



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

CAL CENTER
FOR APPLIED
LINGUISTICS

MISSION

The mission of the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) is to promote language learning and cultural understanding by serving as a trusted source for research, resources, and policy analysis. Through its work, CAL seeks solutions to issues involving language and culture as they relate to access and equity in education and society around the globe.

CORE VALUES

CAL's core values guide our endeavors and help us focus our efforts more effectively.

- Languages and cultures are important individual and societal resources.
- All languages, dialects, and cultures deserve to be respected and cultivated.
- Multilingualism is beneficial for individuals and society.
- Effective language education should be widely available.
- Accurate information should be the basis for policies and practices that involve language and culture.
- Language skills and cultural knowledge should be valued in work situations.
- Language and cultural differences should not be obstacles to personal or group success or well-being.

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A LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), I want to express our profound gratitude to CAL's staff for their unwavering commitment, dedication, and contributions throughout the Fiscal Year 2023. Your collective efforts and wisdom have been instrumental in advancing CAL's mission. We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Marguerite Lukes, CAL's newest Board Member. Dr. Lukes brings a wealth of expertise in research, policy, and practice in the field of immigration, and we are excited about the valuable insights and perspectives she will contribute to our shared mission.

The CAL Board of Trustees recognizes CAL's remarkable impact and delivery of services to its stakeholders in the areas of multilingualism, language practice, policy, research and assessment. The PreK-12 Language and Literacy team engaged over 4,500 educators through professional development initiatives, surpassing the revenue projections and significantly expanding CAL's impact on teaching and learning. The Dual Language and Multilingual Education unit extended its reach both nationally and internationally, offering critical support and guidance to dual language programs and strengthening bilingual education in diverse educational contexts. Additionally, the Adult Literacy and Language Education unit successfully led the EHLS program, equipping heritage language speakers with the English proficiency and career skills necessary for professional success in federal government roles. CAL's WIDA staff continued the development of the WIDA ACCESS English Assessment that is administered to over two million English learners annually. This year also marked the establishment of the Language Assessment and Instructional Research (LAIR) Unit. This newly created unit now encompasses World Languages, and the critical work associated with the BEST adult English proficiency assessments, BEST Plus and BEST Literacy.

The CAL Board also recognizes CAL's administrative and IT teams for its Fiscal Year 2023 accomplishments in maintaining a sustainable infrastructure for CAL services and initiatives. These include completing a comprehensive CAL compensation study; collaborating with CAL Program staff in creating a solid end of year financial position; surpassing CAL revenue expectations for FY2023; and transforming an IT infrastructure to securely and reliably support day to day hybrid space administrative and programmatic activities. Looking ahead, the Board is committed to supporting CAL's sustainable and impactful CAL's mission related goals. These include continuing to empower CAL staff in delivering high-quality and valuable program services to a larger number of stakeholders; exploring new revenue streams to sustain CAL's mission-driven initiatives and enhancing the online accessibility and marketability of CAL's intellectual property for language and culture stakeholders.

With deepest appreciation,

Dr. Liying Cheng
*Chair, Board of Trustees
Center for Applied Linguistics*



A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

In fiscal year (FY) 2023, CAL focused on delivering quality services and maintaining financial stability. The organization appointed a Communications Director. Furthermore, CAL sought a Senior Director for the new Language Assessment and Instructional Research (LAIR) Unit to oversee World Languages and adult English proficiency assessments. This restructuring strengthened CAL's role in these areas. The organization operated in a hybrid model, balancing onsite and remote work to fulfill its mission.

The Language Assessment Division (LAD)/Test Development Unit led the CAL-WIDA partnership, developing test items and supporting English learners in over 40 states. A third-party audit gave the team outstanding feedback on its psychometric work.

CAL received National Security Education Program (NSEP) funding for the English for Heritage Language Speakers (EHLS) program in partnership with Georgetown University and the Institute of International Education. EHLS graduated nearly two dozen scholars prepared for federal roles.

CAL managed a U.S. Department of Education grant for the Multilingual Multimodal Science Inventory (M2-Si) project, creating an online assessment e-portfolio for multilingual learners in North Carolina. CAL continued its multi-year partnership with the Center for the Success of English Learners (CSEL), supporting outreach efforts and co-hosting a national research conference.

The Pre-K-12 Language and Literacy Unit managed over 60 projects and engaged several thousand educators in institutes and workshops. By August, professional development revenue exceeded expectations.

The Dual Language Multilingual Unit trained educators in over a dozen states and multiple countries. The team hosted several online institutes for more than 200 participants and provided evaluation and technical assistance in multiple districts. Revenue projections were exceeded here, too.

The World Language team within LAIR led STARTALK-funded projects, launched two heritage language initiatives, and partnered with Georgetown University's Assessment and Evaluation Language Resource Center (AELRC).

The BEST Plus and BEST Literacy team received U.S. Office of Education approval to continue offering BEST Plus 3.0 and BEST Literacy 2.0 English proficiency assessments for seven years. From October to July, CAL sold tens of thousands of BEST Literacy booklets and hundreds of thousands of Computer Adaptive BEST Plus 2.0 assessments. The team trained more than 1,000 Test Administrators through multiple workshops. By July, BEST assessment sales reached their highest level in recent years.

On the administrative side, Finance staff handled audits, budget preparation, reports, and contracts. The Human Resources (HR) team managed visa applications, staff recruitment, training, health insurance, and payroll while maintaining employee records and benefits. Operations supported hybrid and in-person meetings and addressed facility needs. Communications managed marketing, outreach, and digital engagement, maintaining a large subscriber base and sending millions of emails. Information Technology (IT) team provided maintenance, cybersecurity, and cloud solutions while managing data storage and online tools.

CAL conducted a compensation study, revised salary guidelines, and implemented a merit raise and cost-of-living adjustment for dozens of staff. The organization also completed a diversity, equity, and inclusion study, reduced office space for savings, increased its budget over the past year, and lowered indirect costs. CAL achieved these successes through staff efficiency, strategic projects, professional development, and strong infrastructure support.

