

matsol



Currents

MASSACHUSETTS EDUCATORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS
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INSIDE

The LOOK Bill: A Victory for Massachusetts Students

Preparing Pre-Service Teachers to Teach Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

GROW WITH BOWE: A Linda Schulman Innovation Award for a School Community Garden

ON THE COVER

Governor Charlie Baker signs the LOOK Bill, as (from left to right) Chairman Jeffrey Sánchez, Secretary of Education Jim Peyser, Rep. Alice Peisch, Sen. Sonia Chang-Díaz, and Sen. Sal DiDomenico look on.



Contents

MATSOL News

- 4 President's Message
- 6 A Report from MATSOL's Board of Directors
- 8 An Update from MATSOL's Director of Professional Learning
ANN FELDMAN
- 9 The 2017 TESOL Policy & Advocacy Summit
- 10 The Community College/ESL Mini-Conference
JUANITA BRUNELLE
- 12 The Private Language School/Intensive English Programs Mini-Conference
JOSHUA STONE
- 14 A Report on MATSOL's English Learner Leadership Council (MELLC)
ANN FELDMAN
- 16 What's Happening in MATSOL's Special Interest Groups (SIGs)?

Get Involved

- 20 Join a MATSOL Sub-Committee or Task Force
- 20 Submit to MATSOL Publications
- 21 MATSOL's New "Ambassador" Program
ANN FELDMAN
- 22 MATSOL's New Member Engagement Initiatives
HELEN SOLÓRZANO

Reports

- 24 The LOOK Bill: A Victory for Massachusetts Students
THE MASSACHUSETTS LANGUAGE OPPORTUNITY COALITION
- 28 An Update on Adult Basic Education in Massachusetts
JEFF MCLYNCH
- 30 GROW WITH BOWE: A Linda Schulman Innovation Award for a School Community Garden
KIMBERLY K. CHAPUT

Articles

- 32 LOOKing Beyond English-Only in Massachusetts Schools
MELANIE C. GONZÁLEZ & C. JULIE WHITLOW
- 36 Insights from a New Certificate Program in Teaching Bilingual English Learners with Disabilities
CLAUDIA RINALDI, JONI MAGEE, SARA NIÑO, & MARIA DE LOURDES SERPA
- 42 Annual Mandated Evaluations for Teachers: Challenges and Opportunities
KATHY LOBO
- 47 Preparing Pre-Service Teachers to Teach Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students
ALEXANDRA DEMA & EMILY SPITZMAN

Reviews

- 50 Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance, by Angela Duckworth
REVIEWED BY EILEEN FELDMAN
- 52 Emotions, Learning and the Brain: Exploring the Educational Implications of Affective Neuroscience, by Mary Helen Immordino-Yang
REVIEWED BY KATHY LOBO

President's Message

January, 2018

Dear MATSOL Colleagues and Friends,

The beginning of a new year is always filled with hopes, plans, and promises. I wish you all a most successful and healthy 2018 and a realization of all your goals and expectations for the coming year! This is also an opportunity for me to express my heartfelt thanks to you, our members and supporters, who have made MATSOL's work possible during the past year.



MATSOL is a bridge for all of us, a place for exploring our academic interests, learning about impending legislation, advocating for cultural diversity, social justice, and human compassion, building stamina, and expanding our professional horizons. This is *your* professional organization, a place where your interests are represented and a powerful tool at your fingertips. We urge you to take full advantage of all MATSOL has to offer: Attend an event, [join a committee/task force](#) or [Special Interest Group](#), go to our [conferences](#) and network with your colleagues, [submit an article](#), take a survey, [write a book review](#), [take a course](#), peruse our [website](#), use [MATSOLworks](#) to find a job, and lend your energy and expertise to the success of our organization in any way you can.

[H]eartfelt thanks to you, our members and supporters, who have made MATSOL's work possible during the past year.

In the "MATSOL News" section of this issue of Currents, you will find a report from the MATSOL Board; information about our professional development offerings; a report on TESOL's Policy and Advocacy Summit; reports from our special interest groups (SIGs) and from MATSOL's English Learner Leadership Council (MELLC); and descriptions of the very successful mini-conferences held this fall by two of our SIGs—the Community College ESL Mini-Conference on October 27 at Mass Bay Community College in Wellesley and the Private Language Schools/Intensive English Programs Mini-Conference on November 11 at CELOP.

The "Get Involved" section of this issue of Currents introduces several

new opportunities for member engagement—as a MATSOL “Ambassador,” Guest Writer, Webinar presenter, or E-list leader. Please read through these descriptions and consider whether you might like to take on one of these roles! Training and support will be provided as needed. As an organization, we are driven by the love of our vocation and the camaraderie among our educators, volunteers, students, and families. I can truly say that my own involvement in MATSOL—for many years and in many capacities—has helped me grow both professionally and as a person. I hope you will give us the opportunity to benefit from *your* talents and dedication during the coming year.

[M]y own involvement in MATSOL—for many years and in many capacities—has helped me grow both professionally and as a person.

Our “Reports” section offers a clear and detailed summary of the LOOK bill that was recently passed by the Legislature and signed into law. This is a very significant development for our state, and one that you will want to know about. This section also contains a report on the status of Adult Basic Education in Massachusetts and a description of a school/community vegetable garden in Bowe.

We have four articles in this issue: one on the planning that public school educations should be doing now that the LOOK bill has been passed into law; one on lessons learned from a Lasell College certificate program on teaching bilingual English learners with disabilities; one on ways to take advantage of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s annual mandated evaluations for teachers; and one on efforts at Bridgewater State to integrate principles of critical intercultural communication into their courses for pre-service teachers. Finally, our “Reviews” section offers reviews of Angela Duckworth’s *Grit* and Mary Helen Immordino-Yang’s *Emotions, Learning and the Brain*.

Happy reading!

Sincerely,

Vula Roumis

MATSOL President

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A Report from MATSOL's Board of Directors

MATSOL's Board of Directors welcomed the new members who were elected at MATSOL's Annual Meeting in May and got straight to work at our Board Retreat in June. The retreat focused on reviewing the Strategic Plan that we had developed in 2014 and gathering input for an update. A subcommittee of Board members and staff worked over the summer to revise the plan, and the resulting new Strategic Plan was approved by the Board in September.

This fall, our Board Committees (Finance & Audit, Governance & Nominations, External Relations, and Program & Member Development) have created work plans for their committees and have begun work

[MATSOL's] new Strategic Plan was approved by the Board in September.

on some of the objectives in the new plan. In addition to their ongoing work overseeing MATSOL's finances, the Finance & Audit Committee finalized the FY2017-18 budget and proposed some policy changes for approval by the Board. The Governance & Nominations Committee is reviewing Board policy documents and a Board evaluation survey, and preparing for the nominations process in the spring. The External Relations Committee is reviewing the new TESOL Affiliate Policy and identifying ways to expand and develop our collaborations with other organizations. The Program and Member Development Committee is focusing on two main projects: 1) expansion of the initiative begun last year to reach out to students in teacher preparation programs, and 2) a new initiative to involve members in writing issue briefs and producing webinars to share their expertise (see the description of this initiative on [pg. 22](#) of this issue.)

At its December 13 meeting, the Board approved the following statement regarding the passage of the LOOK Bill with the Seal of Biliteracy (See the report on [pg. 24](#) of this issue):

The MATSOL Board of Directors applauds the passage of the LOOK Bill with the Seal of Biliteracy, which will allow school districts to establish English Learner programs that best meet the needs of students, recognize the assets that bilingual students bring to our schools, and encourage increased

language learning for all students.

We would like to express our deep appreciation to Governor Charlie Baker, Speaker of the House Robert DeLeo, Senate President Stan Rosenberg, the bill sponsors Senator Sal DiDomenico and Chairman Jeffrey Sanchez, and Education Committee Chairs Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz and Representative Alice Peisch for supporting this legislation. In addition, we are grateful to Senator Karen Spilka and Representative Kay Kahn for championing the Seal of Biliteracy.



MATSOL Board members at their annual retreat on June 17

MATSOL is proud to be a founding member of the Language Opportunity Coalition, along with the Massachusetts Association for Bilingual Education (MABE), the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association (MaFLA), and the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA). We thank the Coalition Steering Committee members Helen Solorzano (MATSOL), Phyllis Hardy (MABE), and Nicole Sherf (MaFLA), who put in countless hours supporting the work of the coalition, and Eva Millona and Amy Grunder (MIRA). Charles Glick and Kate Saville Worrall, Charles Group Consulting, provided invaluable guidance on policy issues. In addition, we thank the Seal of Biliteracy Working Group, which today has over sixty members who collaboratively developed the Seal of Biliteracy Toolkit and also led the pilot project to implement and award the Seal in their own schools and school districts. Finally, we'd like to acknowledge the work of our MATSOL members, who advocate every day for their English Learner students and programs, and whose influence and leadership within their districts and communities helped achieve passage of the bill.

We are very excited as we look ahead to this new era in English Learner education in Massachusetts. There is still a lot of work to do, but we look forward to working with our colleagues and fellow MATSOL members as new opportunities unfold to ensure equitable and effective instruction for all our students.

A list of MATSOL Board members can be found on the back inside cover of this issue of Currents. [C](#)

An Update from MATSOL's Director of Professional Learning

Ann Feldman

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Our MATSOL staff has spent the past year developing and setting up a whole new line of open-enrollment professional development (PD) courses. We are now offering coursework for *all* Massachusetts educators and administrators who serve English Language Learners (ELs), including content teachers and directors, ESL teachers and their coordinators, specialists/support personnel who work with ELs, and school/district leaders. Whether you work with pre-K students or adult learners and whether you're a teacher, specialist, or support service staff, MATSOL now has a course that meets your needs. You will be able to build on what you already know, watch your knowledge increase, and get advice on applying what you learn to your particular content area and context. Our courses are available in locations throughout Massachusetts and, beginning in 2018, we will be offering some online classes, as well. In some cases, school districts have collaborated with MATSOL to offer relevant courses for their district stakeholders.



