Helping English Language Learners Graduate From High School

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Staff writer, *Education Week*

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Helping English-Language Learners Graduate From High School

Expert Presenters:

Mary Jo Marion, assistant vice president for urban affairs and executive director of the Latino Education Institute, Worcester State University

Shannon Varga, post-doctoral research fellow, Center for Promise, a research center for America’s Promise Alliance
An on-demand archive of this webinar will be available at www.edweek.org/go/webinar in less than 24 hrs.
I Came Here to Learn: The Achievements and Experiences of Massachusetts Students Whose First Language is Not English

Tuesday June, 2017
Education Week
Background

Youth whose First Language is Not English (FLNE) represent the fastest growing public school aged population in the United States

In Massachusetts, 1 in 5 students have identified a first language other than English
### Massachusetts First Time 9th Graders in 2010-2011 School Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-FLNE</th>
<th>FLNE</th>
<th>Type of FLNE</th>
<th>Percent of student population overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>Current EL</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other FLNE</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>4-Year Graduation Rate (2014)</th>
<th>5-Year Graduation Rate (2014)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70.6%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Current EL</th>
<th>Other FLNE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our Study

Over the past year, the Center has utilized multiple methods to understand the various factors that support or hinder academic persistence for FLNE students.
Research Methods

LATENT CLASS ANALYSIS
13,075 young people
9th graders
statewide data
eight indicators

IN-DEPTH GROUP INTERVIEWS
24 young people
ages 18-25
five sites
semi-structured questions
Findings from Statewide Data Analysis

- EL does not equal low performing
- Some FLNE students are achieving academic success
- Not all Spanish speakers are the same
- Two groups of students clearly need more support
EL does not equal low performing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classes</th>
<th>% 4-year graduates</th>
<th>% 5-year graduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class 3: Above Average ELs</td>
<td>70%***</td>
<td>73%***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 3: Above Average ELs</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% EL</th>
<th>% Free lunch</th>
<th>% Passing all 9th grade courses</th>
<th>% Advanced or Proficient math MCAS</th>
<th>% Advanced or Proficient ELA MCAS</th>
<th>% SPED</th>
<th>% Enrolled in MA public schools &gt;2 years</th>
<th>% Female</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>754</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>15.99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Some FLNE students are achieving academic success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classes</th>
<th>% 4-year graduates</th>
<th>% 5-year graduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class 2: Excelling Non-EL Students</td>
<td>92%*</td>
<td>92%*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Data for Class 2: Excelling Non-EL Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>% EL</th>
<th>% Free lunch</th>
<th>% Passing all 9th grade courses</th>
<th>% Advanced or Proficient math MCAS</th>
<th>% Advanced or Proficient ELA MCAS</th>
<th>% SPED</th>
<th>% Enrolled in MA public schools &gt;2 years</th>
<th>% Female</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2410</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>15.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Not all Spanish speakers are the same

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 4: Low-Income, Long-Time Residents, Non-EL Spanish Speakers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3632</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 5: Low-Income, Spanish Speaking, Massachusetts Newcomers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2169</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 6: Differentiated Learners Who Speak Spanish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3561</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Two groups need more support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classes</th>
<th>% 4-year graduates</th>
<th>% 5-year graduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class 4: Low-Income, Long-Time Residents, Non-EL Spanish Speakers</td>
<td>79%*</td>
<td>82%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 5: Low-Income, Spanish Speaking, Massachusetts Newcomers</td>
<td>44%*</td>
<td>49%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 6: Differentiated Learners Who Speak Spanish</td>
<td>53%*</td>
<td>58%*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings from Group Interviews

• Students are motivated

• Language is sometimes a barrier rather than a bridge

• Competing priorities

• Family support and separation

• School climate
Motivation

“What motivates me to keep on going and stay at school is to demonstrate to the people that didn’t believe in me, that I’m going to be someone... People that don’t see you as a person. People that see that you’re not worth anything. First of all, I want to show them that I can have a diploma from North High School, that I can have a good job... That I can become someone in this life.”

-Lina
Language is sometimes a barrier rather than a bridge

“Everything we talk and say, everything we speak with the truth, but nobody believes us. They believe more to them [native English speakers]. That’s why I haven’t said anything, and well, they punish you for nothing, because they punished me for two hours and a half for having said that to them, and the person who was talking bad was him, not us.”

-David
Competing Priorities

“Some students work from 3:00 to 12:00 at night and they get home around one in the morning, and around 6:30 or 6:00 they have to be awake to come here [school]. So I feel that maybe there’s a lot of pressure, which some adults don’t understand. Some say ‘Oh, they’re in school, what worries do they have? Just homework?’, but they don’t know that a lot of times one who’s young suffers more than an adult.”

- Julio
Family Support and Separation

“She’s really good with me... She loves me and all that. She’s a normal mom, but we haven’t spent that time as a mother and son. Instead, she works, I work. When I come back from work, I go to sleep, or sometimes I do homework... And I don’t want to wake her up, I rather let her sleep and rest. I don’t see her... until the next weekend in the morning... She’s spent her birthdays working. I’ve spent my past three birthdays here, working. All of them. Sometimes I say to myself ‘happy birthday’ in the mirror when I’m in the bathroom—and I replied to myself, ‘thank you.’” – Mario
Experiences of Discrimination

“When I came to school they gave [an ID] to me... When we walk down the hall, everyone says, ‘Here come the immigrants, the group of immigrants,’ and I haven’t wanted to get into trouble, so I listen to them and I remain quiet because I don’t want any problems and I came here to learn.”