Sincerely,

Dr. Joel Gómez
*President and CEO
Center for Applied Linguistics*



PROGRAM AREA UPDATES: ADULT LITERACY & LANGUAGE EDUCATION (ALLE)

PROGRAM AREA STAFF

- Katherine Moran, Director, Adult Literacy and Language Education
- Mathilda Reckford, Specialist, Adult Literacy and Language Education

Program Impact

CAL's Adult Literacy and Language Education program area proudly manages the English for Heritage Language Speakers (EHLS) program. This competitive scholarship program is designed for adults with professional proficiency in a Department of Defense (DoD)-designated critical language to achieve professional proficiency in English. By the end of CAL's FY2023, the program started its nineteenth year and has seen 411 participants since its inception. The EHLS program is sponsored by the National Security Education Program (NSEP) within the Defense Language and National Security Education Office (DLNSEO). Implemented by CAL in partnership with Georgetown University's English Language Center and the Institute of International Education, EHLS gives scholars the English language and career skills they need to succeed in professional positions in the federal government with national security responsibilities.

Mathilda Reckford joined the program area in November 2022 as the EHLS Specialist. The robust EHLS scholarship application process benefits from regular review and revision to ensure that the process is responsive to stakeholder needs. In November, the EHLS team conducted a standard five-year review of the scholarship application with a particular focus on issues around diversity, equity, access, and inclusion. The team conducted focus groups with key stakeholders and used the results to propose changes to the application to DLNSEO. Some resulting changes included removing birth date information and reducing the required number of letters of recommendation to one. Following the focus groups, the CAL EHLS team audited the EHLS website for clarity, accuracy, equity, and accessibility. The eighteenth program cohort was welcomed on January 9, 2023, and all 18 scholars successfully graduated on August 28, 2023. The cohort represented seven language backgrounds, and many had already secured job offers within the federal government by the time of writing. Two of the scholars were selected to present their Open-source Analysis Project (OSAP) at the National Security Education Board meeting held in early September.

CAL regularly engages in nationwide recruitment for the next EHLS cohort. From February through June, Mathilda Reckford held in-person information sessions in Houston, Texas; Los Angeles, California; New York City, New York; and Portland, Oregon. CAL also hosted a series of informational webinars and launched a robust social media campaign across multiple platforms. The EHLS team held the selection committee meeting on August 31. Six panels of reviewers, each with two academic and one federal reviewer, discussed and ranked each applicant under their review. The panels reviewed 149 applications in total, representing 22 language backgrounds. From the focus groups, CAL recommended 48 applicants for additional language testing at the end of September; the final cohort for 2024 will be selected from this group.



The EHLS program not only develops English language proficiency but also professional competencies. CAL's custom assessment, the Professional Performance Assessment (PPA), is a unique instrument which measures growth in pragmatic competence in the federal workplace. In February 2023, CAL staff—Dr. Meg Montee, Dr. Kate Moran, and Mathilda Reckford—reported the results of the Professional Performance Assessment and the interpretive score reports to DLNSEO. The purpose of this meeting was to demonstrate the effectiveness of the PPA for measuring high-level professional written language skills not captured by typical measures of English language writing proficiency and discuss the scoring bands used to interpret results. CAL administered the PPA pre-assessment to the EHLS 2023 cohort on January 23, 2023. CAL presented the results of the pre-assessment to the EHLS faculty at Georgetown University in April and administered the post-assessment to the 2023 cohort at the end of August. CAL and DLNSEO presented the rubric development process for the PPA at the 2023 East Coast Organization of Language Testers (ECOLT) conference in mid-October. The unit also submitted a proposal to the 2024 American Association of Applied Linguistics (AAAL) conference in Houston, Texas.

Innovations:

The Adult Literacy and Language Education team recognizes the dearth of professional development activities for instructors of adult English as a second language (ESL). In 2023, the team developed a two-part professional development webinar series for adult English language instructors. The webinars, scheduled for November 2023, were designed to cover CAL's Eight Principles for Effective Adult Language Education and included classroom activities and ideas for incorporating the principles into teaching.

Accomplishments:

CAL continued as the ESL strand partner for the Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE) conference. Adult Literacy and Language Education staff reviewed approximately 70 proposals for the conference, assisted proposal authors with submission questions, and organized the accepted proposals. As part of the Public Affairs and Engagement Committee (PAEC) for the American Association of Applied Linguistics (AAAL), Kate Moran assisted in selecting awardees for the OpEd Project's Write to Change the World workshops, offered through AAAL's PAEC.

PROGRAM AREA UPDATES: DUAL LANGUAGE & MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION (DLME)

PROGRAM AREA STAFF

FULL TIME

- Lisa Tabaku, Director, Dual Language and Multilingual Education (DLME)
- Igone Arteagoitia, Research Scientist, DLME

PART-TIME

- Ali Alahmadi, Business Coordinator
- Marilyn Raphael, Institute Registrar and Coordinator

Accomplishments

In the field of dual language programs, CAL proudly partners with school districts to conduct evaluations of programs, working alongside districts to carefully understand and review programs, and to provide clear, actionable, and evidence-based recommendations for impactful change.

In 2023, the DLME unit conducted an evaluation of policies and practices related to effectively educating multilingual learners across program models for Verona Area School District in Wisconsin. The unit conducted dual language program evaluations for schools in Urbana School District, Illinois; a dual language school in Berkeley Unified School District, California; and Prosper Independent School District, Texas. DLME also initiated evaluations of programs for multilingual learners in Kent School District in Washington State and Capistrano Unified School District in California in the spring of 2023 (these were ongoing in School Year 2023).

The unit also works internationally and conducted a review of the program model and teacher allocations of a Qatar Foundation dual-language program school in Doha, Qatar, in June 2023.

DLME provided guidance for dual language program improvement in the form of strategic planning in Grand Rapids Public Schools that led to a multi-year plan for formalizing the program design and components of three transitional bilingual elementary schools, leading to the continuation of Spanish language instruction in secondary education for the students served. Guidance in FY2023 also included the beginning of a partnership with Clark County Public Schools, Nevada, to assist with the rebirth of its dual language programs.