MATSOL courses are developed by educators in public schools—past or present—who are involved in state initiatives and advocacy. All our courses are approved by the Title III office of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), which insists on high quality. Course development and evaluation is informed by feedback from school districts across the Commonwealth, maybe including yours!

Course topics range from Introduction to English Language Development Standards to Academic English for English Learners in Math and Science; from the SEI endorsement course to the Smart Card course focusing on observational protocols in the EL Classroom; from an Overview of the ESL Model Curriculum Unit project to Academic Conversations in Classrooms with ELs. A complete list of [MATSOL courses](#) is available on the MATSOL website, with dates, times, locations, and instructions for how to register. Our team is presently developing two new 15-PDP courses of interest to ESL and content teachers as well as support personnel. Stay tuned for more information about these courses! 📌

The 2017 TESOL Policy & Advocacy Summit

MATSOL Executive Director Helen Solórzano joined representatives from TESOL affiliates around the country at the TESOL Advocacy and Policy Summit in Washington DC on June 18-20 in Washington, D.C. Participants attended two days of workshops and training to learn about issues currently before the Congress and to prepare for advocacy meetings with legislators from their home states. They then spent a full day on Capitol Hill, meeting with legislators.

Summit attendees advocated for continued funding of a number of programs: for PreK-12 English learner education and teacher preparation via Title III, Title II-A, and Title I of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA); for adult education under Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA); and for educational and cultural exchange programs at the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State. We also urged passage of the BRIDGE Act to allow individuals in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) program to continue living and working in the U.S.

Helen visited the offices of Senator Elizabeth Warren, Senator Ed Markey, and Representative Katherine Clark. Our Massachusetts representatives all support TESOL's advocacy recommendations, and have been outspoken in defense of them, so Helen was able to thank them for their ongoing efforts on behalf of our students, their families, and our field.

See [TESOL's report on the 2017 Policy and Advocacy Summit](#) for further information about this year's Summit. 



Helen Solórzano in front of Senator Warren's Office in the Hart Senate Office Building



In front of Senator Markey's office, with Markey intern Michael Scarlett, from Cambridge

The Community College/ESL Mini-Conference

Juanita Brunelle


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The Community College ESL Special Interest Group held its second annual mini-conference at Mass Bay Community College in Wellesley on Friday, October 27. The day was a great success, with forty participants who welcomed this opportunity to network and attend workshops. Sarang Sekhavat, from the Massachusetts Immigration and Refugee Advocacy (MIRA) Coalition, delivered an informative and engaging keynote address.

Other presentations included the following workshops:

- ***ESL is More Than Language***
Virginia Drislane and Marilyn Glazer-Weisner, Middlesex Community College
- ***What Does Acceleration Mean for English Language Learners in a Community College?***
Jennifer Nourse, Katie McGrath, Lisa Huber, and student Qiang Li, Mass Bay Community College
- ***English Language Learners at Community Colleges: The Good News, the Bad News, and Improving ESL Services***
Nick David and Kuang Li, Boston University
- ***Principled Choices of Classroom Exercises Used for Academic Writing***
Douglass Willcox, Target International Student Center

Many thanks to the following persons and groups for providing a rewarding day of workshops and opportunities for networking with colleagues:

- **The Community College Steering Committee**
- **Jennifer Nourse, our host, and Dean Chris Barbara, who welcomed us to Mass Bay Community College**
- **Helen Solórzano and the MATSOL staff** 



Katie McGrath, English Professor at Mass Bay, speaks to the assembled group at the Community College/ESL Conference on October 17



Conference participants discuss among themselves

The Private Language Schools/Intensive English Programs Mini-Conference

Joshua Stone

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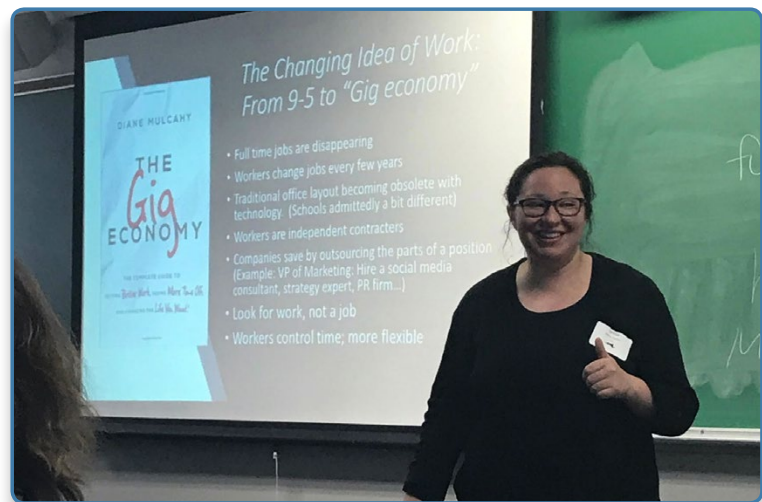
Thank you to everyone who came out and participated, presented, and networked at the second annual MATSOL Private Language Schools/Intensive English Programs Mini-Conference on Saturday, November 11, 2017! We had a great turnout, with over 100 registered participants from Massachusetts and beyond, who selected from 30 sessions in six time slots. Sessions were 50 minutes in length and covered a variety of topics, including professional development, administrative roles in schools, the future of English language learning, and English for STEM, as well as tips on how to motivate students, improve language skills, teach students how to write research-based reports, develop materials and activities, use technology in the classroom, and deal with accreditation and compliance. There were also displays by exhibitors, including the U.S. Department of State, International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Educational Testing Service (ETS), the School for International Training (SIT), Cambridge University Press, and National Geographic Learning. We all enjoyed talking about current and future trends in the industry and brainstorming about how we can strengthen the education of our students and the industry.

A special thanks to Boston University's Center for English Language & Orientation Programs (CELOP) for allowing us to once again use their space to host the event. We would also like to thank National Geographic Learning for providing lunch and Oxford University Press for providing coffee and breakfast. A big thank you to Helen Solórzano, Teresa Kochis, and MATSOL for helping us to organize and carry out this event.

Thanks again to all the participants and presenters for attending. None of this would have been possible without your willingness to share your knowledge and expertise! ☺



Conference participants take a break from sessions and enjoy lunch at CELOP



Jenna Collins, from FLS International Language Schools and Jewish Vocational Services



Anna Topalidou, from FLS International Language Schools

A Report from the MATSOL English Learner Leadership Council (MELLC)

Ann Feldman

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The MATSOL English Learner Leadership Council (MELLC) is a leadership group open to MATSOL members who serve as PK-12 English Learner Education Program Directors or Coordinators in Massachusetts public schools. MELLC was formed in 2007, in response to a request from our ELL coordinators and directors for assistance and support with programming for their culturally and linguistically diverse students. Membership has now grown to nearly 100 professionals in the field. MELLC promotes best practices in the classroom and supports ELLs and their families by validating our students' cultures and languages and advocating for an equitable and meaningful education for all students. MELLC meets four times a year, in Leominster, for full-day professional development and networking sessions.

The October 13, 2017, MELLC meeting started with a segment on "Happenings in Our Commonwealth." We started with an icebreaker activity that asked participants to find something in their pockets, purses, or around the room and to complete the following sentence: "Working with English learners and their teachers in my district is like [name of object] because _____," or "This [name of object] reminds me of the challenges/rewards of my job because _____." This activity was followed by event announcements, updates on MATSOL's call for proposals for our 2018 conference, guidance on welcoming students from Puerto Rico post-Hurricane Maria, and the announcement that a new English Learner (EL) guidance document is available (MA DESE, 2017). Helen Solórzano shared information about the LOOK bill and the Seal of Biliteracy (Language Opportunity, 2017).

Staff from the Burlington Public Schools, including EL Coach Kerri Lamprey and first-grade classroom teacher Tina Ski shared one of the state's upcoming ESL MCU (Model Curriculum Unit) videos highlighting the collaborative practices taking place in their district (MA DESE, 2014). They described how co-teaching works in their instructional context and outlined the factors that ensure success: joint planning, curriculum mapping and alignment, parallel teaching of content

and language, co-developed materials, co-teaching as a framework for sustained teacher collaboration, and collaborative assessment of students' work. Although content varies across grades, language functions remain the same across the curriculum and are embraced by both ESL and content teachers.

Shannon Varga and Catalina Tang, from BU's Center for Promise, spoke about the recent report their center has published on culturally and linguistically diverse students in Massachusetts (GradNation, 2017). In a series of qualitative and quantitative analyses, BU's researchers found that students who grow up with exposure to two languages are often high-performing. The researchers stressed the need for more targeted support, without labeling our diverse populations as "deficient." They recommended that, as district stakeholders, we must find ways to foster connections between students and their peers and teachers, enlist family support, offer greater program flexibility, promote teacher training, and provide greater opportunities for student engagement. We ended with a video from America's Promise Alliance (2017), entitled "I Came Here to Learn—MiniDocumentary," which features the voices of high school students whose first language is not English (FLNEs).

Finally, Sarang Sekhavat from the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA) gave a presentation on current immigration enforcement and what we as EL educators and administrators can do to help our communities during this very volatile and disturbing time. Sarang also recommended other supportive organizations, including the PAIR project, the Irish International Immigrant Center, Catholic Charities, the Committee for Public Counsel Services, and the Office of the Attorney General. 

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What's Happening in MATSOL's Special Interest Groups (SIGs)?

