



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

(didn't pass around sign in sheet, but about 20 participants)

2. Issue/Topic/Activity

Problems of the LEP Subgroup and AYP Accountability, and Recommendations of the Working Group on ELL Policy to Solve Them.

3. Highlights of Discussion/Recommendations/Next Action Steps

Dr. Wayne E. Wright (University of Texas at San Antonio) presented some of the main flaws within the current system of accountability within NCLB for ELL students:

- The LEP Subgroup is not stable. Students who attain English proficiency are exited from the group, while newcomer ELLs continually come into the group. Thus the LEP Subgroup appears as if it never is making progress.
- The current system of AYP requires a higher percentage of students in each subgroup pass their state's high-stakes test. The percentage increases each year until 2014 when 100% are expected to pass the tests. This system does not account for ELLs who come into the education system each year from different countries at different grade levels and different levels of proficiency. This will also make it impossible for the LEP subgroup to reach increasingly higher achievement targets.
- Problems with testing accommodations – little research to inform their effective use. Current lack of knowledge on how to use them and preserve test validity.

Dr. Wright then led a discussion over the policy recommendations from the the Working Group on ELL Policy, made up of the leading researchers in ELL policy and assessment. These

recommendations call for specific changes to ESEA to resolve the above flaws and others, to make the AYP system much more reasonable for ELLs. The recommendations also allow students more time to learn English, to be held accountable based on their level of English proficiency, and to provide more support for programs that develop bilingualism and biliteracy.

The participants had several comments about the specific recommendations, recognizing that they are not perfect and that the “devil is in the details,” but overall agreed that they would result in a much improved situation for ELLs, their teachers and schools, then the current harmful practices and unrealistic expectations of NCLB.

4. Available Resources

Problems with AYP for ELLs – came from Dr. Wright’s book:

Wright, Wayne E. (2010). *Foundations for Teaching English Language Learners: Research, Theory, Policy, and Practice*. Philadelphia: Caslon Publishing. (www.caslonpublishing.com)

The ELL Policy Working Group Recommendations:

Improving Educational Outcomes for English Language Learners: Recommendations for the Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.
www.cal.org/topics/ell/ELL-Working-Group-ESEA.pdf

5. Follow-up requests

We request that OELA work closely with the Working Group on ELL Policy to work out the details of the recommendations and include them in the Obama Administration’s draft of the reauthorized ESEA, and to fight for these changes during the reauthorization process.

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