



What Makes for Quality Education for English Learners in the 21st Century?

What Needs To Be Included and What Actions Can We Take:
Lessons Learned from the Past and New ideas for Today

Open Space Report: Dallas

As a convener, we would like you to put together a short report from your group describing the following:

1. **Names of group members**

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2. **Issue/Topic/Activity**

English Language Learners after high school graduation- those who make it to junior college/ four year university. What do 16-20 ELLs need, what do professorate in academia needs to know?

3. **Highlights of Discussion/Recommendations/Next Action Steps**

We need to remind and keep in mind that many of our second language learners—either those who have finished with a GED, graduate from high school, non-traditional, or those who are international students and pursue higher education in our country may be English language learners.

Our society and institutions of higher education expect that our students pursuing higher education can at least read, write, and compute at basic levels. Unfortunately, this is not a reality for many of our students—even when they are native speakers of English or recent immigrants.

During this conversation, I did not find any initiative or conversation about college level ELL students. Most of the conversations were focused on ELLs at the K-12 level. I hope that future policies include 16-20 levels.

I have noticed that many college professors lack understanding of second language acquisition theories and expect their ELLs to be proficient when entering college. They expect to perform well and do well in their classes; however, there is not support or modification of instruction for these students—who could imagine that professors have to deal with ELLs???

How to meet their needs? How can we continue developing their academic language at such high levels without the proper support or instruction?

How do we expect them to graduate if we do not provide them the proper support? And if there is so many of us that do not understand that we are in the 21Century, and we need to teach and ensure the academic success of our students- all of our students!

One of my experiences- forget me if I sound bossy- but I can't stop thinking of a colleague of mine complaining that her student could not speak English "clearly" and she would not place her child in her classroom because she has an accent and doesn't speak and write professional English. I felt uncomfortable to hear this comment- this is not the only one I have heard. I am a second language learner myself, and I speak with an accent. I learned English's when I was 27 when I immigrated to the US from Mexico City.
(I am not writing in proper English and grammar! I am just mad and upset for this issue!)

This type of mentality—lack of knowledge from students--I have started to notice more and more of this comments and complaints from my colleagues. They ignore the fact that we have at the college level ELLs in our classes- from our nation and from other countries—and we forget that they also need to further develop their language skills and be able to work at the college level and use these academic language in their daily lives. However, we are doing nothing to help them. I need help!!!!
I understand language acquisition and I make accommodations for my own college level ELLS in my class and assignments. But not all do.

I would like to suggest to include the ELLS at 16-20+ to be served as well.

Professors at college levels need to know about language acquisition, language development, and to stop the deficient thinking model—e.g., this student because has an accent can't be a teacher, this students can't write proper English, this student can't talk well in English, and the like. Professors should pass a test for ELLs teaching at the college level—all of us!

College professors need to continue having set high expectations for their ELLs and at the same time ensure that their ELLS reach the academic goals of their courses with the appropriate support and modification to ensure that our students can complete their college degree and have more ELLs finishing college.

4. Available Resources

I need information of any university/colleges implementation of programs for helping their ELLs to be successful at this level.

5. Follow-up requests

Can someone let me know if this make sense???? Should we all be considering ELLs at the college level??

Thank you for allowing to vent and to write my thoughts.

6. Please type in this report in one of the laptops and hand in this sheet. Thanks!