MATSOL's Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are member-led groups formed around areas of common interest:

- The Community College ESL Faculty Network
- English Language Educators of the Cape & Islands
- Low Incidence Programs
- Private Language Schools/Intensive English Programs
- Students with Limited/Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE)
- Teacher Educators

SIG membership is open to all MATSOL members, at no charge. In addition to face-to-face and online meetings, most SIGs have e-lists to facilitate communication between members. For instructions about how to join a SIG or a SIG e-list, please go to our website <http://www.matsol.org/member-groups>.

Here's what's happening in MATSOL's SIGs:

THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE ESL FACULTY NETWORK

The big event for our SIG this fall was our second annual mini-conference on October 27 at Mass Bay Community College in Wellesley (See our report on pg. 10 of this issue.) We thank everyone who attended the conference, especially those of you who took the time to submit proposals and prepare presentations.

The Community College Steering Committee has been working hard to advocate for our ESL programs and services. You can assist us by communicating any concerns about your college's ESL program to your designated contact person

from the committee, and by responding to our annual survey, which gives us the information we need to advocate effectively. Following is a list of Committee members, with the community colleges for which they serve as contact: Darlene Furdock (Middlesex, Northern Essex, North Shore), Eileen Kelley

SIG membership is open to all MATSOL members, at no charge.

(Holyoke, Greenfield, Springfield Tech), Bruce Riley (Cape Cod, Bristol, Massasoit), Madhu Sharma (Mt. Wachusett, Berkshire), Jennifer Nourse (Mass Bay, Bunker Hill), Anne Shull (Quinsigamond, Roxbury), Juanita Brunelle (liaison to the MATSOL Board).

Information about the activities of the Community College ESL Faculty Network is posted on the MATSOL website at this [address](#). For additional information, please write Juanita Brunelle at jbrunelle@matsol.org. To ensure that you receive our notices, please update your personal information at [MATSOL membership](#) and make sure that you have selected the Community College SIG as your primary SIG. You may also wish to join our [Community College e-list](#).

You can assist [the Community College ESL Faculty Network] by communicating any concerns about your college's ESL program to your designated contact person from the committee.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATORS OF THE CAPE & ISLANDS (ELE-C&I)

ELE-C&I is a regional organization of PreK-12 ELL educators on Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket. Our goal is to provide ongoing support to educators in our area as they implement state and federal mandates for the education of ELs. Membership includes the following school districts: Barnstable, Bourne, Dennis-Yarmouth, Falmouth, Martha's Vineyard, Mashpee, Monomoy, Nantucket, Nauset Regional, Provincetown, and Sandwich.

In May, 2017, our group met at the Cape Cod Collaborative to continue our work on developing genre-based ESL curricula and to discuss planning for the 2017-2018 school year. The Steering committee asked members if they would be willing to help plan and lead full-day meetings for SY17-18. Two members volunteered to lead the first and second meetings of 2018. The [dates of our meetings](#) will be published on the MATSOL website.

If you are from the Cape and Islands area and interested in helping to support this SIG, please contact a member of the Steering committee: Tricia Leon Finan (leonfinp@dy-regional.k12.ma.us) or Christine Nicholson (cnicholson@falmouth.k12.ma.us).

LOW INCIDENCE PROGRAMS

The goal of the Low Incidence SIG is to provide ongoing support to educators on best practices, state policies and procedures, current research, and upcoming events. We also gather information, materials, and resources from MELLC meetings and DESE Low Incidence meetings.

In recognition of the need for updated progress reports, the Low Incidence SIG has been reviewing our districts' current progress reports. Over the remainder of the 2017-2018 school year, we will consider what to include in grade-span progress reports aligned with the WIDA standards and will create a template that can form the basis of these reports. Looking ahead, we are hoping to form teams of teachers to collaborate on creating new progress reports for district use.

[The Low-Incidence SIG is working] to form teams of teachers to collaborate on creating new progress reports for district use.

For information about our SIG, please contact Jennifer Fitzgerald at jenniferpfitzgerald@gmail.com.

PRIVATE LANGUAGE SCHOOLS/INTENSIVE ESL PROGRAMS (PLS/IEP)

On behalf of the MATSOL PLS/IEP Special Interest Group, I'd like to extend a sincere thank you to all who joined us at our Fall Workshop on September 20. Special thanks to Marnie Reed from Boston University, who took time out of her busy schedule to lead an interesting and interactive workshop entitled, "Getting the Most Out of Learner-Oriented Listening Instruction." This workshop provided participants with methods and activities to help learners become more independent listeners, armed with strategies to use when listening to authentic speech.

On November 11, we held our second annual MATSOL Private Language School/Intensive English Program mini-conference at CELOP, with over 100 registered participants. (See our report on the conference on [pg. 12](#) of this issue.) We will continue to plan small meet-ups throughout the year in order to keep the great conversations going and to stay informed and motivated about what is happening in our industry.

For information about the PLS/IEP Special Interest Group, please contact Joy MacFarland at joymacfarland@gmail.com, or Joshua Stone at jstone@highpointenglish.com.

STUDENTS WITH LIMITED/INTERRUPTED FORMAL EDUCATION (SLIFE)

The SLIFE Special Interest Group (SIG) is for educators in PK-12 districts and adult education programs who serve students with limited or interrupted formal education due to war, civil unrest, migration, or other factors. The group is presently inactive because we do not have a group facilitator. However, we are

re-activating the [SLIFE memberclicks E-LIST](#) while we look for a MATSOL member who would be willing to serve as facilitator. If you, or you and a colleague, have an interest in that position, please contact Ann Feldman at afeldman@matsol.org.

THE TEACHER EDUCATOR SIG

This fall, the Teacher Educator SIG has been discussing the quality of preparation for Structured English Immersion (SEI) teachers (both pre- and in-service), including the importance of differentiating between the roles of ESL and SEI teachers. Our members are gathering and sharing effective practices to add to their state-approved SEI courses. To inform our work, we created a survey for supervisors and administrators of English Language Educator programs, asking for their perspectives on SEI teacher preparedness across grade levels. The survey was administered at the December meeting of the MATSOL English Learner Leadership Council (MELLC). We are also working on a survey for SEI teachers themselves, to determine how prepared they feel to teach emergent bilingual learners, and what additional supports they believe they need.

[The Teacher Educator SIG is] working on a survey for SEI teachers . . . to determine how prepared they feel to teach emergent bilingual learners.

The Teacher Educator SIG meets monthly, using Go-to-Meeting. For information about our SIG, please contact Michaela Colombo at teacheredsig@matsol.org. 

Join a MATSOL Sub-committee or Task Force

For the latest listing of opportunities, please go to our “Get Involved” webpage at <http://www.matsol.org/get-involved-with-matsol>.

Submit to MATSOL Publications

MATSOL E-BULLETIN

The MATSOL E-Bulletin is published monthly. It includes short (one-paragraph) notices relevant to ELL/ESOL education in Massachusetts. Submission deadline: the 25th of each month for publication in the first week of the next month. For more details, see <http://www.matsol.org/matsol-e-bulletins>.

MATSOL CURRENTS

There's a lot going on in the world of TESOL and ELL education, and we'd like all of it to be reflected in *Currents*! We want reviews of books and materials, reports on meetings and events, and articles on everything of interest to MATSOL members: adult education, PreK-12 education, bilingual and dual-language programs, community outreach, ESL in higher education, educator-preparation programs, professional-development initiatives, Intensive English Institutes, private language schools, teaching ideas, profiles of and interviews with significant figures, and discussion of issues that our members should be aware of. We'd also love to publish stories from students—about their adjustment to life in New England and their experiences learning English in our English-language programs and elsewhere.

We welcome articles with scholarly content as well as those that share interesting experiences or give practical advice. If you have something to share, don't hesitate to send it to us at currents@matsol.org. We will work with you to get your article or report into good shape for publication. For more details and a copy of our submission guidelines, see <http://www.matsol.org/matsol-currents> or write to the editor, Mary Clark, at mclark@matsol.org. 

MATSOL's New "Ambassador" Program

MATSOL is putting together a group of "ambassadors" to spread the word about MATSOL's mission and our values of professionalism, educational quality, multilingualism/multiculturalism, collaboration, and diversity. MATSOL ambassadors will join a small team of volunteers whose mission is to talk to teachers, support staff, and administrators who work with English Learners, and to encourage all Massachusetts educators (not just ESL teachers) to take advantage of MATSOL's resources and support.

MATSOL AMBASSADORS WILL

- speak to their colleagues one-on-one about the issues facing English learners and point them to MATSOL resources addressing those issues
- invite colleagues to enroll in MATSOL courses within their academic areas or areas of interest
- introduce department heads, principals, and district administrators to the training MATSOL can offer their schools, districts, or regions
- write a blog post prior to our 2018 MATSOL conference explaining why they are attending the conference and what they hope to get out of the experience
- attend virtual meetings to network with other ambassadors and share ideas on how to disseminate information.

MATSOL will provide the materials and support that the ambassadors will need in their new role and will conduct training sessions on techniques for encouraging collaboration with staff and administrators in various working contexts.

YOU SHOULD APPLY IF YOU ARE

- an educator or administrator who is willing to share your excitement about MATSOL with others
- active on at least one social media platform (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, or Instagram) and willing to post about our organization from your account
- able to spend a couple of hours per month promoting our resources and offerings
- comfortable allowing MATSOL to use your photo or bio for promotional purposes.

Please contact Ann Feldman (afeldman@matsol.org) if you are interested in becoming a MATSOL Ambassador. 

MATSOL's New Member Engagement Initiatives

Among the objectives listed in MATSOL's new Strategic Plan of October, 2017, several are concerned with finding ways to encourage greater member involvement in our organization. In response, our Program and Membership Committee—one of the standing committees of MATSOL's Board of Directors—has been working to identify useful roles that could be filled by MATSOL members. Three of our ideas are listed below. Our planning is still in progress, but if you (or you and a colleague) are interested in volunteering for one of these opportunities, or if you have suggestions for other opportunities that would be appealing to MATSOL members, please write to the Program and Membership Committee (www.matsol.org/get-involved-with-matsol).

