INTERNATIONAL LITERACY ASSOCIATION

# The Consequences of English Learner as a Category in Teaching, Learning, and Research

*Lee Gunderson*

The use of terms such as *English as a second language* and *English learner* has negative consequences for teaching, learning, policy, and research.

My purpose of this article is to explore whether the concerns I expressed 20 years ago about the negative features associated with the use of categories such as English learner (EL), the pervasive negative public view of immigrants, and the problematic role of categories in research studies are still a feature of education in the United States (Gunderson, 2000). My analyses are based on a historical review of educational developments related to immigrant students and on my experience, beginning in the 1960s, as a teacher of immigrant students, an English as a Second Language (ESL) reading resource teacher in a Spanish–English bilingual school, a teacher, and an administrator in two Cantonese–English bilingual schools, as an ESL special education teacher, all in California, and as a researcher.

Three issues are explored in this article:

1. How are categorical acronyms such as ELL (English language learner), EL, ESL, and EAL (English as an additional language) misrepresentative of diversity?
2. What does history reveal about immigration, first languages (L1s), bilingual education, and diversity and their influence on attitudes and beliefs?
3. How are categorical acronyms misrepresentative in research?

Implications and recommendations for teachers conclude this article.

## How ESL, EL, ELL, and EAL Misrepresent Diversity

I argued previously that "the label ESL—or English-language learner (ELL) or whatever acronym is used—is problematic because it masks significant underlying differences that have serious consequences" (Gunderson, 2008b, p. 186). The way we perceive and make sense of the world may impact our understanding of significant underlying differences. Human beings are unlikely able to cope with infinite diversity, so the world is categorized into units so "non-identical stimuli can be treated as equivalent" (Rosch, 1977, p. 2). The category "birds," for instance, contains thousands of different examples, but we recognize them all (or most of them) as birds. We also understand (perceive or know) that membership in a category does not infer identicality. That is, owls and gulls are categorized as birds, but they are not identical. Categories represent diversity in often subtle ways, especially categories that group human beings. Today, we often refer to ESL, EL, EAL, or ESOL as though they are the same category, and we assume that they are homogeneous, filled with individuals who are the same.

However, in reality, they differ by age, L1, schooling background, cultural views of cooperation/competition, time, body movements, personal space, eye contact, physical contact, gender roles, individual versus group family orientation, nonverbal communication norms, conversation rules (turn taking), spirituality, fate versus individual responsibility, perceptual style (field dependence/independence)-analytic, methodical, reflective-global expression of emotion, family structure, roles of family

**LEE GUNDERSON** is a professor in the Department of Language and Literacy Education at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada; email lee.gunderson@ubc.ca.



© 2020 The Authors. Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy published by Wiley Periodicals LLC on behalf of International Literacy Association
This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs License, which permits use and distribution in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, the use is non-commercial and no modifications or adaptations are made.

members, educational expectations, perception and acceptance of individual differences, childrearing practices, and modes of cultural transmission, to name a few diversity variables. Inclusion in the EL (ESL) category is, in most cases, based on one feature, English ability. There are negative consequences for the use of this unidimensional category to label students, because it does not include other significant diversity features.

## EL, ESL, and EAL: Deficit Labels

Umansky (2016) investigated the consequences of labeling for kindergarten students. She noted assessment reveals that "those who score below a set threshold are classified as 'English learners' (ELs)...[and that] those who score at or above the threshold are considered initially fluent English proficient (IFEP)" (p. 714). She observed that there were no significant differences between those at or above the threshold and those just below. In addition, "I find that among language-minority students who enter kindergarten with relatively advanced English proficiency, EL classification results in a substantial negative net impact on math and English language arts test scores in Grades 2 through 10" (p. 714). Many students themselves have negative views of ELs and EL programs, although some have positive views (Gunderson, 2007). The classification is a deficit label.

