



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: Charlotte

As a convener, we would like you to put together a short report from your group describing the following. When you're finished, please type in this report in one of the laptops and hand in this sheet. Thanks!

1. Names of group members

About 15 were present;

Facilitator: Joan Friedenber, Ph.D., Professor

2. Issue/Topic/Activity :

One-hour discussion of the latest research and stats on how to close the achievement gap for English learners.

The workshop was pitched to leaders and policy-makers, but also people who feel a strong passion to advocate for ELs, but who need more ammunition with which to do so and people who do what they do well, but are still depressed by the outcomes they see for ELs in their schools and districts.

3. Highlights of Discussion/Recommendations/Next Action Steps

Facilitator began by indicating that it was immoral and expensive to base policy on emotions or intuitions instead of empirical research.

Facilitator presented a handout ("Patterns of K-12 English Learners' Long-Term Achievement on NCEs on Standardized Tests in English Reading Compared Across Six Program Models") which demonstrates clearly that ELs in English-only programs end up in the 24th-34th NCE by 11th grade, ELs in transitional bilingual ed programs end up in the 35th-45th, while ELs in one-way maintenance programs end up in the 52nd and ELs in two-way immersion programs end up in the 62nd. (English speakers average at the 50th). Most research findings presented were from Thomas & Collier (see resources below)

Facilitator pointed out that no matter how well a teacher carried out SIOP or ESL/ESOL, ELs in English-only program were going to end up severely behind English speakers.

Participants argued that it was difficult to find Spanish-speaking teachers in North Carolina and therefore, two-way immersion or one-way maintenance programs were unrealistic. Facilitator indicated that there were, indeed, Spanish-speaking teachers in the present group who were teaching in ESL instead of two-way immersion programs. Facilitator also illustrated that incorporating a two-way immersion program required only one new bilingual teacher hire once every two years.

Participants argued that two-way immersion and maintenance programs were not realistic for smaller language groups (e.g., having one Hmong-speaking student, one Hindi-speaking student, etc.) Facilitator agreed but added that teachers should learn how to greet and praise such students in their native language and to get some materials translated anyway, if only for affective purposes.

Participants argued that the achievement gap was as much caused by poverty as by language. Facilitator responded that the negative effects of poverty can be reduced down to only 5% with strong programming.

4. Available Resources

Collier, Virginia and Wayne Thomas (2009). *Educating English Learners for a Transformed World*. (Available from <https://www.formstack.com/forms/dlenm-educatingenglishlearner>)

5. Follow-up requests