E-LIST LEADER

DESCRIPTION

Promote discussion and member engagement and participation in a MATSOL E-List by regularly posting resources, links, and discussion questions.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Send at least one email per week to the E-List.
- Find resources and links to post to the E-List.
- Respond to member posts as needed to encourage discussion.
- Help members troubleshoot basic E-list problems.
- Monitor the E-list for inappropriate activity.
- Participate in periodic online meetings with other E-list leaders to share ideas and strategies.
- Write a brief annual report summarizing the topics discussed on the list for publication in Currents.

REQUIREMENTS

- Interest in the E-list topic (expertise in the topic is welcome, but not required)
- Willingness to find resources to post to the group
- Willingness to learn about E-list functions in the MATSOL members system (Memberclicks)

ISSUE BRIEF – GUEST WRITER

DESCRIPTION

Write a two-page issue brief on a topic related to English Learners for publication by MATSOL in print and online formats.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Write an issue brief, following the MATSOL format (to be provided), including descriptive information and a list of links/resources.
- Revise in response to editorial feedback.
- Supply photos, if applicable.

If appropriate, also consider doing a webinar on the same topic.

REQUIREMENTS

- Expertise in the topic area of the issue brief
- Strong writing skills.

WEBINAR PRESENTER

DESCRIPTION


Create and deliver a webinar on an area of interest to our members via GoToWebinar. MATSOL staff or volunteers will assist with the technical aspect of running the program.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Design and plan a 45-60 minute webinar.
- Create PowerPoint slides and an outline of talking points.
- Create handouts or other materials to share with attendees (if needed).
- Write a description to use in publicity.
- Practice delivery with MATSOL staff or volunteer.
- Deliver the webinar.

If appropriate, also consider writing an issue brief on the same topic.

REQUIREMENTS

- Expertise in the topic area of the webinar.
- Comfort with delivering an online webinar, or the willingness to learn 

The LOOK Bill: A Victory for Massachusetts Students

The Massachusetts Language Opportunity Coalition

<https://languageopportunity.org>

On November 22, Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker signed into law the bill [H.4032 An Act relative to language opportunity for our kids \(LOOK\)](#), which greatly expands options for English learners in the Commonwealth's public schools and creates a new Seal of Biliteracy that will help our students compete in the global economy.

For the past 15 years, Massachusetts schools have been required to teach all English Learners (ELs) the same way: in “sheltered English immersion” programs, which provide language support but teach all content strictly in English. There are exceptions, but they are very limited, benefitting only a small fraction of students. Although the goal of this “one size fits all” approach was to benefit all students, it didn't actually meet the needs of the state's diverse EL population. ELs are the fastest-growing population in Massachusetts schools, doubling since 2000 to more than 90,000 students, or about 9.5% of total enrollment. Some are immigrants, but 82% of them are U.S. citizens, and they live throughout the state: 90% of school districts have at least one EL.

Since 2003, when the English-Only law went into effect, the gap between native speakers and ELs in fourth-grade reading scores has widened, and fewer than half of ELs scored Proficient or Advanced this year in tenth-grade English and math MCAS assessments, a high school graduation requirement. ELs have a dropout rate of 6.6%—the highest of any reported subgroup, and three times higher than the rate for all students (1.9%). Only 64% graduate from high school, compared with 87% of all students.

Recognizing these problems, the [Massachusetts Language Opportunity Coalition](#),¹ of which MATSOL is a member, worked with Massachusetts legislators to change the law. The resulting bill—the LOOK bill—passed both chambers of the Legislature last year but, unfortunately, the House and Senate bills could not be reconciled before the end of the session. New bills were therefore introduced this year, passing the House in June, by a 152–2 vote, and the Senate in July, unanimously, and were sent to a conference committee for reconciliation.

¹ Other members include the Massachusetts Association for Bilingual Education (MABE), the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association (MaFLA), and the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA).

The resulting compromise bill passed both houses on November 15 and was signed into law by Governor Baker.

“We are very excited about this change for our students and their families,” said Helen Solorzano, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Association of Teachers of Speakers of Other Languages (MATSOL). “Teachers have long recognized that many ELs were falling through the cracks under the current system. With the passage of the LOOK bill, we will be able to tailor programs to help all our students succeed academically.



Helen Solórzano with LOOK Bill sponsor Senator Sal DiDomenico

“On behalf of the entire Coalition, I would like to express our deep appreciation to the Speaker of the House, the Senate President, Chairman Jeffrey Sanchez, Senator Sal DiDomenico, and the Chairs of the Education Committee for their unwavering commitment to this legislation,” Solórzano added.

The new law allows districts to establish the EL programs they deem to best meet the needs of their students, which may include the current sheltered English immersion, and/or two-way immersion, transitional bilingual education, or other options. All programs must be research-based, drawing on best practices in the field, and include components to teach both subject matter (e.g. math) and English language.

The bill also empowers parents, by requiring districts to inform families of their options and allowing them to request any available EL program for their child. A group of 20 or more parents can also request a new program (e.g. dual-language or bilingual transitional education). In addition, districts with more than 100 ELs (or over 5%) will now have an EL parent advisory council.

To ensure that all students make progress towards English language proficiency, the bill requires the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE) to develop benchmarks for language acquisition and guidelines to help districts identify students who are falling behind, along with a “success template” to assist them.

Finally, the bill establishes a state “Seal of Biliteracy” for students who achieve

proficiency in English and an additional language. The Seal of Biliteracy can be earned by students of any language background, as long as they master both English and a second world language. A successful pilot project is now in its third year in Massachusetts. Twenty-eight states and the District of Columbia already have such programs.



With LOOK Bill sponsor Chairman Jeffrey Sánchez

“One of Massachusetts’ greatest strengths is the rich diversity of our people,” said Eva A. Millona, executive director of the Massachusetts Immigrant and Advocacy Coalition (MIRA). “Students in our schools speak over 150 languages and navigate between cultures every day. That is a huge advantage on the global stage, and we need to build on it. Young people deserve to make the most of all their assets.”

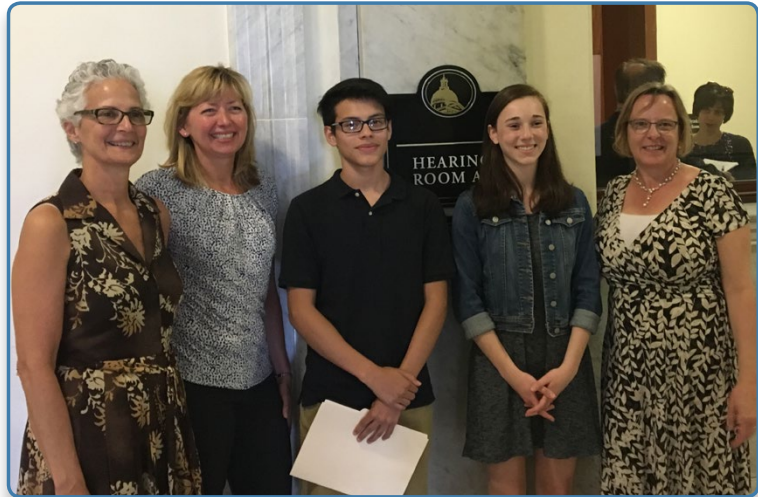
WHAT’S IN THE NEW ENGLISH LEARNER EDUCATION LAW?

Given the intense interest in the new law, the Language Opportunity Coalition is providing an overview for our members. Please be aware that this is not a legal statutory analysis; provisions of the law are subject to regulations and guidance created by DESE. With that caveat, the new law

- Allows school districts to establish EL programs including sheltered English, two-way immersion, and transitional bilingual education, based on the linguistic and educational needs and the demographic characteristics of ELs in their district.
- Allows parents to request any EL program offered by a district for their child, and without the obstacle of the parental waiver for participation in bilingual programs.
- Establishes a state Seal of Biliteracy for students who have attained a high level of proficiency in English and another language, with criteria to be developed based on the work of the Seal of Biliteracy pilot program.
- Directs MA DESE to develop (i) benchmarks for attaining English proficiency for ELs, (ii) guidelines to assist school districts in the identifica-

tion of ELs who do not meet benchmarks, and (iii) an English learning success template for use by districts to assist ELs who do not meet English proficiency benchmarks.


- Requires school districts to submit a plan for any new EL programs, to be reviewed by MA DESE for compliance with state and federal regulations.
- Allows a group of parents/guardians of 20+ students to request that a school district establish a new language instruction program.
- Establishes an English Learner Parent Advisory Council for districts with 100+ or 5%+ ELs to advise the district, participate in planning and development of programs to increase EL opportunities, and participate in reviews of school improvement plans.
- Directs DESE to establish educator endorsements for all EL program types, including two-way immersion and transitional bilingual education.
- Adds additional points of review for program evaluation and annual data reporting.
- Establishes a commission to study the current collection and dissemination of district and state-wide data on school-aged English learners, to include a representative of MATSOL.



Testifying before the joint Committee on Education, from left to right: Phyllis Hardy, MABE; Nicole Sherf, MaFLA; Pedro Parada Campos and Caitlin Davan, students from Framingham Public Schools; Helen Solórzano, MATSOL



Governor Charlie Baker prepares to sign the LOOK Bill, as Rep. Jeffrey Sánchez (House Ways and Means Chairman) and Rep. Alice Peisch (House Chair of the Joint Committee on Education) look on.

For a more comprehensive summary, see https://languageopportunity.files.wordpress.com/2017/11/look_law_summary_112917.pdf. 