EL is a category defined by English skills. Different jurisdictions determine the parameters within which the category is defined; those who score below a particular level are ELs, and those above are not. In California, for instance, the students at the emerging level have limited receptive and productive English skills (California Department of Education, n.d.), which is a deficit view. Dabach (2014) interviewed 20 teachers who taught both sheltered ESL and mainstream courses, and concluded that "so-called stupidity or a lack of intelligence surfaced in all three accounts, across separate locations," which suggested to her that "the co-occurrence of stupidity and sheltered courses suggests that in these accounts, sheltered courses were stigmatized spaces, even as teachers simultaneously narrated their strategies to mitigate students' sense of stigma" (p. 114). Umansky (2016) concluded,

> a growing body of work has identified numerous ways in which services for students learning English, and the classification of students by English language ability, creates a hierarchically tiered education system that parallels social inequalities outside of the educational setting. (p. 733)

García (2009) proposed the use of the term *emergent bilingual*, noting that "by looking at children through a monolingual and monoglossic lens and insisting on categorizing them as LEPs [limited English proficient students] or ELLs, the U.S. educational system perpetuates educational inequities and squanders valuable linguistic resources" (p. 322). Over two decades ago, it was reported that California's low achievement scores occurred because "vast numbers of students speak little English" (Asimov, 1997, p. A2). ELs are viewed as both victims of and responsible for poor performance in schools. I noted that "a deep-seated English-only attitude has grown in strength and aggressiveness" (Gunderson, 2008b, p. 184).

## What Does History Reveal About American Attitudes and Beliefs?

I believe that English-only is still a pervasive view in the United States. I review briefly the complex issues related to immigration, instruction, and language beliefs to reveal the roots of this negative view. Ovando (2003) reported that there were hundreds of languages in America before the arrival of European colonists. He noted, "Records suggest that from the 1700s to the 1880s, a fair amount of tolerance or benign neglect existed toward the many languages represented in the new society" (p. 4). A common misperception is that colonists were all English speakers; however, Kloss (1977) observed, "Among the settlers already established in the United States by 1776 are the Germans" (p. 11).

Colonial children learned to read at home and were usually taught by their mothers using the Bible (Cremin, 1970). By 1776, there were thousands of German settlers in what became the states of Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, New York, and Ohio. Kloss (1977) indicated that Ohio authorized German–English instruction in 1839 and that laws authorized French and English programs in Louisiana in 1847 and Spanish and English in the territory of New Mexico in 1850. By the end of the 1800s, nearly a dozen states had established bilingual programs. Urban areas began to build public schools, and L1 and bilingual schools were scattered across the states (Kloss, 1977).

Ovando (2003) referred to the 1700s–1800s as the "Permissive Period" in which instructional L1s other than English were permissible. He noted that permissiveness was more evident in small communities outside urban areas. Boston, Massachusetts, struggled with the organization and administration of schools and, in 1847, established grade levels organized by students' ages (Osgood, 2005). "By the late 1800s, graded schools constituted the preferred model for urban school

systems in the United States" (Osgood, 2005, p. 23). Furthermore, "such settings—especially in classrooms with upwards of eighty to ninety students under the charge of a single teacher—proved highly problematic in terms of both instruction and management" (Osgood, 2005, p. 23), and

> in Boston, even before the implementation of graded schools, teachers complained about academically weak and ill-behaved children—most of whom were identified as being of immigrant background—and strongly urged the creation of separate schools to which they could send them. (Osgood, 2005, pp. 23–24)

"Immigrant children brought to crowded classrooms a wide range of languages, educational experience, and cultural values, which all too often lead to academic and behavioral struggles in school" (Osgood, 2005, p. 23). Various approaches were employed to account for students with special needs and abilities, including the construction of separate schools, often called intermediate schools. "Boston's location of their intermediate schools exclusively in immigrant neighborhoods, and the rapid growth of those schools during the first wave of mostly Irish immigration between 1840 and 1860, exemplified the presumed connection between immigrant background and school failure" (Osgood, 2005, p. 25).

## *A Growing Negative View of Immigrants*

Ovando (2003) identified a "Restrictive Period" that occurred roughly between the 1880s and the 1960s. Restrictions also became an immigration factor. In 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act to ban Chinese laborers became law (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a). Ovando reviewed multiple developments related to English-only sentiments associated with the beginning of the Restrictive Period. The American Protective Association pushed English-only school laws, adopted by Illinois and Wisconsin in 1889. Ovando noted that the Immigration Restriction League, as reported by Higham (1988), was established in the 1890s. The 1906 Naturalization Act required immigrants to speak English to be able to become Americans. By 1923, English-only instruction was mandated in all public and private primary schools in 34 states (Kloss, 1977).

