

What research tells us about the education of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students

According to a longitudinal study conducted by Wayne Thomas and Virginia Collier (*School Effectiveness for Language Minority Students*, 1997), it takes typical bilingually schooled students, who are achieving on grade level in their native language, from 4-7 years to make it to the 50th Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) in English. It takes typical “advantaged” immigrants with 2-5 years of on-grade-level home country schooling in their native language from 5-7 years to reach the 50th NCE in English when schooled in all English programs in the U.S. It takes the typical young immigrant schooled all in English in the U.S. 7-10 years or more to reach the 50th NCE, and the majority of these students do not ever make it to 50th NCE unless they receive support for native language academic and cognitive development at home.

In research conducted by the National Research Council (*Improving Schooling for Language Minority Students: A Research Agenda*, 1977), the following are characteristics of programs that successfully address LEP students’ unique needs:

- Some native language instruction, especially initially
- For most students, a relatively early phasing in of English instruction
- Teachers specially trained in instructing LEP students

Kris Anstrom, in her research (*What are the Defining Characteristics of Effective Instructional Programs for Language Minority Students?*, 1996), identifies the following characteristics of effective programs for LEP students:

- Promote language and cognitive development
- Provide access to the content-area curriculum
- Create an active learning environment
- Make appropriate use of the students’ native language
- Utilize the students’ home and community background
- Give students adequate time in special services

Implications:

To achieve Ohio’s standards, LEP students need sufficient time in well-designed programs that allow for their meaningful and active participation in effective learning experiences. This requires well-trained school administrators and teaching personnel with adequate resources.

Additional resources on research relating to the instruction of LEP students:

- www.ode.state.oh.us – LEP - *Principles of Second Language Development in Teaching LEP Students*
- <http://www.centeroninstruction.org/>
Practical Guidelines for the Education of English Language Learners: Research-Based Recommendations for Instruction and Academic Interventions

Practical Guidelines for the Education of English Language Learners: Research-Based Recommendations for Serving Adolescent Newcomers.
- www.erlbaum.com/august
Developing Literacy in Second-Language Learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth by Diane August (ed.) and Timothy Shanahan (ed.)
- <http://www.cal.org/crede/si.htm>
The Effects of Sheltered Instruction on the Achievement of Limited English Proficient Students – Center for Applied Linguistics