An Update on Adult Basic Education in Massachusetts

Jeff McLynch

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New Year's celebrations may still be fresh on our minds and the refrain from “Auld Lang Syne” may still hang on our lips, but advocates for adult basic education (ABE) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) are already turning their attention to Massachusetts' next fiscal year, which begins on July 1. As far off as that may seem, the process of formulating the budget for FY 2019 is already well underway and will enter a new, far more intense stage with the release of Governor Charlie Baker's budget proposal this January. That represents both an opportunity and a challenge for the ABE/ESOL community—a chance to build upon recent progress in improving state funding for our services and to address the nearly two-decades-long decline in the real value of that funding.

Debates over the budget for the current fiscal year, FY 2018, were more protracted than many anticipated, but they ultimately resulted in a modest increase in state funding for ABE. Spurred by outreach by adult educators and students across the

Commonwealth, the Massachusetts legislature overrode Governor Baker's veto of essential ABE funds in late September, setting appropriations for FY 2018 at \$29.63 million—2.8 percent above the FY 2017 level of \$28.82 million.

Such progress is very encouraging, but it is not nearly enough to overcome the long-term erosion in public resources for adult basic education. Even with the gains achieved in FY18, state appropriations for programs that offer ABE and ESOL services have dropped by roughly 30 percent since FY 2001, once inflation is taken into account. Similarly, federal funds flowing into Massachusetts for adult education fell—again, after adjusting for inflation—by 17 percent between

[A]dvocates for adult basic education (ABE) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) are already turning our attention to Massachusetts' next fiscal year, which begins on July 1.

federal fiscal years 2001 and 2017.

Critically, this deterioration in state and federal financial support has occurred even as the demand for ABE and ESOL remains high. At present, more than 20,000 adults sit expectantly on state wait-lists. And the need is very great: data from the US Census Bureau show that more than 471,000 Massachusetts adults lacked a high school credential in 2015, while another 525,000 indicated that they spoke English less than very well.

[S]tate appropriations for programs that offer ABE and ESOL services have dropped by roughly 30 percent since FY 2001, once inflation is taken into account.

The Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education (MCAE), its members, and its partner organizations throughout the Commonwealth will be hard at work in the months ahead to begin to reverse the trend of deteriorating funding for ABE. We have called on the Governor and the Legislature to bring appropriations for Massachusetts' ABE system to \$34.5 million in the coming fiscal year. We will be meeting with key policymakers to explain the returns that such an investment can yield, not just for those in the classroom, but for the Commonwealth as a whole.

To learn more about how you can become involved in MCAE's efforts to promote more robust funding for ABE and to access a variety of advocacy materials, including MCAE's recent budget webinar, please visit <http://www.mcae.net/>. Should the legislature follow past practice, public hearings for the FY 2019 budget will be held quite soon. These sessions provide a critical opportunity for budget writers to hear from their constituents about their concerns and priorities. Please consider lending your voice to help build a chorus of support for ABE and ESOL. **C**

GROW WITH BOWE: A Linda Schulman Innovation Fund Award for a School Community Garden

Kimberly K. Chaput

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Patrick E. Bowe, in the center of Chicopee, Massachusetts, is a Title 1 public elementary school that serves approximately 450 students from preschool through grade 5. The student population is 84% low-income, and 11.2% are English language learners.



The Patrick E. Bowe School community garden, which began six years ago, provides free, fresh vegetables for the Bowe school community and for our low-income neighbors. We currently have 26 raised beds, six fruit trees, a pumpkin patch, and two compost areas. During the school year, the garden is planted and maintained by the Bowe Garden Club, which consists of approximately 45 students in grades 4-5, approximately half of whom are ELs. During the summer months, the garden is maintained by our EL summer school students and teachers, with assistance from the neighboring community. The neighborhood surrounding our school is built around low-income housing, with residents from a variety of countries of origin and various immigration and refugee statuses. In the early fall, Garden Club students harvest the mature crops for use in the school cafeteria and the school Cooking Club, and for consumption in their homes. Surplus produce is donated to Lorraine's Soup Kitchen in Chicopee. The students then plant winter crops such as garlic and kale and prepare the remaining beds for winter.

A Linda Schulman Innovation Fund Grant of \$960 was awarded to Bowe in May 2016. We used that money to purchase four Chromebooks to provide our ELs with a cooperative social and technical tool to improve their English proficiency. The Chromebooks provide translation services to help students communicate effectively. With the Chromebooks, students from a variety of



Students gather for consultation before setting to work in the Bowe School garden

home languages, including Spanish, Russian, Portuguese, Swahili, Polish, French, and Arabic, are able to sit down together to track and graph crop yield and sustainability, crop rotation, donation amounts, and the distribution of harvested produce to the school cafeteria and the community. They have used their Chromebooks to research and share information about nutrition, composting, and gardening; to plan new beds; to predict and confirm data on growth and production; and to map out a beautification project for the front of the school. They have also used their Chromebooks to design and share informational presentations that showcase their garden accomplishments.

The Bowe Garden Club is a member of the state's "Green Team Initiative." In 2014, 2015, and 2016 we received achievement awards from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. The Club's mission is to transform underused schoolyard space into edible gardens while teaching students healthy and sustainable eating habits.

In the past, we have invited nutritionists and gardening professionals from various cultural backgrounds to our club meetings for mini-workshops on topics ranging from composting to healthy eating choices. Both modern and traditional gardening techniques are discussed and explored, using hands-on experiences in the garden. Guided by the District's Curriculum Frameworks, young gardeners are presented with thoughtful math, science, reading, and writing lessons that connect with their weekly gardening experience. The students are taught to be reflective about their gardening experience and to use the previous season's successes and failures to order to plan effectively for future seasons.



Work begins, with assistance from community volunteers

Our Chromebooks have also allowed greater parent involvement as we work to create a multicultural heritage garden. Our ELs have interviewed their family members to learn about plants and vegetables that are staples in their native countries. They are creating culturally relevant recipes and working together to create student/family cookbooks, which will give our multicultural gardeners an opportunity to share their language and food traditions with children from different cultural backgrounds. In this way, all our students have become acquainted with new foods and flavors, and have begun to expand their knowledge of traditional and modern techniques for gardening and food preparation.

On behalf of Patrick E. Bowe School, we offer a tremendous "Thank you!" to the Linda Schulman Innovation Grant Committee for the opportunity to improve our English Learner students' language and technology proficiency, and enhance our community garden and our relationships with the families of our students. 

LOOKing Beyond English-Only in Massachusetts Schools

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After fifteen long years, the Massachusetts legislature has passed, and the Governor has signed, a reconciled version of the Language Opportunity for Our Kids (LOOK) bill. (See the report on [pg. 24](#) of this issue.) We in the field have long looked forward to this day, which brings an end to the restrictive law that required Massachusetts's public schools to use English-only methods for teaching English Learners (ELs). The Question 2 ballot initiative of 2002, which created the English-only policy, has now been replaced by the LOOK law, which gives school districts greater flexibility in designing programs for a variety of learners at different stages of English language acquisition. Districts and schools will now have instructional options that include sheltered English immersion (SEI), dual language, transitional bilingual education, and other approaches that may best meet the needs of particular groups of students. We will be better able to tailor coursework and curricula to students of different ages, stages, and backgrounds.

The law also provides for a state Seal of Biliteracy, which will be awarded to high school graduates who have reached articulated benchmarks in more than one language. The Seal will appear on diplomas and transcripts of all high school graduates who have met this standard, signifying explicitly that Massachusetts considers bilingualism to be a valued asset in our increasingly interdependent globalized world.

As leaders in the field of English language education, we must be prepared to take advantage of the opportunities that the new LOOK law provides. We must begin the conversations that are necessary to determine what sorts of programs will work best in our own districts, based on sound research, data from our students, and access to qualified personnel. Implementation will be hard work, and will require the development and recruitment of a large pool of qualified bilingual teachers.

As we plan new approaches, we must not abandon the efforts and successes

of the RETELL initiative and the strengthened SEI programs that are now in place in most districts; the state's investment in SEI instruction and professional development has been well-received, and these programs will continue to have an important place in our schools and districts as ELs are reassigned and mainstreamed. However, SEI approaches by themselves are not sufficient to meet the challenges we face. For insights, and as a model, we can look toward California, which is a step ahead of us in the process of replacing their own version of the English-only mandate.

California's electorate repealed their 1998 English-only law with 73% approval in 2016. California's Proposition 58, *Education for a Global Economy Initiative*, emphasizes not only language but also discipline-specific content, academic language proficiency, and biliteracy (California Department of Education, 2017, September). The California Board of Education has also recently approved an English Learner Roadmap to provide guidance for curriculum development for the 1.4 million ELs in their public schools (California Department of Education, 2017, August).

Via this Roadmap, California schools will examine placement and exit procedures for ELs, including diverse sub-populations of ELs such as newcomers, students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE), gifted and talented, long-term ELs, and ELs with disabilities. Following Massachusetts's own development of successful SLIFE programs (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2015), we should further refine curricular and instructional approaches for other sub-groups to determine best practices to meet their needs and develop the resources necessary to do so. The California English Learner Roadmap also describes procedures that will ensure continued success for ELs once they exit EL programs. California collects data on multiple indicators including academic progress and achievement, graduation rates, suspension and absentee rates, school climate, and parent engagement. These are all measures that we are familiar with in Massachusetts but which need to be addressed more consistently across our districts.

Other important areas that are addressed in the California English Learner Roadmap include coherent, aligned support for dual language learners across the preschool and primary grades as they develop their bilingualism and

Districts and schools will now have instructional options that include sheltered English immersion (SEI), dual language, transitional bilingual education, and other approaches.

biliteracy; explicit literacy instruction in the early grades; explicit recognition that the development of language proficiency is a 5-7 year process; and ongoing academic support across content-areas. Socio-emotional supports are also addressed in detail, along with a positive “additive” approach to diversity and an emphasis on the importance of giving a strong welcome to newcomers and their families. Through this program, ELs in California are provided with an articulated pathway from early childhood through reclassification, high school graduation, and higher education. With the passing of Proposition 58, bilingual pathways such as dual language immersion, developmental language programs, and heritage language programs are being made available without requiring parental waivers, and schools are now able to choose the programs that are most suited to their students’ needs (see California Association of Bilingual Education, 2017). As such, ELs in California are expected to be ready to participate as bilinguals in a global 21st century world (California Department of Education, 2017, August).