In 2022, the DLME unit began working with Alexandria City Public Schools, Virginia, in the area of curriculum guidance. In 2023, the project expanded to include the development of Spanish language arts curriculum maps to align Spanish and English standards and to prioritize content for instruction. The DLME unit worked with the district to attend to transferable and non-transferable skills and address critical-consciousness perspectives for Grades 3–5 and the newly adopted Grades K–2 Spanish language arts materials.

CAL's virtual institutes allow dual language professionals to participate in high-quality online professional development, and 2023 saw more than 200 participants from the U.S. and around the world.

In 2023, CAL offered:

- “Leading Dual Language Programs for Student Success”
- “Teaching Spanish Language and Literacy”
- “Language and Literacy Instruction for Spanish/English Emergent Bilingual Learners”
- “Foundations of CAL SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) for Dual Language Instruction”
Participants consistently speak to the high quality of these events:
- “The PD was wonderful and packed with lots of information and made me think of new ways to teach and things to implement in my classroom.”
- “The workshops are very helpful and very well-organized. The resources provided are rich and useful. It is a very pleasurable learning journey. Thank you very much for giving us the opportunity to learn, to share, and to connect with colleagues from different parts of the world.”
- “The master handout with all of the links to resources is extremely valuable! Thank you for your organization, preparation, and clear presentation of knowledge.”
- “I appreciate the expertise and skill set of the presenters. This PD was one of the most informative and reflective PDs I have attended. Thank you so very much for this opportunity and collaborative learning time!”



CAL also provides professional development directly to school districts implementing dual language models. In FY2023, DLME served 14 U.S. districts and schools with professional development in person or online in Alaska, California, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, Texas, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and the District of Columbia, as well as the countries of South Africa and Qatar. In a district in Washington State, DLME used a less traditional professional development delivery model: DLME staff provided guidance to teachers in 12 school-based professional learning communities—some in person and some remote—in which teachers were able to select, by school, a topic of their choice for guidance and discussion from CAL.

Recognition

CAL's clients consistently provide testimony to the quality and impact of our services. After a number of educators from Palmdale School District participated in the Spanish Language and Literacy Institute, the district asked CAL for support to continue learning and practicing instructional biliteracy strategies focused on honoring and leveraging students' full linguistic and cultural repertoires. As one of them put it: “We need training in linguistics, in particular Spanish linguistics, and we have not gotten it anywhere else.” CAL DLME staff will continue to work with Palmdale dual language teachers in 2023–2024. The pool of participants will be widened by including non-Spanish speaking dual language educators.

- “Your session was phenomenal and exactly what our team needed. We will be hosting PD for our teachers later this month, and I can't wait to discuss the strategies for linguistic equity that you shared. We are also looking forward to working with our team on many 'action steps' that came out of our administrative session last week!”
– Supervisor of World Languages, Dual Language Immersion and English Language Learning, commenting on CAL's PD services
- “I would like to say: Thank you very much for these two days of trainings! Attached is some of the work I developed for my science class during the training today, reflecting what we have been learning. We have learned a lot from you; we hope to see you again soon!”
– Participant in an in-person CAL SIOP for Dual Language session
- “I had the pleasure of attending the CAL SIOP for Dual Language training you facilitated ... in Doha, Qatar. The training was outstanding and something I truly believe would be of great benefit to our developing dual language acquisition program at [our school].”
– Participant in an in-person international professional development session

PROGRAM AREA UPDATES: PREK-12 ENGLISH LEARNER EDUCATION

PROGRAM AREA STAFF

- Kia Johnson, Director, PreK-12 Language and Literacy and Professional Development (PD)
- Marybelle Marrero-Colon, Associate Director of Professional Development
- Maria Cieslak, Professional Development Content Manager
- Ali Alahmadi, Professional Development Business Coordinator
- Marilyn Raphael, Administrative Specialist

Program Impact

In FY2023, the PreK-12 Language and Literacy unit implemented well-received changes and pursued exciting new developments. Kia Johnson supervised the transition from FY2022, including the execution and renewal of contracts and the establishment of client relationships and partnerships.

Contracted Services and Projects

By the end of FY2023, the PreK-12 Language and Literacy unit had 62 projects. The Professional Development (PD) calendar was scheduled for customized and standard CAL Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) and CAL Solutions PD through the summer of 2024. The unit looked forward to continuing work with several repeating clients, including Greenville, Texas; Savannah-Chatham County Schools; and the Virginia Department of Education.

- Turlock Unified School District, Turlock, California: CAL PreK-12 PD staff trained over 700 teachers during a PD Day for Turlock USD on August 11, 2023. The unit's staff and six CAL consultants facilitated six 3-hour PD sessions across the district on best practices for working with Multilingual Learners.
- Juneau School District, Alaska: Mark Babiarz, a CAL consultant, traveled to Juneau, Alaska, from August 28–31 to deliver a 4-day workshop on implementing the CAL SIOP Model in various classroom contexts.
- Natividad Pagan International Newcomers Academy (INA), Cleveland, Ohio: The PreK-12 Language and Literacy unit completed a series of in-person and virtual workshops where CAL staff and consultants supported the entire school staff in implementing the CAL SIOP Model into their instruction for their specialized multilingual learner population. All students enrolled at this school were newcomers or refugees in the U.S. school system for less than two years. As of June 2023, all students in grade 12 had graduated. The staff thanked CAL for engaging and helpful professional learning and its impact on their instructional practices.

Online Course and Institutes

Online course and institute attendance remained steady in FY2023. The institutes reached 725 participants in locations as far as Canada and Chile. One participant who had attended several CAL institutes joined the CAL PreK-12 PD consultant team in June 2023 and supported virtual and in-person CAL SIOP projects with flexible full-time availability.

New Initiatives

The PreK-12 Language and Literacy unit advanced several new initiatives to boost the CAL SIOP brand and align it with current research and goals in multilingual learner education:



- **CAL SIOP Refresh Planning:** The team reworked the CAL SIOP website to bring new research and resources to educators and researchers interested in the SIOP Model. Updates included video testimonials, new lesson plan templates, and engaging infographics designed to appeal to educational stakeholders.

- **CAL SIOP Overview Institute:** The first installment of the CAL SIOP Overview Institute took place in September 2023 as a closeout to FY2023. This event allowed educators worldwide to attend the workshop without requiring a direct contract with their district or school.