The Immigration Act of 1924, because of quotas related to previous immigrant categories, excluded Asians (U.S. Department of State, n.d.b). Osgood (2005) noted that an increase in immigration brought focus on immigrants and increasing anti-immigration views and that "the notion that mental disability was inherited and that it was frequently apparent in families of 'foreign-born', became commonplace" (p. 25). The idea that some immigrants were undesirable was supported by the results of the putative scientific studies of intelligence.

## *Immigrants: Morons, Imbeciles, and Idiots*

Goddard "used the recently developed standardized Binet intelligence tests and administered them to immigrants arriving at Ellis Island in New York harbor" (Osgood, 2005, p. 25). Goddard (1920) reported categories that included "moron," "imbecile," and "idiot" to represent lower scores on the Binet. He concluded that most immigrants from certain regions of Europe were in the "moron" category. Osgood (2005) noted, "This connection found comfort in the intense anti-immigrant atmosphere of the early twentieth century and validation in the reputedly 'scientific,' 'objective,' findings of standardized intelligence tests" (p. 25) and that many immigrant families were sent back to their countries of origin based on Goddard's findings. The measure Goddard used contained items such as "Do these two words mean the same or opposite…?" and "Re-arrange these groups of words into a sentence and tell whether or not it is a true or false statement." It is not clear that an IQ test reliably measures intelligence, because many items are related to knowledge of English (Gunderson & Siegel, 2001). One can argue about the pros and cons of requiring English as a prerequisite for immigration; however, there is no ethical defense for using a measure that is primarily an English assessment to measure intelligence and for using the results to categorize human beings as morons and deny them entry as immigrants. According to a 1911 Federal Immigration Commission report, there is evidence that immigrant students, especially those from eastern and southern Europe, did not do well in U.S. schools (Olneck & Lazerson, 1974).

Ma Ferguson, the first woman governor of Texas, became involved in a debate about which language should be used in teaching Texas school children. She was reported as saying, "If English was good enough for Jesus Christ, it's good enough for me" (Gunderson, 2008a). Cavanaugh (1996) noted, "After World War I, the prevailing attitude regarding immigrant education was that immigrants needed to learn English so that they could learn the U.S. Constitution, understand the government of their new country, and become assimilated into American culture," and "it was called the 'Americanization Movement'" (p. 41). He also concluded, "What history seems to have taught us regarding the teaching of English to those for whom it is a second language is that it has not been done as well as it could" (p. 42). World War II brought increasingly negative views

of immigrants, particularly the Japanese who were interned by President Franklin Roosevelt's Executive Order (History.com Editors, 2020). Education in languages other than English appears to have diminished during the 1940s and 1950s but changed in the 1960s.

Thousands of Spanish-speaking students from Cuba arrived in Florida in the early 1960s, signaling for Ovando (2003) the beginning of the Opportunist Period (1960s–1980s). These school-age students and their needs resulted in the establishment of bilingual programs. In 1967, Governor Ronald Reagan signed California Senate Bill 53 that allowed the use of instructional languages other than English in California public schools (Calisphere, 1967). The U.S. Congress passed the Bilingual Education Act (known as Title VII) in 1968 ("Bilingual Education Act 816," 1968), which specified that individuals who "come from environments where a language other than English has had a significant impact on their level of English language proficiency; and who, by reason thereof, have sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language," should be provided bilingual programs. All programs had to provide students with "full access to the learning environment, the curriculum, special services and assessment in a meaningful way."

The U.S. Supreme Court in 1974 concluded that "basic English skills are at the very core of what public schools teach" and that "imposition of a requirement that, before a child can effectively participate in the educational program, he must already have acquired those basic skills is to make a mockery of public education" (*Lau et al. v. Nichols et al.*, 1974). Title II of the Educational Amendments Act of 1974 mandated that language barriers were to be eliminated by instructional programs (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 1974). School districts were required to have bilingual programs for groups with 20 same-language speakers. My teacher colleagues in San Francisco, California, at the time were more concerned about the district hiring noncertified individuals as bilingual teachers, an approach they thought threatened seniority principles, than the provision of bilingual instruction.