With the passage of the LOOK bill, Massachusetts ESOL teachers, administrators, and teacher educators must be ready to quickly develop and implement the new biliteracy frameworks that may be needed in their schools. Spanish and English will have to be taught together in many districts, and approaches such as translanguaging (Yip & Garcia, 2015), use of first language “inner voice” (Tomlinson, 2000), and the use of multilingual curricular resources must be considered for low-incidence populations. Teachers and administrators must work together to determine how biliteracy can best be achieved in their own districts. This will require us to become much more aware of effective models for dual language, traditional bilingual education, and robust heritage language programs. We also must continue to improve, strengthen, and refine our SEI practices and build on the successes of the RETELL initiative.

Of course, change always comes with challenge, and we must be prepared to face, as has California, a shortage of qualified and experienced dual-language teachers. We will need strategies and professional standards for recruiting, training, and licensing bilingual educators. The California state budget of July 2017 added \$5 million dollars for a Bilingual Professional Development Program; Massachusetts will need a similar investment. Institutions of higher education will have to offer new degree and/or certification programs.

We must also begin educating our colleagues, friends, communities, and neighbors about the LOOK law. As leaders and practitioners in the field, we must be advocates for this new law, and supporters of ELs and their families. As we begin the necessary planning, we can LOOK to a bright future where multilingualism is valued and sought after, and where biliteracy is a goal for all Massachusetts students. **C**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank and acknowledge the work of the sponsors of the LOOK bill, the community advocates, the Massachusetts State House Speaker, the Senate President, the Chairs and Members of the Education Committee, and the legislature at large for their commitment to this bill.

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Insights from a New Certificate Program in Teaching Bilingual English Learners with Disabilities

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Educators who work with bilingual English learners often grapple with difficult issues in deciding how

to best further the education of these students. When a bilingual child struggles in school, is it a disability, a language difference, or both? Which are the right services for a particular child? Will special education serve to foster academic and language development? How will special education and English as a second language services fit together? How can the team collaborate to provide all the supports required by law? How can all services be delivered during the school day? What professional development do teachers need to deliver the right instruction and services while also providing access to the general curriculum? This article summarizes the efforts of a new teacher preparation program that aims to support educators and administrators in answering these questions.

Teacher preparation programs in the United States generally prepare educators to meet licensure requirements for their states, while also promoting skills and dispositions based on research and evidenced-based practices. Since most programs are driven by licensure options, programs are not usually offered in areas for which the state doesn't provide licensure. Here in Massachusetts there

is no licensure or endorsement for bilingual special education, and so teacher preparation programs have not focused on preparing teachers in this area. Instead, they have embedded aspects of bilingual education into their existing general and special education curricula in early childhood, elementary, and secondary education. But it takes time to give adequate treatment of research that is now coming out in the field of bilingual special education. That is why Lasell College has developed a [new certificate/micro-credentialing program](#) to provide practical research-based preparation in teaching bilingual English learners with disabilities.

Lasell faculty began by organizing a coalition of teacher preparation faculty, researchers, and practitioners. The coalition looked nationally at who had grants, publications, and practical tools, and who had experience in evaluating, consulting, coaching, and teaching in this area. A group of six leaders and many advisors emerged to develop the design for our program. The result is a certificate/micro credentialing program that addresses the historical, theoretical, practical, and legal foundation of bilingual and multicultural education.

Lasell's program includes current research on culturally responsive teaching, along with recognized practice procedures such as tiered intervention,¹ special education referral, the pre-referral process, culturally relevant assessment processes, and individualized education and instruction plans (IEPs). The program also covers special education law, with its provision of free and appropriate education for racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse children with and without disabilities in the least restrictive environment, and familiarizes students with legal mandates and guidance from the US Department of Education and the Office of Civil Rights (Musgrove, 2012).

Another critical area for educators of English Learners with disabilities is access to the general curriculum. Core instruction must be designed and delivered in such a way as to remove barriers and take full advantage of prevention frameworks such as the multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; Higgins & Rinaldi, 2011; Rinaldi & Parker, 2016) and Universal Design for Learning for English Learners (UDL) (Tegmark-Chita, Gravel, Serpa, Domingos, & Rose, 2012). The

What professional development do teachers need to deliver the right instruction and services while also providing access to the general curriculum?

¹ Tiered instruction is an approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs. Struggling learners are provided with interventions at gradually increasing levels, with the intensity and duration of interventions based on the student's response to instruction.

Lasell program focuses on the role and expertise of each educator (ESL, regular, and special education) in the instructional process, and helps participants develop and adapt practical tools, such as intake tools and forms, that can be applied to their own practice. Participants are exposed to peer-reviewed research from a variety of research sources and practitioner journals, such as the National Center for Learning Disabilities, Understood.org, Council for Great City Schools, Council for Exceptional Children, the Council for Chief State School Officers, and WIDA. We consider questions such as the following: What happens when bilingual English learners continue to face academic challenges? How can the special education referral process be culturally responsive and non-discriminatory? What processes and assessment tools are needed to understand who our students are academically, personally, and within their families and communities? What are the best practices for developing truly individualized IEPs that tackle language development and academic skills using culturally responsive teaching and specialized educational support and assistive technologies?

Some initial program take-aways are that teachers' commitment, skills, and passion make an impact on students' lives, and that teachers can learn a lot from sharing success stories about their students and their families. There is a lot of work still to do if we want this population of students to be successful. Our first cohort of teachers, in AY2016-17, provided important insights into the practices that are now in place across local education agencies. We came to realize the need to share evidenced-based research and to highlight and encourage pockets of excellence that can serve as models for other institutions.

As the program progresses, we expect to continue to learn more about the needs of bilingual learners with disabilities and to share what we learn about current research and best practices. Here are some of our recommendations moving forward:

1. All educators must understand the concepts of inclusion, the multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) as a data-informed tiered instruction and intervention framework, Universal Design for Learning (UDL),

As the program progresses, we expect to continue to learn more about the needs of bilingual learners with disabilities and to share what we learn about current research and best practices.

least restrictive environment (LRE)², and ways to improve participation and problem-solving during the development of the IEP. They need to know that one service does not supersede another and how to make everything work together.

As one of our students said, "I feel that the definitions of inclusion, UDL, least restrictive environment, and appropriate supports need to be clear for every school district, teacher, and classroom. It is when there is disparity between how, who, when or why to put these concepts into practice that you see people pointing fingers or not taking ownership of all the students in their classrooms. I have seen this, especially when the RTI/MTSS [Response to Intervention/ Multi-Tier System of Supports] process is not clearly defined with roles and responsibilities."


2. Educators should be able to refer to the pre-referral team and to the special education evaluation team at any point, based on the individual needs of each bilingual English learner. There is no specific guidance either federally or at the state level on how long to wait or what proficiency level the child must reach before a special education evaluation can be conducted.
3. Families must be fully involved in the development of the IEP by providing information about the educational, medical, cultural, and linguistic history of the child and helping to set up important and meaningful goals for the child's future. We must limit educational jargon and power differentials in meetings. Teachers need professional development on how to conduct, participate, and collaborate more effectively in IEP meetings.

As one student said, "I was struck by the statement that the goals need to be deemed important and meaningful by the family. In practice, I have rarely seen or heard a conversation where parents are asked if they think the goals are important or meaningful. I worry that they are sometimes put off by the educational jargon and just kind of nod along in agreement or figure that what teachers suggest must be what is best."

4. Educators cannot serve in two roles at once, such as teacher expert in their area and also interpreter/translator for the family. All teachers (general education, ESL, SEI, special education, specialist, interventionist) must bring information from their own assessment of the student and must participate in the eligibility decision.

² According to section 612(a)(5) of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), LRE asserts a strong preference for educating children with disabilities in regular classrooms with appropriate aids and supports unless it is determined that the nature or severity of the disability is such that the education cannot be achieved satisfactorily. Placement must be decided based on the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

5. Interpreters and translators need training in general education curriculum and practice, special education laws and parental rights, and the laws that pertain to English learners.
6. The IEP team need professional training in the identification of goals that address English language development.

Here is what one participant shared: "I do not feel that language goals are written, and there is always a specific statement made that ESL services are not 'on the grid.' I think I will open a dialogue to change that. I hope to also offer more of a goal-oriented statement at future meetings to get language goals included for the students." 

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Annual Mandated Evaluations for Teachers: Challenges and Opportunities

Kathy Lobo

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As part of their annual evaluation, public school teachers in Massachusetts are required to articulate a student learning goal and a professional practice goal. At the start of the 2016-17 school year, as part of our student learning goal, my school principal and my department head asked our teachers to seek answers to the following questions, through the perspectives of their students:

1. How do students learn, and what do students experience in my classroom?
2. How can I/we best gather feedback from students on the effectiveness of our instructional practices?

My first thought was that these are difficult questions to ask students, especially English Learners (ELs) who lack full English proficiency. Thinking about metacognition is hard enough, but asking an EL to reflect on their learning and then provide feedback to the teacher (maybe to write about it) seemed too big a challenge, especially for younger students and those with lower English language proficiency. I was concerned that many ELs would lack the vocabulary to understand the nuances of what was being asked.