- **Digital Badging:** The unit entered a one-year contract with Credly by Pearson, a digital credential network, to offer digital badges for participants of professional learning services provided by the PreK-12 Language and Literacy unit. As of February 26, 2024, the unit had issued 454 digital badges, with an average acceptance rate of 71%, 4% above the company rate.

Impact on the Field

- **Empowering English Education:** Yasmin Hernandez-Manno, Director of Education Compliance for Porzio Compliance Services, attended the CAL SIOP Training of Trainers (TOT): Foundations Institute in June 2023. In her article Empowering English Education: Meeting the ESL Challenge with CAL-SIOP, she highlighted how the CAL SIOP Model instilled confidence in English learners. She stated, "Every student deserves the opportunity to succeed and be proud of their academic work, and the [CAL] SIOP method gives this opportunity back to English learning students."

- **Professional Development Feedback:**

- Marybelle Marrero-Colon facilitated the CAL SIOP Overview in Covington, Kentucky, in August 2023. Feedback included: "Thank you for bringing the [CAL] SIOP training to HMS! It was an outstanding four days of learning and positive interaction... Ms. Marrero-Colon did an excellent job of planning and executing these sessions and should be commended for [her] effort."

- Maria Cieslak facilitated the CAL Webinar Series with Vista Higher Learning in May 2023. A participant commented, "The designing dynamic classroom interaction webinar was fantastic! ... The amount of meaningful and valuable resources shared was excellent. Maria Cieslak is a true inspiration for what teaching is all about."

- CAL consultants Ruth McMullen and Ann Hengerer facilitated the CAL SIOP Overview for the Virginia Department of Education in October 2022. One participant remarked: "This training was fantastic... My students and coworkers will benefit from this SIOP training. Thank you!"

The PreK-12 Language and Literacy unit continued to promote CAL's mission to advance language learning and cultural understanding. The team's investment in PD equipped educators with cutting-edge methodologies and research-based practices, elevating their instructional prowess and meeting the diverse needs of Multilingual Learners.



PROGRAM AREA UPDATES: LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT & INSTRUCTIONAL RESEARCH

PROGRAM AREA STAFF

- Francesca Di Silvio, Director of World Languages
- Elsa Fraser, Director of Operations
- Jenna Bushton, Research Assistant
- Leslie Fink, Senior Research Assistant
- Leah Guo, Psychometrician
- Reshmi Kumpakha, Quantitative Research Assistant
- Toni Lewis, Operations Manager
- Amya McKoy, Customer Support Assistant
- Jamie Morgan, Senior Project Manager
- Rachel Myers, Senior Research Assistant
- Aubrey Sahouria, Quantitative Research Assistant
- Elyssa Sun, Associate Project Manager

World Languages

In FY2023, the World Languages team worked on five significant projects, including a comprehensive research study for the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The study explored the landscape of heritage language programming in the United States through the following activities:

- A literature review examining heritage language frameworks and standards across 50 states; Washington, DC; and Puerto Rico;
- A comparative analysis of 123 national language organizations and 33 specific district and program frameworks; and
- Engagement with Massachusetts educators through three focus groups involving 14 participants, a statewide survey with 142 respondents, and ten interviews.

This work culminated in a 134-page report and a three-page summary with actionable recommendations. The findings generated significant interest from leaders in states such as Nebraska, Rhode Island, Indiana, and Maine.

CAL also contributed to the Assessment and Evaluation Language Resource Center (AELRC) in partnership with Georgetown University. Key contributions included:

- Expanding the Understanding Assessment module to meet the needs of post-secondary language educators,
- Compiling a directory of less commonly taught language courses at community colleges, and
- Delivering two webinars, titled Oral Proficiency Assessment and Rubrics in World Language Classrooms, which collectively reached over 150 educators.

In addition, CAL launched the STARTALK Career Pathways: Connecting Heritage Learners to Federal Careers website. This resource highlights federal career opportunities for heritage language learners and includes podcasts, video interviews with federal employees, and language learning guides. The materials were piloted in high schools and colleges, with overwhelmingly positive feedback from students and teachers.



Instructional and Assessment Research for English Learners

CAL's team made significant progress on projects supporting English learners. A renewal grant from MetriTech allowed CAL to develop new speaking items for the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT). This work, focused on measuring English oral proficiency for K–12 students, will continue through 2025.

In Massachusetts, CAL completed a two-year study on Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE). This year's efforts included:

- An analysis of state-reported data from 2017 to 2021, focusing on SLIFE enrollment, academic outcomes, and standardized test performance,
- A 58-page report detailing findings and recommendations for improving SLIFE identification and support, and
- A presentation to 30 educators participating in the state's SLIFE community of practice.

Participants engaged actively during the presentation, with educators sharing suggestions for additional resources, such as tools for assessing students in their first language (L1).

Additionally, CAL collaborated with the Mississippi Department of Education to align English Language Proficiency Standards with academic content standards in English language arts, math, and science. This project involved training educators, collecting data from over 1,000 standards, and producing 37 detailed data tables on alignment and interrater reliability.

BEST Assessments

CAL finalized development of the updated BEST Plus 3.0 and BEST Literacy 2.0 assessments, which received federal approval for use in adult education programs through 2030. These assessments align with new National Reporting System (NRS) standards and incorporate updated content and themes.

BEST Plus 3.0 transitions to an app-based testing platform, enhancing flexibility and accessibility for adult English learners. Concurrently, BEST Literacy 2.0 provides updated print materials to assess reading and writing proficiency. To support these updates, CAL's efforts include:

- Developing the CAL Test Platform to administer the computer-adaptive version of BEST Plus 3.0.
- Creating a web portal for managing test administrations and user data.
- Producing new self-paced training modules for test administrators.

These improvements are designed to ensure a seamless transition for over 2,000 test administrators across 300 adult education programs nationwide before the retirement of earlier test versions in Summer 2024.



