

A Review of the Education and Diagnosis of English Language Learners

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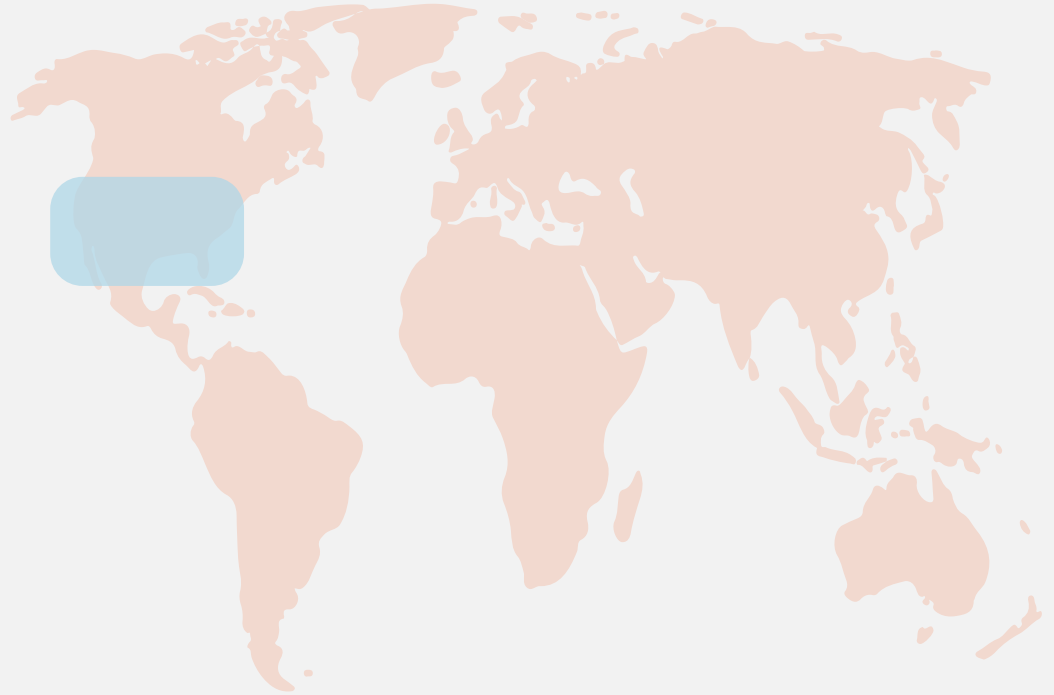
Prevalence of Immigrants

28%

Of the U.S.
population is
immigrants and their
U.S.-born children

90
Million

Adults and
children who are
assimilated into
our society



Federal Law

- **No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001)**

- Heightened accountability by mandating the inclusion of these students in high-stakes state and national assessments and by requiring states to provide equal education opportunity for these students
- Focus on reducing the performance gap between English Language Learners and their American counterparts
- Substantial autonomy is given to the states without much direction
- Created a lack of consistent criteria for ELL identification
- Does not include a comprehensive language policy built on the linguistic strengths of language-minority students

- **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015)**

- Built on many of the same principles of NCLB
- Including principles of high stakes testing and state autonomy
- Focused more on learning from the results of high stakes testing
- Using these to inform decision and funding

Both NCLB and ESSA do not require ELL training
- it is a decision given to the states

Teacher Preparation: Suggestions

- Training and diversity classes should be included in teacher preparation programs
 - Culturally responsive teacher preparation
 - Khong & Saito (2014) reported that 87% of teachers didn't receive any training
- Certification should be required to teach ELL students

- Interpreter training should be offered in schools
- Introduce more bilingual professionals into the school environment
- Offer professional development to in-service teachers focused on skills to supplement live classroom instruction

Teacher Attitude

- Lower quality of education
 - Deficit perspective
 - Exposed to much simpler English
 - Negative, self-fulfilling prophecy
- Newcomers do not wish to learn English
- The problem of Americanisation
- Bilingual and ELL teachers are not treated as equals
- Do not respond to these disparities
- Inaccurate conclusions
- Deny responsibility
- Insufficient time for co-planning
- Inappropriate usage of their academic knowledge
- Frustrated at the slow academic progress
- Negative attitude of administrators
- Lack necessary resources

Challenges within the Classroom: ELL Education is Not Just Good Teaching

- Low achievement and literacy of ELLs
→Linguistic features: low-frequency vocabulary, conditional clauses, and passive-voice verb constructions
- Differences in social language usage and cognitive and academic language usage
- This deficit in testable skills may lead to a lower IQ determination and thus an incorrect identification
- Indistinct line between ELL students at the lower levels of English proficiency and students with learning disabilities
- Performance gap virtually disappeared in math computation
- Some strategies that have been effective for English-speaking students can also work for ELLs
- Bicultural and bilingual education is the most effective approach
- The skills required to be cognitively and academically proficient in English may take as long as five to eight years to develop
→5-6 years of instruction for ELLs to overcome the language demands of mathematical word problem
- Adjustment problems
- An integrated approach to ELL is best
→Education needs to be exploratory

Issues with Assessment

- Validity of the test
→ Stem from linguistic complexities within the tests themselves that are not relevant to what is being assessed
- Linguistic and cultural biases
→ These nuisance variables impacting the reliability and validity of assessments must be identified and controlled
- Standardised achievement tests tend to assess language proficiency rather than content area knowledge
- There is no consistent approach for determining language proficiency

- Some language demands are based on the norms of American culture
- ELLs struggle with test format, fatigue and frustration factors due to test length, and overcrowding of pages
- It is difficult to discern between linguistic and cultural differences and specific disabilities
- LD is the most common misdiagnosis
- Question of whether the assessment should be given in the home language

Testing Accommodations

01

Originate in
testing
Students With
Disabilities

02

Be aware if the
accommodation
alters the
construct being
assessed

03

Customized English
and bilingual
dictionaries

04

Native language or
bilingual test booklets
and computer-based
testing

05

Linguistic
modification
of test items

THANKS

Do you have any
questions?

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