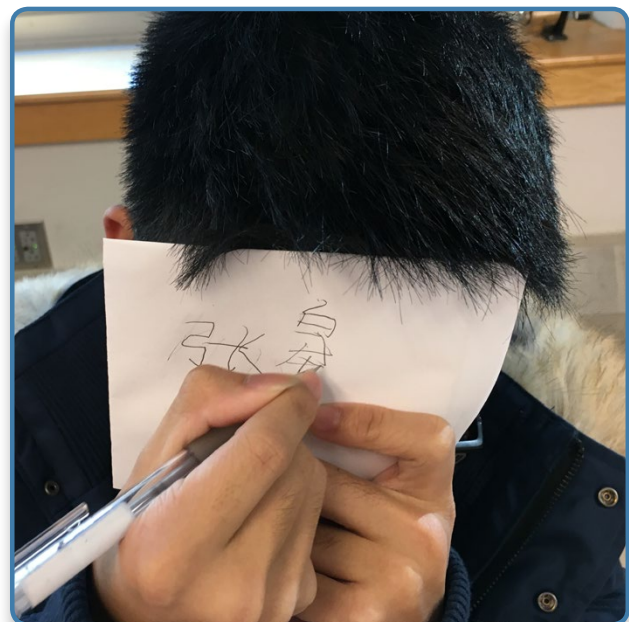
I first started to think about this challenge in 2015 when I served on a MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE) committee that reviewed and rewrote questions for the department's [Model Student Feedback Survey for Grades 6-12](#). As I analyzed the drafted questions, I kept wondering whether our ELs would understand even the question, let alone the four possible multiple-choice responses. When I suggested that this assessment tool could not be used effectively for all students, I was assured that “the surveys will be translated into Spanish.” I had to remind the committee that not all ELs are Spanish speakers, let alone Spanish readers! I was then told that the surveys

we were working on would not be required; each district could decide either to use these surveys or to create an assessment protocol of their own. Luckily for me, my district left this question in the hands of the teachers, who did not opt for this one-size-fits-all survey.

My student learning goal for 2016-2017, which I dutifully uploaded to [Teachpoint](#) (an on-line customizable teacher evaluation system that can make the process paperless), was as follows: "In order to find out how my students learn and what they experience in my classroom, I will teach a series of mini lessons on learning and metacognition and will facilitate some activities that are related to learning and thinking. I will then gather reflections and feedback from the students. I will share my lessons and experience and the feedback from the students with my team [two other ESL teachers]."

The class I chose for executing my goal was an English class for students in grades 9-12 at WIDA levels of high 4 and 5. I began by teaching a series of mini-lessons on cognition and learning. Some topics I covered were spatial reasoning and perspective taking; study methods for learning new vocabulary; perceptions of time; time management; and expressing an opinion when sharing a reflection. I explored spatial reasoning and perspective-taking by doing a classroom exercise consisting of two tasks: In the first task, I asked the students to hold a piece of paper against their foreheads and write their name on it (see accompanying photos). The object was to see how the students wrote their names: Was it oriented so that an observer could read it, or was it set up from the perspective of the participant? If a person writes their name so the viewer can read it "correctly," that shows that the writer can take the perspective of someone else. If the name is "backwards" to the reader but "correct" from the perspective of the writer, this may show that they are more focused on themselves.

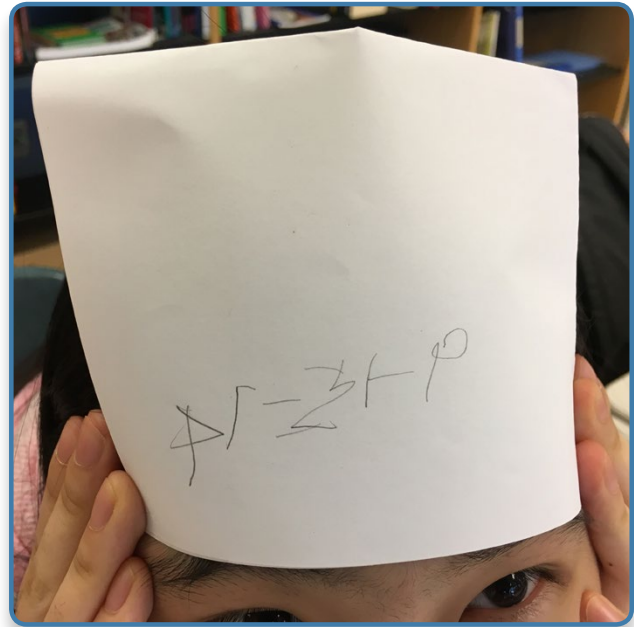
Some students produced a mixed result by writing some letters backwards. This helped them to understand the challenges for students with special education challenges—for example, from dyslexia. The second task was to use another paper, again on the student's forehead, to write "9 + 5 =" and then the answer ("14"). These tasks are intended to show students how complex our minds are and also that,



A student writes his name (in Chinese) on his forehead

with concentration and practice, we can master new skills. I asked the students to reflect on what they had learned about perspective-taking and to try to be more accepting and empathetic when they or their classmates made mistakes or learned more slowly.

I intended these lessons to serve as background for my efforts to gather feedback regarding how the students were learning and what they were experiencing in my class. After an assessment test on the vocabulary we had covered in a unit on mythology, I asked the students to tell me how they had learned new words in their home country and to compare that with the way they learned vocabulary in our class. I also asked them to predict what grade they thought they would earn on the test, and to share what they would do the same or differently the next time they studied English vocabulary. From this exercise, I learned a lot about their former schooling and what they considered to be good methods of study. They shared methods and practices they liked and disliked. Mostly they felt more successful when they knew what to expect and had opportunities to practice the skills on which they would later be assessed. When one boy asked me about studying with on-line programs, I told him about [Quizlet](#), so that he could make study aids for himself whenever he wanted to.



$$9 + 5 = 14$$

I began to use exit tickets that posed the question, “What does Ms. Lobo do in class to help you become a better learner? How does she help you learn?” I received affirming feedback such as the following:

“Ms. L allows students to learn and take notes in different ways, which makes the lessons more interesting.”

“Improve my grammar and learn more about myself, and read English which improves our English and promoted us to be better students.”

“Ms. L adapts what each person needs to work on. For example,

each person gets a different packet to help us work on our weaknesses."

"Ms. L teaches slowly and often gives her students reading topics so it can improve my reading skill and new vocabulary."

"She teaches us. She explains to us. If we have difficulties she will help us."

After all this preparation, I finally administered DESE's 45-question [Model Student Feedback Survey, Grades 6-12](#), which we had revised in November, 2015. (There are shorter versions of the surveys, but I used the full-length form. But since the language demand is very high, I don't think this is a good tool to use with lower-level ELLs.) The survey includes questions about what the teacher did, as well as what the student was able to do. There are questions about the difficulty of the course work and about various scenarios in class, such as whether the teacher offers additional more challenging work when a student has finished the regular classwork, whether the materials used in the class are clearly thought out, and whether the teacher inspires the student to explore topics outside of school.


This year of activities, mini-lessons, and surveys gave me many opportunities to hold productive conversations and share results with students, colleagues, and my supervisor. While I have learned a lot, I feel that I have learned the most from asking my students one simple question: "What is Ms. L doing already and what should she do in the future to make you a better learner and our classroom a better place for learning?"

This year, 2017-18, I have revised my student learning goal to include an activity in which students identify something they are doing or want to do to be better learners and then share what I as their teacher am doing to make our classroom

This year, 2017-18, I have revised my student learning goal to include an activity in which students identify something they are doing or want to do to be better learners and then share what I as their teacher am doing to make our classroom a better place to learn.

¹ The Frayer Model is a strategy that uses a graphic organizer for vocabulary building. This technique requires students to (1) define the target vocabulary words or concepts, and (2) apply this information by generating examples and non-examples. The information is placed on a chart to provide a visual representation ([AdLit.org](#), 2017).

a better place to learn. The aim of this exercise is to help the students set a short-term goal and become self-advocators as they work toward those goals. My student learning goal for 2017-18 reads, "During the 2017-18 school year, I will support students in my ESL 4 English class [WIDA level 4] as they identify their areas of need, set semester-long goals, self-advocate, and assess their own progress." I have already solicited the students' statements about what they are doing/want to do to be better learners, and I have learned what I am doing and what they would like me to do in the future to make our classroom a better place for learning. I will now help them set individual goals and try to help them achieve their goals. We will reflect on and revise the goals once each term.

Teaching and learning involves an interchange of studying, processing, reflecting, and putting what has been learned into use in some way. It's ongoing and dynamic. I think DESE's annual student evaluations, with a little tweaking, can help us learn more about our students and ourselves. 

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Kathy Lobo Teaches at Newton South High School and Brandeis University. She currently serves on MATSOL's Finance Committee and is the Chair of TESOL's Conference Professional Council. She is also the Chair of TESOL's 2018 annual convention, which will take place in Chicago on March 27-30, 2018.

Preparing Pre-Service Teachers to Teach Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

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In preparing future teachers of English as a second/foreign language (ESL/EFL), Teacher Education Programs generally focus on theories of language acquisition, along with theoretically-based approaches for teaching language and content. As part of this study, pre-service teachers are introduced to the role of cultural learning in language development. However, programs rarely emphasize the critical role of power dynamics in intercultural interactions.

As TESOL faculty at Bridgewater State University, we are integrating principles of critical intercultural communication into our courses, based on research on the integration of power and languaculture by such authors as Bennett, 1993; Dearsdoff, 2006; and Halualani & Nakayama, 2010. To help our students become interculturally competent teachers, we begin by asking them to reflect on their own cultural identities and to consider how they can cultivate self-reflection in their own students. In this report, we will describe two of the activities that we have used to foster self-reflection in our students and one activity that asks students to apply these principles to their own teaching practices.