PROGRAM AREA UPDATES: CAL-WIDA PARTNERSHIP



During CAL's FY2023, the CAL-WIDA Partnership Team provided test development, test production, and psychometric analysis and research services to WIDA in support of WIDA's entire suite of assessments, including ACCESS for ELLs (Online and Paper), WIDA Screener (Online and Paper), Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs, WIDA Screener for Kindergarten, and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs.

By the end of CAL's FY2023, the CAL-WIDA Partnership Team consisted of 38 staff members and interns, along with numerous consultants and subcontractors. The CAL-WIDA Partnership Team was supported by an organizational team that met weekly. The following staff led the team:

- Justin Kelly, Senior Director, CAL-WIDA Partnership
- Elsa Fraser, Director of Program Operations, CAL-WIDA Partnership
- Shu Jing Yen, Senior Director, Psychometrics and Quantitative Research
- Tanya Bitterman, Associate Director, Test Development
- Dale Ingram, Manager, Test Production

PROGRAM AREA STAFF

OPERATIONS

- Elsa Fraser, Director of Program Operations, CAL-WIDA Partnership

TEST DEVELOPMENT

- Justin Kelly, Senior Director, CAL-WIDA Partnership
- Tanya Bitterman, Associate Director, Test Development
- Michele Kawood, Test Development Manager
- Samantha Musser, Test Development Manager
- Rebecca Pred-Sosa, Test Development Manager
- Mina Niu, Associate Test Assembly Manager
- Christy Shepherd, Kindergarten Test Development Manager
- Ian Bradley, Language Testing Specialist
- Shauna Cannon, Language Testing Specialist
- Melissa Cheston, Language Testing Specialist
- Regina DiBella, Kindergarten Language Testing Specialist
- Ashley Gurule Sauerwein, Language Testing Specialist
- Rachel Miles, Language Testing Specialist
- Megan Welch, Language Testing Specialist
- Alexandra Herbert, Senior Test Development Assistant
- Victoria Burges, Test Development Assistant
- Leah Cave, Test Development Assistant
- Virginia Stouse, Intern

TEST PRODUCTION

- Dale Ingram, Manager, Test Production
- Todd Rudolph, Technology Lead
- Kim Balacuit, Production Artist
- William Evans, Production Artist
- Stephanie Galvez, Production Artist
- Irina Mukhutdinova, Production Artist
- Adam Neubauer, Production Artist
- Basra Abdillahi-Chire, Test Assembly Specialist
- Elizabeth Pavlova, Test Assembly Specialist

Psychometrics and Quantitative Research (PQR)

- Shu Jing Yen, Senior Director, Psychometrics and Quantitative Research
- Frank Wucinski, Project Manager
- Xin Yu, Quantitative Team Lead
- Seong Eun Hong, Psychometrician
- Yage (Leah) Guo, Psychometrician
- Yu Lan Su, Senior Psychometrician
- Sofia Buitrago, Quantitative Research Assistant
- Reshmi Kumpakha, Quantitative Research Assistant
- Aubrey Sahouria, Quantitative Research Assistant
- Jasmine Tsai, Quantitative Research Assistant

Accomplishments

CAL's strong partnership with WIDA highlighted the synergy between the mission and values of the two organizations. In CAL's work to promote language learning and cultural understanding by serving as a trusted source for research, resources, and policy analysis, the CAL-WIDA Partnership Team worked closely with WIDA in its mission to advance academic language development and academic achievement for children and youth who are culturally and linguistically diverse.

CAL continued to be a valued partner to WIDA for test development, test production and assembly, and psychometric analysis and research for WIDA's suite of assessments. CAL made important annual contributions to the development and analysis of ACCESS for ELLs, WIDA's flagship assessment, which more than 2.5 million students take each year. CAL's FY2023 included portions of the July 2022 through June 2023 and July 2023 through June 2024 project years, during which CAL worked on WIDA assessments ACCESS for ELLs Assessments, Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs Refreshment, and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Refreshment.

Between October 2022 and September 2023, CAL's efforts on the ACCESS for ELLs testing program included the following work.

ACCESS for ELLs Online and Paper field test

The CAL TD team—led by Tanya Bitterman, Michele Kawood, Sam Musser, Becca Pred-Sosa, Mina Niu, Dale Ingram, and Todd Rudolph—developed new test materials for ACCESS for ELLs. Many of the items that CAL developed were also adapted for use on the ACCESS for ELLs Paper assessment. Each item underwent a rigorous quality control process, with educator and WIDA input at multiple points in the cycle, along with formal documentation of sourcing and fact-checking, mock administration, layout review, and QC checks in both online and print platforms. This work involved the combined effort of test developers, production artists, and test assembly specialists.

2022-23 Test Development Cycle

- CAL produced 150 Listening items, 159 Reading items, 60 Speaking tasks, and 34 Writing tasks in this development cycle. The test items created in the 2022-23 cycle were the first to be developed to align to the WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition. These materials were to be field tested during the 2023-24 school year.

- The CAL TD and Test Production teams, led by Mina Niu and Dale Ingram, produced 44 field test forms (99 documents) for the ACCESS Paper field test.

2023-24 Test Development Cycle

- CAL began work on 171 Listening items, 195 Reading items, 60 Speaking tasks, and 40 Writing tasks in this development cycle. These materials were to be field tested during the 2024-25 school year and used for both ACCESS for ELLs and WIDA Screener.

The CAL TD team, led by Tanya Bitterman and Sam Musser, conducted work to provide the necessary materials for rating the ACCESS for ELLs Speaking and Writing tasks. CAL test developers analyzed field test responses to select anchor papers and responses for use in other training and calibration activities, which are used to score the current field test. This work, critical to obtaining valid and reliable data for the field test, runs concurrently with test development activities. It encompassed the production of materials for the 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years.

ACCESS for ELLs operational assessments

The CAL PQR team completed the Annual Technical Reports for the forms of ACCESS for ELLs Online and ACCESS for ELLs Paper administered in the 2021-22 school year. Before drafting the reports, the CAL PQR team conducted exhaustive analyses of the test data from the 2021-22 administration. These comprehensive technical reports detailed the statistics that support the validity and reliability of the assessments.

