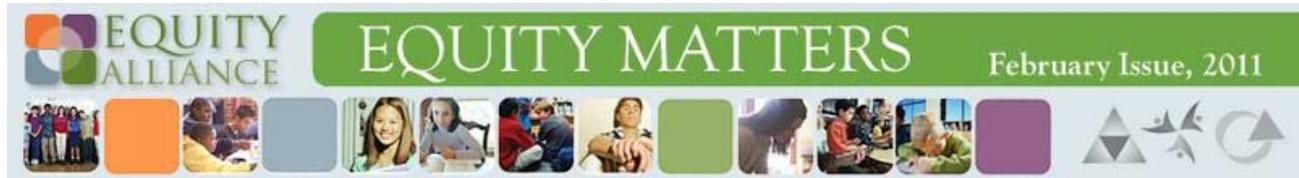


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## Power in Linguistic Diversity

### Subscribe Here



*Language is the quintessential cultural tool. We cannot plan lessons or activities in ways that will suppress or ignore the role of language in a person's development.*

-- Alfredo Artiles  
from the Teaching Diverse Students Initiative

### Equity Alliance Online Special Feature

#### [Language Policy Matters!](#)



Public education has a vital role in ensuring that this and subsequent generations are successful in a global, multilingual economy. In this What Matters brief, we examine how teachers, students, parents, and communities in our nation's schools can create rich opportunities for students to learn.

### Frequently Asked

Languages seem to develop a life and trajectory of their own. Some become increasingly dominant while others dwindle in popularity and use. Each year the world runs the danger of losing more and more indigenous languages as global languages like Chinese, English, and Spanish anchor themselves in wide flung communities across the globe. Learning about the importance of language in representing the world in which we live allows us to understand how language shapes our realities. Language is a powerful expression of the world around us, and should be appreciated and celebrated as a resource that students and families bring to school rather than as a barrier.

Studying and becoming proficient in more than one language builds a capacity to understand and use language skillfully in multiple languages. Because languages can be structured differently, the mental schemas that use language to store and retrieve, and transform information, ideas, feelings and interpretations of the world around us can become more powerful by becoming fluent in more than one language. Languages offer clues into the cultures from which they emerge, so language learning is another way of understanding and developing cultural fluency as well. Multilingual approaches provide access to new cultures, information and knowledge, and opportunities to forge new economic and political alliances.

Language matters for individuals, the cultures they inhabit and negotiate, as well as the ways in which language can inform and shape how we think and make connections. Language is a medium of exchange for economic and political exchange. What languages we speak and when we choose to use those languages is fundamental to our identities and cultural practices. Language is an important tool that we use to define who we are as individuals and members of specific tribes and communities. In vibrant democracies like the United States (which has been and continues to be created and advanced by immigrants), understanding the uses and value of multilingualism is a critical feature of our continued hybrid strength.

### Equity in Action

#### [Vaughn Next Century Learning Center](#)

Vaughn Next Century Learning Center is a large urban public school within the Los Angeles Unified School District. Tired of being helpless and hopeless, Vaughn converted to a Public charter school in 1993,

## Questions

1. [How many school-aged English learners are there in the US?](#)
2. [What is the truth about second language acquisition? Is it true that the more time students spend receiving English instruction, the faster they will learn it?](#)
3. [What role does culture have when working, teaching and serving ELLs?](#)
4. [What does the research say about best practices for English learners?](#)
5. [Why do language policies matter?](#)

## Upcoming Events

[The Equity Alliance at ASU's Equity Forum -- Beyond the Sidelines: Let's Get to Work Feb. 28 & March 1, 2011](#)

[US Department of Education 2011 Leveraging Resources Conference March 15-16](#)

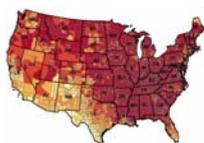
[TASH New England Conference: "Come Together, Right Now!" Reaffirming Values and Mobilizing Resources for Meaningful Lives April 1-2, 2011](#)

## Online Tools

[Glossary of Second and Primary Language Acquisition Terms](#)

[U.S. Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition](#)

[Modern Language Association -- Language Map](#)



## Online Publications

"The Little School That Could" pushed public school reform to its limits with the approval and support of LAUSD. Vaughn Next Century Learning Center is a large, urban, full-service, public charter school that provides maximum learning opportunities to students (Kindergarten -- Grade 12) so they will be successful academically, physically, and socially. Specifically, Vaughn Next Century Learning Center prepares students to master grade level standards, think critically, and be ready for post-secondary learning; reduce social stressors that negatively impact child and family development, including poverty; create a professional and caring community among staff, families and community; become a model for school reform locally, nationally, and globally.



Today, Vaughn is proving to be a model of educational success. Not only has it raised the academic achievement and improved the future prospects of youth from highly disadvantaged backgrounds, but it has also strengthened the fabric of the local community. Vaughn Next Century Learning Center faces many urban public school challenges and provides maximum learning opportunities to neighborhood students. The opportunities include, but are not limited to accelerated English learning and school-wide literacy program, international studies and world languages for high school students in partnership with Asia Society and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, onsite University Professional Development Center in collaboration with UCLA, California State University, Northridge and Alliant International University, and response to intervention system and special education inclusion program.