## *The Reemergence of Negative Views*

A general discontent with the use of languages other than English in schools developed sometime in the 1980s. Ovando (2003) titled it the "Dismissive Period." I noted that, "Some view the learning of English as a basic requirement of citizenship for immigrants, their democratic responsibility" (Gunderson, 2000, p. 693). Some states passed English-only laws, and a group called U.S. English organized to lobby for an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would establish English as the official language (Crawford, 1989). In 1998, 63% of the voters in California supported an anti-bilingual proposition called Proposition 227 (Zehr, 2003). In 2006, voters in Arizona voted 849,772 (66%) to 295,632 (26%) in favor of Proposition 103 to make English the official language and to make businesses enforce the measure. The 1990s also witnessed serious disagreement about instruction and the U.S. government's expanding efforts to discover best instructional practices.

## *The United States and Instructional Research*

"The 'reading wars' pitted researchers against researchers, teachers against teachers, and eventually got the U.S. government into the search for scientific evidence to support the best reading instructional programs" (Gunderson, D'Silva, & Murphy Odo, 2020, p. 12). In 1997, the National Reading Panel was created to "assess the status of research-based knowledge, including the effectiveness of various approaches to teaching children to read" (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000, p. 1-1), and in 2002, the National Literacy Panel was established to review studies comparing bilingual and English-only programs (August & Shanahan, 2006). Garan (2001) concluded that "the panel's own words have established that the research base in its report on phonics is so flawed that the results do not even matter" (p. 502), and in 2005, the U.S. Department of Education declined to publish the report, "because of concerns about its technical adequacy and the degree to which it could help inform policy and practice" ("U.S. Department of Education Declines to Publish," 2005, p. 1).

The No Child Left Behind Act was signed into law in 2002, based on the findings of the National Reading Panel. The law established the Reading First initiative, which was "a new, high-quality evidence-based program for the students of America" (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). A difficulty was that funding for programs seemed more likely if they included systematic phonics instruction and scripted reading. Teachers often felt they were forced to adopt teaching approaches that did not fit into their own professional instructional models. This view was reinforced by a report by the Office of Inspector General (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). The law required that all children should reach grade level by 2014, which they did not.

In 2015, No Child Left Behind evolved into the Every Student Succeeds Act (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.) that provided more control for state governments and included concerns for ESL (EL) students. In 2010, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers in the United States led the drive to develop sets of standards that could be applied to instruction. Standards were developed for 48 states, two territories, and the District of Columbia. Earlier, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided $4.35 billion for the Race to the Top fund, a grant program designed to encourage and reward states that created the conditions for education innovation and reform: achieving significant improvement in student outcomes, including making substantial gains in student achievement, closing achievement gaps, improving high school graduation rates, and ensuring student preparation for success in college and careers (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). The view that such a great amount of money had not been effective in raising achievement levels seems to have been fairly commonplace.

The 2019 results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in the United States revealed that in reading, 35% of fourth graders, 34% of eighth graders, and 37% of 12th graders were at or above NAEP proficient (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2019a). ELs in fourth grade scored 65% below basic, 35% at or above basic, 10% at or above proficient, and 1% advanced, whereas non-ELs scored 29%, 71%, 39%, and 10%, respectively. It should be noted that groups were categorized as ELL or non-ELL (NCES, 2019b).

The recent federal approach to teaching and learning in K–12 schools appears to be to establish relations between private funding organizations and government-supported school systems. This has occurred within an environment in which some view immigrants in a negative way. I am convinced that a related serious difficulty is a failure to understand the lack of diversity in categories employed by researchers and policymakers to identify immigrant students and those who have languages other than English as their home language.

## Categorical Misrepresentation in Research

Categorical analyses in research, such as NAEP noted earlier, often employ ESL (EL) comparisons with "mainstream" (non-ESL) groups. Such comparisons obfuscate the realities of ESL (and non-ESL) as a category by representing it as monolithic. The first significant problem is definitional. A simple definition is anyone who speaks a home language other than English is an EL; an alternative is anyone who speaks a home language other than English who scores from 0 to X (some assessment benchmark) in English is an EL. The definition is vital.