- These statistics and analyses included descriptive statistics regarding participation in the assessment; overarching scale score and proficiency level results; item and task analyses, differential item functioning analyses, raw score distributions, scale score distributions, proficiency level distributions, equating summaries, test characteristic curves, and test information functions for each grade level cluster and domain; analyses of composite scores; annual updates of validity evidence; and reliability evidence (reliabilities of the domain scores, interrater agreement, conditional standard error of measurement of the scale scores at

the cut points, accuracy and consistency of domains, reliability of composite scores, conditional standard error of measurement of student scale scores, and accuracy and consistency of composites).

- These reports were reviewed by WIDA and the members of their Technical Advisory Committee, and redacted versions of the final reports were made available to stakeholders throughout the WIDA consortium.

The CAL PQR team began conducting analyses of test data from the 2022-23 school year. These analyses will be included in the Annual Technical Reports finalized in Spring 2024.

The CAL PQR team completed verification studies for the Speaking and Writing subtests of ACCESS for ELLs Online, which were administered in the 2022-23 school year. These verification studies are an annual step to ensure the stability of item parameters from year to year, and these studies result in the scoring tables used on the operational assessment to report student scores.

The CAL TD team prepared additional materials for the rating of newly operational tasks on ACCESS for ELLs Online in the 2023-24 school year. This work involves selecting additional anchor responses and developing additional anchor explanations, selecting and annotating additional training samples, and updating task-specific scoring notes. This is a collaborative process between CAL and WIDA. During this phase of work, CAL also reviews supplemental rater training materials developed by DRC, WIDA's printing, distribution, scoring, and reporting vendor.

Innovations

WIDA English Language Development Standards, 2020 Edition

CAL continued to work with WIDA on the operationalization of the WIDA English Language Development Standards, 2020 Edition (henceforth, 2020 Standards) in the suite of WIDA assessments. By the end of FY2023, CAL had begun working on new items for ACCESS for ELLs that aligned to the 2020 Standards.

Members of the CAL TD and PQR teams worked closely with WIDA to develop a new scoring rubric for the Writing subtest that aligned to the 2020 Standards, given the extensive updates to the Proficiency Level Descriptors in the 2020 Standards.

Members of the CAL TD team, led by Tanya Bitterman, collaborated with members of WIDA's assessment team on a research-driven approach to developing the Writing scoring rubric, utilizing a methodology where the number and nature of the score points emerge from reading and evaluating a set of writing responses. Members of the CAL PQR team provided critical insight into the usability of the rubric for psychometric purposes. In addition, the CAL TD team produced materials for both educator and DRC trials of the scoring rubric and contributed to the finalization of the rubric. By the end of FY2023, CAL was wrapping up the final steps to operationalize the rubric for first use during the field test of new Writing tasks in the 2023-24 school year.

SPOTLIGHT: PROJECTS



The Center for the Success of English Learners (CSEL) is a grant-funded research center that aims to enhance opportunities and outcomes for English Learners (ELs). Its research is supported by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), U.S. Department of Education, through Grant R305C200016 to the University of Houston.

CSEL undertakes a focused program of research aimed at identifying and removing barriers related to school tracking through the analysis of administrative and newly collected data using a mixed-methods approach and intersecting strands: policy, formative assessment, science, and social studies. In addition, CSEL develops and tests interventions that leverage four transdisciplinary approaches to improve instruction for ELs in grade 6 and grade 9 science and social studies. The transdisciplinary levers include (1) foregrounding content to build language through content instruction; (2) using activities that are engaging and meaningful to students while involving students in the practices of the discipline; (3) using the organization of learning in heterogeneous teams, or Team-Based Learning (TBL), to promote collaboration, discussion, and social motivation; and (4) making use of formative assessment both to improve teachers' and students' understanding of students' development and to promote responsive instruction and feedback to students.

CAL's Outreach Contributions

CAL serves as the national outreach and dissemination partner in the CSEL collaborative. The President of CAL serves as a Co-Principal Investigator for CSEL. CAL manages and maintains CSEL's social media and website, www.cselcenter.org, which includes a blog where CAL shares posts on language education topics, webinar recordings, and more. CAL's national reach among stakeholders ensures that research findings and insights from the CSEL investigators can be quickly and nimbly disseminated to the field.

CAL's Conference Contributions

CAL staff played a vital role in supporting CSEL in planning and coordinating the inaugural Improving Instruction, Assessment, and Policies for Secondary English Learners Across the Content Areas conference, which CSEL organized in collaboration with the National Research & Development Center to Improve Education for Secondary English Learners, an IES-funded collaborator. The support from CAL staff was instrumental to the conference's success.

The conference showcased a lineup of expert speakers, including Kenji Hakuta, Amanda Kibler, Guillermo Solano-Flores, and Jennifer O'Day, who discussed a wide range of topics related to English Learners in secondary school settings. Mark Schneider, IES Director, offered insights on the federal commitment to research and improving education for English Learners.

In addition, Miguel Cardona, U.S. Secretary of Education, shared recorded remarks highlighting the value of multilingualism and asset-based approaches in education. Furthermore, Montserrat

Garibay, Acting Assistant Deputy Secretary and Director of the Office of English Language Acquisition, spoke supportively about the topics presented by the keynote speakers.

The conference also included breakout sessions where participants heard from researchers who discussed curricula, instruction, student success, and ongoing research topics. Attendees examined real-world obstacles and discussed actions to overcome them during vignette group discussions. Many CAL staff members, associates, and consultants made crucial contributions to the conference's success, including, in alphabetical order by last name, Ali Alahmadi, Keira Ballantyne, Amy Burden, Joel Gómez, Lupe Hernandez-Silva, Kia Johnson, Marybelle Marrero-Colón, Fabian Monasterio of World Data, Inc. (WDI), Hisham Alqasrawi (of WDI), Althea Rowe, and Brittany York.



In FY2023, CAL's Research to Policy: Critical Conversations in Language Education webinar series focused on issues like language access, translanguaging, and community-centered approaches. These sessions continued to prioritize the learning needs of multilingual students and provided a platform for insightful discussions with researchers and educators.

