.**
- ▶ **Adjust NCLB accountability to avoid penalizing schools that allow ELL students to take more than the traditional 4 years to complete high school successfully.**

# Inadequate Use of Research-based Instructional Practices

- ▶ Encourage the use of proven and promising instruction for ELLs.
- ▶ Require states, districts, and schools developing literacy plans to incorporate appropriate instruction for adolescent ELLs.
- ▶ Designate a state or district adolescent ELL literacy coordinator to ensure instruction rigorously supports adolescent ELLs through the use of proven and promising practices.
- ▶ Clarify regulations so that ELLs receiving Supplementary Educational Services are provided with services that incorporate proven and promising practices specific to adolescent ELLs.

# **Strong, Coherent Research Agenda about Adolescent ELL Literacy**

- ▶ **Fund short-term r&d on literacy interventions and longitudinal studies on adolescent ELLs and former ELLs to evaluate promising programs and investigate the effects of teacher development.**
- ▶ **Fund research to identify and evaluate model programs, such as newcomer programs and early college programs with an ELL focus.**
- ▶ **Analyze forthcoming NCLB data for information about adolescent ELLs targeting longitudinal, within-state studies.**
- ▶ **Collect and analyze data on ELL high school graduation and exit exam passing rates; track which students drop out and/or switch to adult education.**

# Question and Answer Break



## ► Question and Answer Break

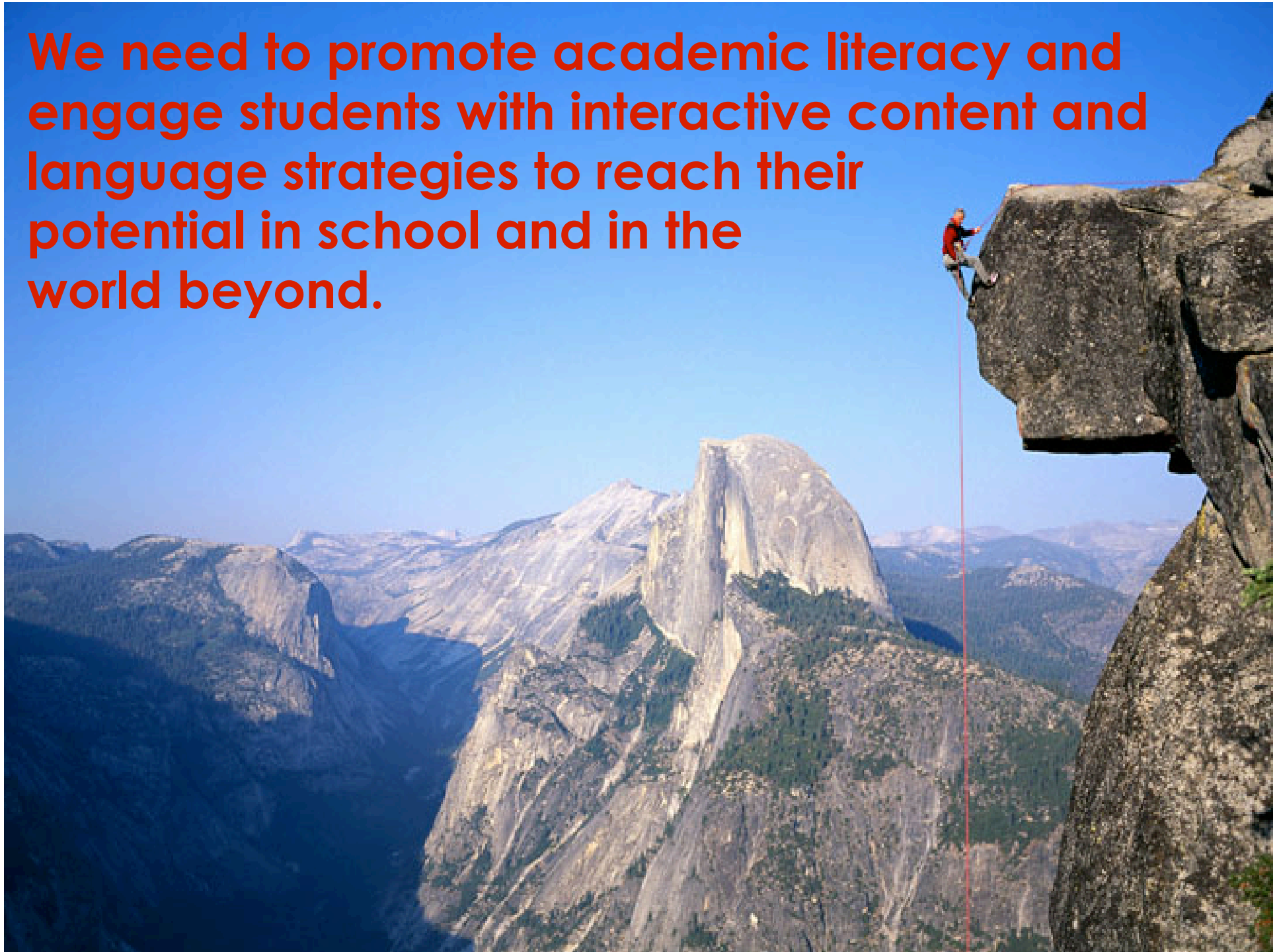
# Literacy Factors That Educators Can Facilitate

- **Build and activate background knowledge and vocabulary for text comprehension and academic discourse**
- **Promote transfer of key skills from L1 to L2**
- **Exploit the relationship between oracy and literacy development**
- **Set essential questions and issues to explore, use themes**
- **Monitor text selection & teach text use**
- **Tap into out-of-school literacies**





**We need to promote academic literacy and engage students with interactive content and language strategies to reach their potential in school and in the world beyond.**



# For More Information

- ▶ Center for Applied Linguistics [www.cal.org](http://www.cal.org)
- ▶ Alliance for Excellent Education  
[www.all4ed.org](http://www.all4ed.org)
- ▶ Carnegie Corporation of New York  
[www.carnegie.org](http://www.carnegie.org)

# *Thank You!*

## Web cast sponsored by



- ▶ [www.cal.org/projects/create.html](http://www.cal.org/projects/create.html)

Join our listserv. Send an email to [create@cal.org](mailto:create@cal.org)  
Write "list" in the subject line. Include name,  
organization and email address.

- ▶ [www.tlc2.uh.edu/times/Research/Active/National\\_Research\\_and\\_Development\\_Center\\_for\\_English\\_Language\\_Learners](http://www.tlc2.uh.edu/times/Research/Active/National_Research_and_Development_Center_for_English_Language_Learners)

# Next Steps: Archive and Feedback

- ▶ <http://www.schoolsmovingup.net/events/doublework>
- ▶ <http://www.schoolsmovingup.net/events/doublework/survey.htm>