### *ESL and Non-ESL as Research Categories*

NAEP's research approach is to compare EL and non-EL scores. EL students are defined by jurisdictions that have different exclusion policies, which vary according to their inclusiveness (NCES, 2019a). The problem is that the defining parameters of EL are unclear because they vary by jurisdiction. The unidimensional definition of EL obscures underlying difference in diversity. Additionally, the non-EL group includes a wide range of English abilities, whereas the EL group includes a limited range of lower level English abilities. An additional difficulty is that individuals in the fourth-, eighth-, and 12th-grade samples are not the same.

I conducted research involving the secondary school achievement of randomly selected ESL (defined as home language not English upon entry as immigrant) and randomly selected non-ESL students in math, science, social studies, and English (Gunderson, 2007). The initial findings were extraordinary; there were no statistically significant differences in achievement between the two groups as measured by grade point average (grades 8–12), except in 12th grade. Individuals identified as immigrant students on the average scored the same as native English speakers until grade 12, when they scored lower than native English speakers. How is this extraordinary finding possible?

When L1 was included, statistically significant differences between groups across grade levels were revealed, with Mandarin speakers scoring higher grades than, for example, Cantonese, Spanish, and Tagalog speakers. Further analysis revealed a significant socioeconomic variable. The groups differed by socioeconomic status, in addition to other variables.

There were significant differences among and between learners who identified as Chinese (Gunderson, 2007; Gunderson & D'Silva, 2016; Gunderson, D'Silva, & Murphy Odo, 2012; Murphy Odo, D'Silva, & Gunderson, 2012). Mandarin-speaking girls received significantly higher grades and were four times more likely to be eligible for university entrance than Cantonese-speaking boys. Mandarin speakers from Taiwan had significantly higher grades than both Cantonese speakers from Hong Kong and Mandarin speakers from China. Cantonese speakers had significantly higher grades than Mandarin

speakers from China. L1 was a proxy by chance for socioeconomic differences as a result of immigration patterns. L1 is not always a proxy in this regard.

### *Within-Category Differences*

Asian students are often identified as a "model minority" that does not struggle academically (Lee, 1996). Differences in families' access to educational resources make any single characterization of the Asian category inappropriate (Kao, 1995). Chinese students, also categorized as Asian, are identified as members of the model minority that does not struggle academically (Lee, 1996).

Chua (2011) gained national attention with her views related to "Chinese" students and their "tiger mothers." Her "study" was based on her two children and their interactions. "Chua's narrative self-study and its results exemplify the perils of generalizing findings to broad populations" (Gunderson & D'Silva, 2016, p. 88). Chua's generalizations support the popular perception that Chinese students are the "model minority." It is a perception based on a generalization that does not represent the diversity in the category.

### *The Dangers of Generalizing About Unidimensional Categories*

A U.S. presidential candidate in August 2016 established a context of negative beliefs about immigrants, a broad category of human beings, particularly Mexicans, by stating that "they're bringing drugs, they're bringing crime, they're rapists, and some I assume are good people" (BBC News, 2016). ESL, ELL, EL, EAL, immigrant, refugee, and other such categories related to human beings obscure the diversity within them. The vilification of some members of a category often generalizes to all members.

In some cases, such as the "model minority" overgeneralization, they impute a characterization that is positive but misrepresentative. NAEP research results have revealed that EL students do not do well, but the EL category excludes students on the basis of English success. Jiménez and Rose (2008) argued that a difficulty with the EL category is that when students are successful in achieving at a prescribed level of English, they are no longer identified as ESL (EL) and their achievement is not included in research findings. Using such categories in research does not represent underlying diversity.

## Conclusion

Acronyms such as ELL, EL, ESL, and EAL represent a category that is unidimensional, defined by the degree to which individuals vary from "normal" English developmental levels as measured by some test. The diversity of those labeled ESL is misrepresented; it is a deficit label that has negative consequences for learners that often last for years (Dabach, 2014; Gunderson, 2000, 2007; Umansky, 2016).