Nov 01, 2022: [English for Occupational Purposes: Language and Policy Issues for Health Care Professionals](#)

Apr 04, 2023: [ELL Segregation and Integration: Beyond the Classroom](#)

May 16, 2023: [Bridging Borders through Language Museums: Promoting Language Awareness](#)

Jun 13, 2023: [Harnessing the Power of Multilingualism: Strategies for Meaningful Assessment](#)

Jul 18, 2023: [Breaking Down Borders for Multilingual Learners with Disabilities](#)

Aug 29, 2023: [Critical Multiliteracies Beyond School Borders: Heritage Language Involvement in the Community](#)

Sep 26, 2023: [Critical Biliteracies without Borders: Translanguaging and Culturally Sustaining Approaches](#)

Oct 31, 2023: [Educating Transnational Students: Languages and Identities across Borders](#)

Nov 17, 2023: [Indigenous Language Reclamation](#)

By the end of FY2023, CAL had begun the development of new test items and tasks for WIDA Screener Online and WIDA Screener Paper to align these assessments to the 2020 Standards.

Members of the CAL TD team, led by Tanya Bitterman and Justin Kelly, collaborated with WIDA on the refreshment of the ACCESS for ELLs and WIDA Screener training modules. These are hosted on WIDA's secure portal to train test administrators to administer and, where appropriate, score WIDA's suite of assessments. The purpose of this refreshment was also to ensure these materials aligned to the 2020 Standards.

ACCESS for ELLs

The CAL PQR team conducted a special research study to compare the field test calibration results to the operational calibration results for the ACCESS Writing subtest. The results of this study indicated that Writing field test calibration results can be validly and reliably used for score reporting moving forward, alleviating the need to conduct operational calibration analysis in the future.

The CAL PQR team investigated an automation procedure for conducting the ACCESS for ELLs Online pre-equating analysis in the Listening and Reading domains. This automation will allow CAL to accommodate a compressed analysis schedule requested by WIDA.

Throughout 2023, the CAL TD and PQR teams collaborated with WIDA to plan a new study to establish a vertical scale for ACCESS Online and ACCESS Paper. This effort involved establishing the plan for linking between ACCESS Online and ACCESS Paper, as well as linking between different grade-level clusters on ACCESS Online, identifying test items to serve as linking items, and preparing the test materials and ancillary materials for the first phase of the study involving the Listening and Reading subtests. CAL will continue to support this effort by establishing the scale for Listening and Reading and implementing a second study involving the Speaking and Writing subtests throughout 2024 and into 2025.

Alternate ACCESS for ELLs

By the end of CAL's FY2023, WIDA also developed a new version of Alternate ACCESS for ELLs, and academic English language proficiency assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. This was part of the rollout of the 2020 Standards. In November 2022, the CAL Production and Test Assembly teams (led by Dale Ingram and Mina Niu) completed the delivery of the field-test forms for the refreshed Alternate ACCESS for ELLs. A total of 20 forms (60 documents) were delivered, including five forms for each of the four Grade Level Clusters.

The CAL PQR team completed the calibration plan and functional rules for the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs field test. These documents are critical to the administration and analysis of the field test.

The CAL PQR team completed the analysis of the Alternate ACCESS field test data and conducted an item selection meeting with WIDA to select items for one operational form of Alternate ACCESS and one operational form of Alternate Screener.

The CAL TD and Test Production teams completed the assembly and delivery of the operational form of Alternate ACCESS. This was first used operationally in the 2023-24 school year.

CAL began planning activities related to the analysis of the first operational assessment year of the refreshed Alternate ACCESS. These activities include conducting an operational verification study, participating in standard setting, and producing the final scoring tables for the first iteration of score reporting in Summer 2024.

The CAL PQR, TD, and Production teams were involved in preparing the operational form of Alternate Screener in 2024 and beyond.

Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs

As part of the rollout of the 2020 Standards, WIDA worked on the development of two new forms of Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs, with CAL as the test design, development, and analysis partner with WIDA on the project.

Led by Christy Shepherd, Regina DiBella, and Michele Kawood, CAL TD and PQR team members participated in discussions with WIDA regarding high-level design decisions for the refreshed Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs forms, completed the initial development of the test items and ancillary materials, conducted Bias and Sensitivity and Content reviews of the materials, and were, by the end of FY2023, preparing to conduct cognitive labs on a select subset of the materials.

In 2023-24, CAL will conduct the cognitive labs and associated analyses, prepare materials for pilot testing, conduct pilot tests and associated analyses, and prepare for field testing in the 2024-25 school year. In 2024-25, the CAL PQR team will conduct field test analyses, and the CAL TD and Production teams will produce final operational forms.

External Feedback

In 2022, WIDA contracted with a third party to audit WIDA's psychometric program. As WIDA's psychometric partner, CAL was critically involved in many phases of this audit. The final report of the audit was very complimentary of WIDA's psychometric program, which in turn reflects exceptionally well on CAL. Here is an excerpt from the audit report:

While this report focused on areas that might be improved, it is important to note that WIDA's psychometric processing methodology is essentially sound. In fact, WIDA's methods are often better than would be expected in a typical assessment program. For instance, WIDA estimates item parameters and maintains reporting scales for each language domain (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) separately. ... This extra effort allows WIDA's assessments to meet unidimensionality requirements (an assessment is intended to measure a single construct) for each domain-level test. It also allows for unique information by domain to be trustworthy when reported. ... WIDA's domain scores are more trustworthy and meet psychometric scrutiny that is not typically applied to other language assessment's domain scores.

Finally, WIDA uses well-established psychometric processing steps that have been applied operationally by many large-scale, high-stakes assessment systems. Rasch modeling was one of the earliest departures from classical test theory and continues to be used to generate scale scores for assessments worldwide. ... Overall, WIDA's psychometric processing is effective and generates trustworthy assessment scores.