SELF-REFLECTION ON THE STUDENT'S OWN IDENTITIES

In the first activity, students reflect on their own identities through completing personal and social identity wheels (adapted from the *AAUW Diversity and Inclusion Kit* (AAUW, 2017)) that include categories such as professions, hobbies, personal traits, organizations, and affiliations, along with other cultural categories that are shaped by society, such as language, nationality, race, gender, sexual orientation, and religion. The students consider which categories are most important in their lives and which are less important, and how this impacts their experiences. They also discuss how some identities are more socially powerful than others. For example, one white student doing this activity reflected on how,

for her, race was not an important aspect of her identity, whereas an African-American student in the class found race to be a very salient attribute, often leading to discrimination. After a series of rich discussions focused on respectful self-disclosure, students compile their findings into interactive presentations of their identity wheels and an analysis of their identity transformations across time and context.

SELF-REFLECTION ON LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

One integral component of the identity wheel is a reflection on the role of language. In our second activity, students engage in a structured analysis of the development of their first and second languages, both oral and written. The purpose of this activity is to help them appreciate the complexity of the language development process and to empathize with the linguistic experiences of their own students.


The students start with a reflection on the home and school experiences that influenced their own reading and writing habits and the factors that facilitated or hindered their literacy development. As part of this process, they consider the linguistic contexts that determine their communication styles, dialects, and language expression, and the power dynamics that are embedded in language. For example, a student who is a native speaker of English reflected on her study-abroad experience in Spain and how her lack of proficiency in Spanish prevented her from expressing herself and presenting her authentic identity. The students are asked to share their linguistic self-reflection in a student-facilitated discussion that incorporates relevant findings and implications from the identity wheel activity.

[O]ne white student . . . reflected on how, for her, race was not an important aspect of her identity, whereas an African-American student . . . found race to be a very salient attribute, often leading to discrimination.

APPLICATION TO TEACHING PRACTICE

After engaging in these two activities, the students are asked to consider how they can incorporate similar activities and principles into their own teaching. They design two activities for their current or imagined teaching contexts, adjusting them to match their students' grade level, English proficiency level, the content area, the cultural and linguistic environment, and other relevant sociocultural attributes. As part of this activity, the students practice

implementing these activities with their own students or with their classmates. They reflect on their experience teaching these activities and identify several professional goals regarding the application of critical intercultural communication in their teaching contexts.

We find that our students' levels of engagement and enthusiasm are significantly higher when they are encouraged to analyze their own identities and reflect on their personal backgrounds and experiences in this way. These activities create enriched learning opportunities and make students more aware of the power dynamics that are embedded in intercultural communication. Classroom observation, coupled with students' self-assessment of their own and each other's performance on the application-to-practice activity, show that they have become more aware of the nuances of teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students and are better equipped to plan effective instruction that promotes inclusion and builds on and celebrates diversity. 

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Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance, by Angela Duckworth. New York: Scribner, 2016. 333 pages. ISBN978-1-5011-1110-5

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Angela Duckworth is a Professor of Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania, a 2013 MacArthur Fellow, a former classroom teacher, and a summer school founder. In this book, she argues for a quality called “grit,” which underlies the successful performance of high achievers in music, finance, and the military. The book is divided into three parts: Part 1: “Why Grit Matters,” Part 2: “Growing Grit from the Inside Out,” and Part 3: “Growing Grit from the Outside In.” Professor Duckworth offers useful advice for parents, teachers, coaches, curriculum designers, and counselors.

Parents can encourage grit in their children by being gritty role models themselves: The development of a character trait is fostered by observing that trait in others (the “social multiplier” of Dr. Jim Flynn, of the University of Otago). Parents should lead the family in cultivating family interests, connecting to a purpose beyond self, committing to a daily habit of selecting a challenge and overcoming it, and holding on to hope when all seems lost. These practices are recognized in the Finnish culture, where they are called *sisu*, and in the Japanese culture, where they are known as *kaizen*. When we overcome adversity in youth, we establish a way of dealing with adversity throughout our lives.

At school, teachers and coaches can encourage grit 1) by asking students to memorize several core values of the school per week (as practiced at West Point), along with literary quotes to communicate each value (as advocated by Anson Dorrance, University of North Carolina coach), 2) by assigning essay topics such as “How could the world be a better place? Draw a connection to what you are learning in

The development of a character trait is fostered by observing that trait in others.

school,” “Think of someone whose life inspires you to be a better person,” or “Imagine that you can’t get all your work done. Describe the major cause,” and 3) by asking students to take and retake Dr. Duckworth’s [grit test](#) to try to improve their scores. Dr. Robert Eisenberger (University of Houston) has argued that industriousness can be learned by doing something hard every day and not quitting. Dr. Carol Dweck (Stanford) has shown that IQ can be increased in adolescence, but if there is no mastery in childhood the result is learned helplessness in adulthood.

Parents should lead the family in cultivating family interests, connecting to a purpose beyond self.

Extracurricular activities are a major agent of grit, so they should be required for at least two years. Funding for arts and music should be increased. The gap between rich and poor students in extracurricular participation contributes to the gap that we see in their grit scores.

In her conclusion, Dr. Duckworth acknowledges that grit is not the only valuable virtue; it is only one of a collection of admirable character traits of the “intrapersonal” cluster. (The other clusters are interpersonal [empathy] and intellectual [curiosity and zest].) But she feels that the intrapersonal cluster is the strongest predictor of academic success.

I recommend this very interesting book to parents, teachers, and others who are concerned with education and character development in children. [C](#)

Emotions, Learning and the Brain: Exploring the Educational Implications of Affective Neuroscience, by Mary Helen Immordino-Yang. W.W. Norton & Company, 2016. 206 pages. ISBN-13: 978-0393709810, ISBN-10: 0393709817.

Reviewed by Kathy Lobo

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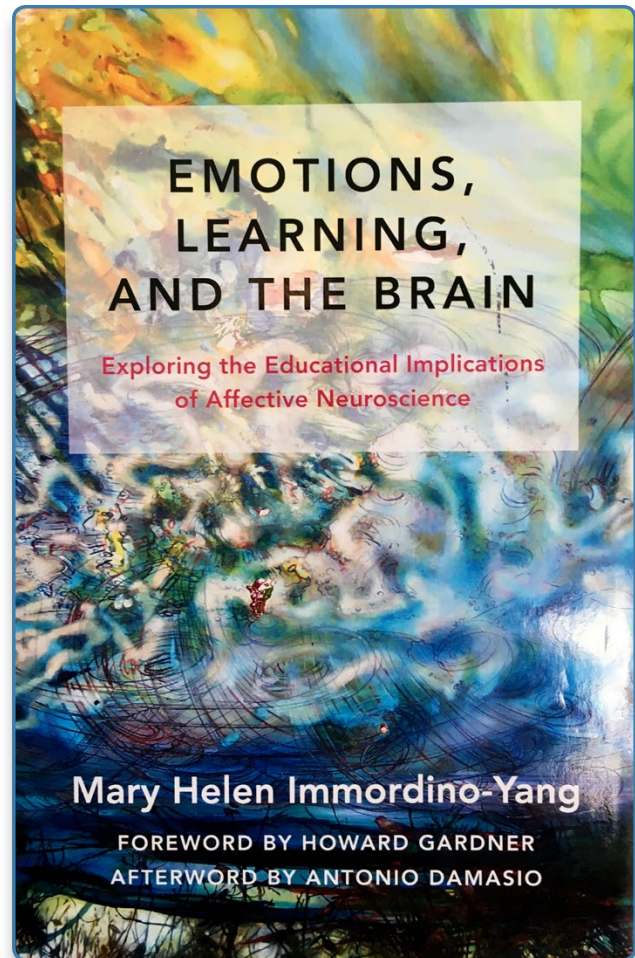
This is a quick, engaging, worthwhile read. Immordino-Yang is an affective neuroscientist with expertise in human development and psychology. (An affective neuroscientist is someone who combines neuroscience [function and development of the nervous system] and psychology [personality, emotion and mood].) While she is now an Associate Professor of Education, Psychology, and Neuroscience at the University of Southern California, Professor Immordino-Yang was formerly a public-school teacher here in Massachusetts!

Immordino-Yang believes that emotions are integral to learning. In a foreword to the book, Howard Gardner sums up the content very well when he writes that “A range of sciences (and other disciplines) provide suggestions about how best to educate. . . [Immordino-Yang] combines findings about psychological development and cultural contexts in order to make suggestions about how educators might proceed” (p.9).

The book is organized into two parts: In Part I (three chapters) the author describes how emotions are supported by the brain when learning is taking place; in Part II (seven chapters) she shows how various findings from the field of affective neuroscience provide insights for learning and for teaching. Some of the chapters have contributing co-authors.

Chapters of particular interest to me included Chapter 6: “Musings on the

Neurological and Evolutionary Origins of Creativity via a Developmental analysis of One Child's Poetry," Chapter 7: "A Tale of Two Cases: Lessons for Education from the Study of Two Boys Living With Half Their Brains," and Chapter 10: "Perspectives from Social and Affective Neuroscience on the Design of Digital Learning Technologies." I wholeheartedly agree with the statement of Antonio Damasio, author of the Afterword, that "Immordino-Yang is engaging, and convincing, perhaps because of her encompassing view of the developing human mind, which is itself drawn from a mature view of both cognitive science and neuroscience" (p.192). Immordino-Yang is able to share research in such a way that I, as an educator, feel intrigued and empowered at the same time. I look forward to following her work and reading the books and articles she writes next!



You may wonder how I came to know of this book. I am the Conferences Professional Council's Chair for the TESOL convention due to take place in Chicago March 27-30, 2018, and Professor Immordino-Yang has agreed to be the Friday Keynote Speaker. Since I will have the honor of introducing her that day, reading her work was part of my "homework."

I hope you will be able to attend the TESOL convention to hear her speak in person, but if you can't, then this book (or some of the videos you can find on YouTube) might be a good alternative! [C](#)

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