History reveals ebbs and flows of negative societal attitudes toward EL students and immigrants (Ovando, 2003). Early views were associated with those who were judged as academically weak and ill-behaved (Osgood, 2005). Negative views gained strength in the 1920s with the measurement of intelligence at Ellis Island. Many, mostly from eastern and southern Europe, were labeled as morons, imbeciles, and idiots (Osgood, 2005). Anti-immigrant beliefs over the years are reflected in different exclusionary laws and practices (History.com Editors, 2020; U.S. Department of State, n.d.a, n.d.b). Currently, a negative view of immigrants focuses on those who speak Spanish (BBC News, 2016).

EL as an independent variable in research is problematic because it does not represent differences within the category unless findings are disaggregated by other variables, such as gender and socioeconomic status (Gunderson, 2007; Gunderson & D'Silva, 2016). L1 may, by chance, also represent other differences. EL is a category defined differently across jurisdictions; therefore, it is important to know about the EL population in a research study. It is unclear, for instance, what is meant by EL in NAEP research because exclusion parameters vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction (NCES, 2019b). In research, EL is defined within a set of English parameters that render it immutable. Studies across grades can never show growth as a result of the exclusionary definition. In addition, NAEP seeks to represent the population in the United States. As such, findings are not necessarily applicable to individual classrooms or school populations. Brooks (2018) described myths related to "long-term English learners (LTELs)." She advocated "using locally gathered data to inform the design of more equitable instructional practices" (p. 229).

There are noteworthy school-based EL programs, such as Lazar and Ruggiano-Schmidt (2018). Indeed, an exceptional program designed to teach every student in a secondary school about inclusion is led by an ESL teacher (Gunderson & D'Silva, 2018).

## Implications and Recommendations for Teachers

The value of evidence-based teaching strategies appears to be valued by publishers and others, but teachers

have little time to read and evaluate research. It is also clear to me that most teachers love their academic disciplines. The following recommendations are based on the discussions in this article:

- Resist judging students' potential by their English; many brilliant human beings have little or no English ability.
- Learn about the English assessment(s) used to screen students into (or out) of your classes. If the assessment results in "levels," find out what the levels mean?
- Does the assessment provide information about students' academic vocabulary related to your discipline? If not, see the Academic Word List listed in the More to Explore sidebar at the end of this article.
- Does the assessment provide information about students' reading levels? If so, does it match the reading levels of academic materials? You can estimate the reading levels of materials online (e.g., Online-Utility.org, n.d.).
- Is there information to help you disaggregate students' background information that might be helpful in planning instruction?
- Search for discipline-specific teaching magazines and journals such as the *Science Teacher* for ESL- or EL-related studies. Explore the following questions:
  - Is the study a classroom-based study?
  - How is EL defined?
  - Is the definition the same as the one in your school?
  - Can the technique or approach be used in your classroom?
  - If so, test it out in your classroom.
- Does the study involve statistics? If so,
  - What group or population does the study focus on?
  - A frequently used word in research is *significant*. To a quantitative researcher, it means "there's a high probability my results are real," and to a qualitative researcher, it means "these results are important."
  - You, the reader, determine whether results are significant to you and your class; you make the judgment of whether results seem important enough to explore in some way, despite what the researcher says.

The final test is for you to use a strategy or program in your own classes to see if it works for you and your students.

## TAKE ACTION!

1. Be aware that categories such as EL obscure the diversity within them. Find out how EL is defined in your school and district and how students differ.
2. Are ESL (EL) students stigmatized by their inclusion in this category? If so, how? Explore what you as a teacher can do to help eliminate the stigma?
3. Explore students' backgrounds and plan instruction in your classroom that takes advantage of what knowledge they have.
4. Get to know your students' families and their backgrounds so you can plan programs that represent their interests and expertise.
5. What are the criteria that determine that a student is no longer designated as ESL (EL)? Become familiar with the criteria so you understand their limitations and what they do and do not measure.
6. If you are an academic teacher, find out if your EL students can comprehend your textbooks or online materials.
7. Choose assessment measures that provide information about students' knowledge beyond just their English levels; for example, what are their interests?