SPOTLIGHT: PROJECTS CONTINUED



Multilingual Multimodal Science Inventory (M2-Si)

Project Staff

- Dr. Keira Ballantyne, VP of Programs and Development (Co-PI)
- Dr. Amy Burden, Multilingual Multimodal Test Development Manager
- Brittany York, Senior Research Assistant

In partnership with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, CAL is conducting a 4-year U.S. Department of Education-funded Competitive State Assessment Grant. Our research and development team, consisting of Dr. Keira Ballantyne, Dr. Amy Burden, and Brittany York, is working to create the [Multilingual Multimodal Science Inventory](#) (M2-Si), an assessment for learning in grades 3–5 science that centers multilingual learners and aims to allow educators to understand what students know and can do in science, not just what they know and can do in science in English. To date, our team has conducted focus groups with educators, multilingual families, and students across North Carolina, working to understand how interest holders need and understand information about students' science abilities. We are moving forward into the 2023-24 school year with plans to engage with a cohort of up to 20 educators to co-create and pilot formative assessment activities in science that support students' full range of multilingual and multimodal resources as they engage in scientific sense-making.

For FY2023, CAL provided services to Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), Maryland, to evaluate services for emergent multilingual (EML) and Latino/a students. MCPS is the 14th largest school district in the nation, with more than 150,000 students and approximately 30,000 EML students. One-third of the students are Latino/a, and 18% are classified as EML.

CAL's mixed-method approach included the engagement of a Stakeholder Commission composed of MCPS educators and other stakeholders to steer the direction of the inquiry. We conducted 18 focus groups, an educator survey, a family and community engagement survey, over 350 classroom observations, interviews with central office staff, document review, and quantitative data review.

CAL's evaluation is aligned to the U.S. Department of Education's English Learner Toolkit for State and Local Education Agencies, and the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine publication [Monitoring Educational Equity](#). Our evaluation report is available [here](#).

SPOTLIGHT: PUBLICATIONS

CAL Publications



[Right from the Start: Enriching Learning Experiences for Multilingual Learners through Multiliteracies](#)

Author: Gottlieb, M.

Publication/Publisher: Center for Applied Linguistics

Description: This position paper examines policies and practices concerning the expansion of literacy to multiliteracies and the subsequent impact on teaching and learning for multilingual learners. In this exploration of multiliteracies, Margo Gottlieb celebrates the linguistic and cultural strengths of multilingual learners and the importance of fostering their agency and empowerment. Additionally, the author reveals how multiliteracies can enhance learning experiences for multilingual learners and provides an insightful evaluation of the Science of Reading.

Staff Publications Beyond CAL

Names are in alphabetical order by surname, with CAL staff in boldface.

[Supporting Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education \(SLIFE\): Effective Policies, Practices, and Programs](#)

Authors: Morgan, J., Montee, M., & Di Silvio, F.

Publication/Publisher: Language Teaching, 1–4. Cambridge University Press.

Description: In this summary, we present research from a literature review and state policy analysis on effective policies, practices, and programs for supporting students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) in K-12 schools.

[Providing Alternative Assessments Through Experiential Learning in an Online Language Teacher Training Course](#)

Author: Burden, A.

Publication/Publisher: Emerging Practices for Online Language Assessment, Exams, Evaluation, and Feedback (pp. 119-141). IGI Global Scientific Publishing.

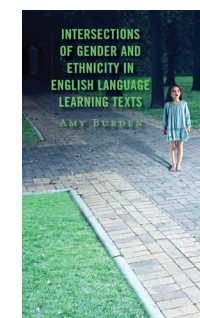
Description: This chapter focuses on anti-racist alternative assessment taught and assessed through experiential learning in a low-resourced online ESL teacher training classroom. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is threefold: (1) to discuss how alternative assessments can fit within an anti-racist assessment ecology in an online course; (2) to describe an online experiential learning teacher training project designed to capture emerging knowledge of pre-service language teachers on forms of alternative assessment and their applicability for differing linguistic modalities in the ESL classroom; (3) to describe the tools and strategies for overcoming challenges to successfully teach alternative assessment through experiential learning online in a low-resourced college community.

[Intersections of Gender and Ethnicity in English Language Learning Texts](#)

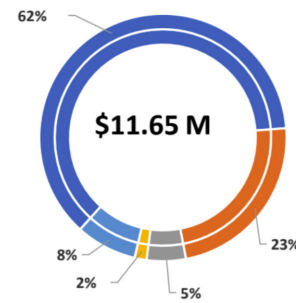
Author: Burden, A.

Publication/Publisher: Intersections of Gender and Ethnicity in English Language Learning Texts. Lexington Books: an imprint of Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group.

Description: Drawing on her extensive research, Amy Burden offers a first-of-its-kind critical linguistic analysis of gender and ethnicity representation in English Language Learning materials and an update for the U.S. ESL textbook market 40 years overdue. Burden systematically deconstructs the theoretical and textual ways in which gender and ethnic representations reinforce patriarchal ideologies, ultimately arguing that Critical Literacy and Critical Race Pedagogy are necessary tools for ensuring equitable, egalitarian representation and combatting the harmful impact that racist, patriarchal themes have had on readers and communities.

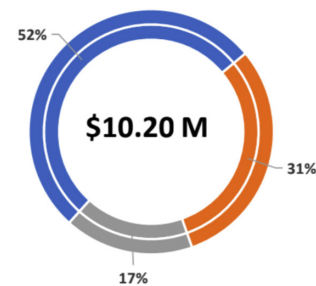


FY22 SOURCE OF FUNDS



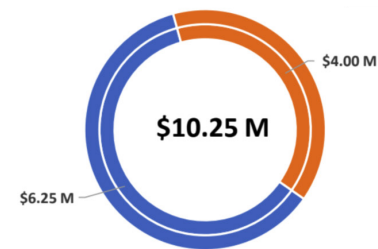
- Contracts & Grants
- Consulting Fees & Workshops
- Testing
- Products & Publications
- Other

FY22 USE OF FUNDS



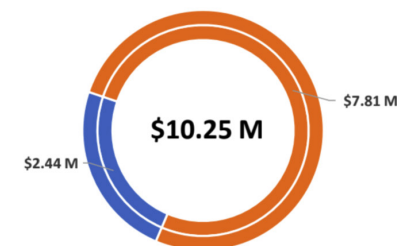
- Salaries, Wages & Benefits
- Consultants, Purchased Services, Pass-thru & Subscription Costs
- Other Program Expenses & Support Services

FY22 STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION ASSETS



- Cash, Receivables & Investments
- Other Assets

FY22 STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS



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- Net Assets

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