In order to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, today's students need to develop linguistic and cultural literacy, including academic knowledge, proficiency in English, and in several of the world's languages and cultures. We can no longer afford to simply **learn about** languages and cultures but rather, we must provide students with opportunities to **learn** languages and cultures by participating in communicative interactions that prepare for real-world language use and global citizenship. Language learning needs to be a life-long endeavor.



## Tools You Can Use

### Things to Read

[Forbidden Language: English Learners and Restrictive Language Policies](#)

is a collaboration between thirty-three American academics and researchers in bilingual education. They contribute 13 chapters presenting new research on the impact of English only policies on English learner (EL) students and their teachers in the US. The majority of the contributors are based in California, Arizona, and Massachusetts--three states that have passed language policies in the past decade seriously restricting the use of bilingual instruction. The text



English Learners and Restrictive Language Policies  
Edited by  
Gretchen Condon and Susan Hopson

[Understanding English Language Learners' Needs and Language Acquisition Process](#)

[English learners in Boston public schools: Enrollment, engagement, and academic outcomes for native speakers of Cape Verdean, Creole, Chinese dialects, Haitian Creole, Spanish, and Vietnamese](#)

[Double the Work: Challenges and Solutions to Acquiring Language and Academic Literacy for Adolescent English Language Learners](#)

[Raising Bilingual Children: Common Parental Concerns and Current Research](#)

\*These resources and many others can be found on our learning carousel. For direct access to the [Learning Carousel](#) click on the icon below.



## Featured Equity Friend

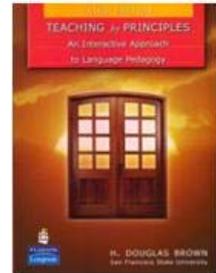
### [National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition](#)

The National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition collects, coordinates and conveys a broad range of research and resources in support of an inclusive approach to high quality education for ELLs. To fulfill its mission NCELA supports high quality networking among state-level administrators of Title III programs.

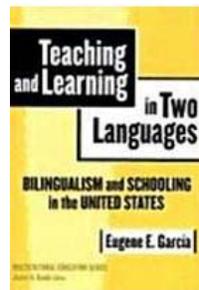
In addition to State Education Agency (SEA) coordinators, NCELA serves other stakeholders involved in ELL education, including teachers and other practitioners, parents, university faculty, administrators and federal policymakers.

contains reports of recent empirical studies examining new and never-before-analyzed national and state-level data, and also examines effective alternative instructional strategies for EL students.

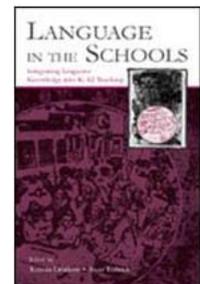
ESL/EFL teachers and trainees will welcome this new methodology text, [Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy](#), which considers all practical classroom techniques and activities in terms of solid foundation stones of research on second language acquisition. Readers will develop an overall approach to language teaching from which their classroom practices can emerge. This new edition also has user-friendly, readable prose, interactive end-of-chapter exercises for discussion and action, and end-of-chapter recommendations for further reading.



[Teaching and Learning in Two Languages](#) conducts a fresh and authoritative examination of the range of issues involved in education English Language Learners (ELLs) in the United States. The author approaches the issue from the stand that linguistic, cognitive and social development are interrelated and proceed simultaneously. Consequently, the book serves as a primer on schooling theories and practices in bilingual settings as well as optimal instruction and learning features that have been successful. It also explains promising new approaches, such as dual language programs that aim to create bilingual students by instructing both ELLs and English-speaking students in a second language without sacrificing learning outcomes.



Kristin Denham and Anne Lobeck, the editors of [Language in the Schools: Integrating Linguistic Knowledge into K-12 Teaching](#) intend the book to be a resource for K-12 teachers (in all subject areas) to help them to understand and assist their linguistically diverse student populations. The editors note that classroom linguistic diversity simultaneously presents K-12 teachers with challenges and opportunities and that because many teachers have little to no training in linguistics, they need help in recognizing the nuances of culturally and linguistically varied populations. The book also aims to help teachers discover which linguistic topics are most suitable for classroom exploration and to learn what approaches to these topics will most successfully open communication and make classrooms as inclusive as possible.



## Things to Watch

### Quick Links



[First Steps](#) is part of the Becoming Bilingual video series from [ColorinColorado.org](#). In this video, you will see how a teacher in El Paso Texas addresses the needs of English Language Learners, as well as commentaries of two experts as they provide insights on how to adjust instruction for students learning English.



[Two Languages at a Time](#) is part of the series called becoming bilingual from [ColorinColorado.org](#). This video provides a snapshot on a teacher's classroom where the teacher taps into students' Spanish skills to enrich English Instruction.

\*[First Steps](#) and [Two Languages at a Time](#) can be found in our [Language Differences Media Lab](#) along with many other video resources about English Language Learners and speakers of African-American English.

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