Wonderful school-based EL programs exist across the United States that are developed on teachers' expertise and experience. They have the potential to inform ESL teaching and learning as others adapt and test them in their own classrooms. Publication of such studies is essential to the process, and all teachers should be encouraged to report their action research efforts to local and regional professional associations such as the International Literacy Association and, of course, to journals.

### REFERENCES

Asimov, N. (1997, January 16). California schools rate D-minus in report: Exhaustive study blames Prop. 13 for the damage. *The San Francisco Chronicle*, p. A2.

August, D., & Shanahan, T. (Eds.). (2006). *Developing literacy in second-language learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

BBC News. (2016, August 31). *Drug dealers, criminals, rapists': What Trump thinks of Mexicans*. Retrieved from https://www.bbc.com/news/video_and_audio/headlines/37230916/drug-dealers-criminals-rapists-what-trump-thinks-of-mexicans

Bilingual Education Act 816 (1968).

Brooks, M.D. (2018). Pushing past myths: Designing instruction for long-term English learners. *TESOL Quarterly*, *52*(1), 221–233. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.435

California Department of Education. (n.d.). *Initial ELPAC general PLDs*. Retrieved from https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ep/elpacipld.asp

Calisphere. (1967). 1967 Amendment to the California State Education Code: Chapter 1549. Retrieved from https://calisphere.org/item/ark:/13030/hb0n39n5zv/

Cavanaugh, M.P. (1996). History of teaching English as a second language. *English Journal*, *85*(8), 40–44. https://doi.org/10.2307/820039

Chua, A. (2011). *Battle hymn of the tiger mother*. New York, NY: Penguin.

Crawford, J. (1989). *Bilingual education: History politics, theory, and practice*. Trenton, NJ: Crane.

Cremin, L.A. (1970). *American education: The colonial experience, 1607–1789*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.

Dabach, D. (2014). "I am not a shelter!": Stigma and social boundaries in teachers' accounts of students' experience in separate "sheltered" English learner classrooms. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, *19*(2), 98–124. https://doi.org/10.1080/10824669.2014.954044

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, Pub. L. No. 93-380 (1974).

Garan, E. (2001). Beyond the smoke and mirrors: A critique of the National Reading Panel report on phonics. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *82*(7), 500–506. https://doi.org/10.1177/003172170108200705

García, O. (2009). Emergent bilinguals and TESOL: What's in a name? *TESOL Quarterly*, *43*(2), 322–326. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1545-7249.2009.tb00172.x

Goddard, H.H. (1920). *Human efficiency and levels of intelligence*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Gunderson, L. (2000). Voices of the teenage diasporas. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *43*(8), 692–706.

Gunderson, L. (2007). *English-only instruction and immigrant students in secondary school: A critical examination*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Gunderson, L. (2008a). Bilingual education. In S. Mathison & E.W. Ross (Eds.), *Battleground schools* (pp. 57–64). Westport, CT: Greenwood.

Gunderson, L. (2008b). The state of the art of secondary ESL teaching and learning. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *52*(3), 184–188. https://doi.org/10.1598/JAAL.52.3.1

Gunderson, L., & D'Silva, R. (2016). Disaggregating secondary-level Chinese immigrants' academic, English, and school success. In W. Ma & G. Li (Eds.), *Chinese-heritage students in North American schools: Understanding hearts and minds beyond test scores* (pp. 88–102). New York, NY: Routledge.

Gunderson, L., & D'Silva, R. (2018). The secondary school that ROARS. In A. Lazar & P. Ruggiano-Schmidt (Eds.), *Understanding exceptional schools* (pp. 32–51). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Gunderson, L., D'Silva, R., & Murphy Odo, D. (2012). Immigrant students navigating Canadian schools: A longitudinal view. *TESL Canada Journal*, *29*(6), 142–156. https://doi.org/10.18806/tesl.v29i0.1114

Gunderson, L., D'Silva, R., & Murphy Odo, D. (2020). *ESL (ELL) literacy instruction: A guidebook to theory and practice* (4th ed.). London, UK: Routledge.

Gunderson, L., & Siegel, L. (2001). The evils of the use of IQ tests to define learning disabilities in first- and second-language learners. *The Reading Teacher*, *55*(1), 48–55.

