



Supporting the Educators of Multilingual and Multicultural Students

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Webinar Guest Speakers

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Webinar Overview

In this webinar, we present evidence-based professional learning structures and content for educators of multilingual learners. We explore how we can support our educators to respond to the constantly changing demands of our times and uphold what works for multilingual learners.

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Key Insights

- In *science* education, contemporary approaches emphasize that students make sense of phenomena and design solutions to problems as scientists and engineers do in their professional work. Students experience science as sense-making practices. This is a shift from individual learners' mastery of science content.
- In *language* education, contemporary approaches emphasize that language is used for a particular purpose in a particular context (WIDA 2020). Students use language as meaning-making practices. This is a shift from individual learners' acquisition of vocabulary and grammar.
- Many K–12 educators in the US do not have access to EL endorsement training, and professional development opportunities are often limited.
- Multilingual learners (MLs) are increasingly recognized as assets.

Policy Implications

- Policy changes have brought about an intersection of research and practice through the adoption of *A Framework for K–12 Science Education* (National Research Council, 2012) in 49 states. WIDA 2020, adopted in 42 states, now mirrors the framework standards.
- At the national and state levels, there is a general consensus on how to integrate science and language with MLs across science and language and across theory, policy, and practice. This includes recognition that everyone is responsible for the education of English language learners, not just the specialist teacher.
- As an example of action at the state level, Illinois has helped classroom teachers earn EL endorsements, prioritized professional development, and funded workshops and webinars in support of multilingual learner education. The state has also hosted an annual Bilingual Parent Summit to support and educate parents of multilingual learners.

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Calls to Action

- Our entire system of researchers, educators, administrators, and policy makers must work together to further the meaningful education of multilingual learners.
- Regarding STEM education, content and language professionals should come together to promote the concept of students *doing* science while *using* English.
- School districts should consider their multilingual learners being served. Who are they, and what are their needs? What training do their teachers and administrators need?
- There are still barriers to training for some multilingual educators. Policy should continue to improve accessibility.
- At the state level, consider all regions, not just those with heavy populations of multilingual learners.
- It may be worthwhile to rethink the practice of frontloading (or preteaching) vocabulary.
- English proficiency is often conflated with cognitive ability. We must continue to recognize that all students can participate in content learning. Keep them in class.

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Resources

- [Recruiting and Supporting Bilingual Educators Memo](#)
- [Teacher Vacancy Grant Pilot Program](#)
- [Illinois State Board of Education Multilingual / Language Development Department Webpage](#)
- Integrating Science and Language for All Students with a Focus on English Language Learners:
<http://www.nysed.gov/bilingual-ed/integrating-science-and-language-all-students-focus-english-language-learners>
- NYU SAIL Research Lab:
<https://www.nyusail.org/>

References

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