Higham, J. (1988). *Strangers in the land: Patterns of American nativism, 1860–1925* (2nd ed.). New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

History.com Editors. (2020). *Japanese internment camps* (Rev. ed.). Retrieved from https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/japanese-american-relocation#section_1

Jiménez, R.T., & Rose, B.C. (2008). English language learners. In S. Mathison & E.W. Ross (Eds.), *Battleground schools* (pp. 228–234). Westport, CT: Greenwood.

Kao, G. (1995). Asian Americans as model minorities? A look at their academic performance. *American Journal of Education*, *103*(2), 121–159. https://doi.org/10.1086/444094

Kloss, H. (1977). *The American bilingual tradition*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

*Lau et al. v. Nichols et al.*, No. 414 US 563 (U.S. Supreme Court 1974).

Lazar, A., & Ruggiano-Schmidt, P. (Eds.). (2018). *Understanding exceptional schools*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Lee, S.J. (1996). *Unraveling the 'model minority' stereotype: Listening to Asian American youth*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Murphy Odo, D., D'Silva, R., & Gunderson, L. (2012). High school may not be enough: An investigation of Asian students' eligibility for post-secondary education. *Canadian Journal of Education*, *35*(2), 249–267.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2019a). *National achievement-level results*. Retrieved from https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/reading/nation/achievement/?grade=4

National Center for Education Statistics. (2019b). *Overview of The Nation's Report Card*. Retrieved from https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/faq.aspx#q3

National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers. (2010). *Common Core State Standards for English language arts and literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects*. Washington, DC: Authors.

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2000). *Report of the National Reading Panel. Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction: Executive summary* (NIH Publication No. 00-4769). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Olneck, M.R., & Lazerson, M. (1974). The school achievement of immigrant children: 1900–1934. *History of Education Quarterly*, *14*(4), 453–482.

Online-Utility.org. (n.d.). Readability calculator [Computer software tool]. Retrieved from https://www.online-utility.org/english/readability_test_and_improve.jsp

Osgood, R. (2005). *The history of inclusion in the United States*. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press.

Ovando, C.J. (2003). Bilingual education in the United States: Historical development and current issues. *Bilingual Research Journal*, *27*(1), 1–24. https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2003.10162589

Rosch, E. (1977). Human categorization. In N. Warren (Ed.), *Studies in cross-cultural psychology* (pp. 1–72). London, UK: Academic.

Umansky, I.M. (2016). To be or not to be EL: An examination of the impact of classifying students as English learners. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *38*(4), 714–737. https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373716664802

U.S. Department of Education. (2006). *The Reading First program's grant application process: Final inspection report* (ED-OIG/I13-F0017). Washington, DC: Office of Inspector General,

U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oig/aireports/i13f0017.pdf
U.S. Department of Education. (2016). *Race to the Top fund*. Retrieved from https://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html
U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). *Every Student Succeeds Act*. Retrieved from https://www.ed.gov/essa
U.S. Department of State. (n.d.a). *Chinese immigration and the Chinese Exclusion Acts*. Retrieved from https://history.state.gov/milestones/1866-1898/chinese-immigration
U.S. Department of Education declines to publish report on literacy education of bilingual children. (2005). *Reading Today*, *23*, 1.
U.S. Department of State. (n.d.b). *The Immigration Act of 1924 (The Johnson-Reed Act)*. Retrieved from https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/immigration-act
Zehr, M.A. (2003). Reports spotlight Latino dropout rates, college attendance. *Education Week*, *22*, 12.

## MORE TO EXPLORE

- Learning Support Services, Carleton University. (2012). *Academic reading* [Video]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fg1VWs00UEE (This YouTube video provides strategies for academic reading and reading academic research.)
- The Academic Word List was developed by Averil Coxhead of Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. This webpage provides background information and a how-to for using the word list: https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/lals/resources/academicwordlist/information.

DO YOU WANT TO...

- Get more involved in the literacy conversation?
- Network with colleagues in your state and learn about global literacy?
- Be the first to hear about special literacy events near you?

Learn more, and join the ILA Network!

INTERNATIONAL LITERACY ASSOCIATION

literacyworldwide.org/networks