- David
Supportive & Transcaring School Climate

“There are always two people that have supported me a lot, which are, Ms. Go¬mez and Ms. Brown. They’ve always supported my education and myself. They’ve supported me to motivate me, because if it weren’t because of them, maybe I wouldn’t be here at school still.” – Marcos

I do feel like I belong here... they’ve helped me a lot, but mostly Ms. Go¬mez. She’s always calling us, so she always knows. She tries to make you feel like you’re part of the school. Like we’re all like a community, we could say that, so, we feel more familiar to each other... –Dario
Implications
from the voices of youth

• Create more opportunities for connection
• Engage young people in the design of educational programs that serve FLNE students
• Provide more comprehensive student supports
• Support the student by supporting the family
• Provide more flexible programs for older youth
• Continue to increase opportunities for teacher training and sharing of promising practices
From Research to Practice
LEI’s Model for Latino Education Success

01 Family Engagement
The entire family must do well if we want to achieve success

02 Program Design
Serve students K-12 through personalized academic and social supports with rigor and cultural context tailored to the needs of each school

03 Research & Policy Initiatives
Data and research to inform policy and practice as a catalyst for advocacy and reform

04 University/Community Partnerships
If we align resources and missions we can be more effective
LEI’s Mission

Our Mission is to improve the educational outcomes and well-being of Latino youth and their families by providing direct services, involving families in the education process, and conducting research.

Because LEI...
- Embodies and embraces culture as an asset for the advancement of all students
- Promotes leadership through service learning and the development of critical thinking skills
- Enhances learning, English proficiency, confidence, and opportunities for learners across the ages (K-12, ABE, and university students)
- Partners with public schools to co-design and implement programs that accelerate student learning and literacy
- Works with parents and families to connect home and school to improve student supports
- Engages in research and analysis to illuminate the challenges and successes of Latino students
- Leverages the resources of Worcester State University such as faculty, students, and world-class facilities

An Environment is created where...
- Youth feel empowered, rooted by their culture and identity, and inspired to engage in their communities
- All students are prepared to excel academically, become proficient in English, graduate from high school, and advance toward a college degree and meaningful career.
- Families and communities understand and support their children through the challenges they face in today’s society
- There is collaboration with community partners to improve access to local resources, build advocacy networks, and inspire system-wide change
- Communities and policy makers are well informed of the positive contributions and progress of urban youth and the Latino community
- The university is more central to families and communities, serving as a resource hub and an introduction to higher education

Resulting in...
- A growing population of informed citizens who actively contribute to the economic and social well-being of Worcester
- The successful replication of the LEI in communities across Massachusetts
Latino Education Institute

- 53% of LEI youth are English language learners.
- The LEI serves youth from 27 of the Worcester's public schools.
- 70.4% are economically disadvantaged.
- 80% of LEI students attend college.
- 95% graduate high school.
- Over 50% decline in school discipline for LEI middle school boys.
- 1113 youth have been served in core programs over 5 years (2011-16).
• 25,076 enrollment
• Overall 1 in three children in Worcester have at least one foreign-born parent.
• The majority of ELLs (73.2%) were born in the mainland U.S. (Puerto Rico not included)
• The following most common countries of origin are the Dominican Republic, Iraq, El Salvador, and Ghana
• There are 103 languages spoken in the Worcester Public Schools
• 60.6% of ELLs speak Spanish, followed by Vietnamese (5.6%), Arabic (5.3%), and Twi (5.3%)
Implications for the field

1. Classification System Allows Community and School Efforts to Better Hone in on Special Populations
2. Building Assets Based Approaches
3. Understanding Class 4
4. Engaging All Parents
Better Targeting Services and Students

1. Newcomer students and families receive orientation services and are matched with community organizations.

2. Late arrival students receive accelerated and flexible learning opportunities.

3. Opportunity for honor and AP classes for high performing students.

4. More time on task for all classes.
Assets-Based Approaches

1. Using the Term Emerging Bilingual

2. Seal of Bi-literacy

3. CLEP Exam and AP Spanish

4. Dual Language Immersion
1. Middle School Matters

2. Relationship and Mentorship

3. Expanding Networks and Opportunities

4. Early College and Career Programming

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**MY VOICE, MY COMMUNITY**

Four Week Summer Academy for Middle School Bilingual Students Who Are Learning English

Worcester State University
July 11-August 4, 2017
10:00 am - 3:00 pm | Tuesdays-Fridays

- Enhance your leadership and critical thinking skills
- Theatre and Photography
- Fun Field Trips
- Food and Transportation provided
- Get to know more about your community

FREE but limited space, please register soon!
Applications available at LEI and your school.
508-798-6507

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WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY
LATINO EDUCATION INSTITUTE
Universal Strategies

Family Engagement for All
A Blended, Supplemental English Learner Curriculum for Grades 4-10

ELL
I, II
Entering, I, II, III
Entering

Visit MiddleburyInteractive.com for a course demo.
Grounded in the language pedagogy of Middlebury College’s Language Schools, Middlebury Interactive’s supplemental, blended ELL courses:

- Are research- and social learning-based.
- Teach academic English through rigorous academic content.
- Provide a framework and structure for classroom teachers to support ELLs.
- Include professional development to support varied classroom implementations.
Unique ELL Course Features

- On-grade level content to teach academic English
- Adaptable modular structure and flexible implementations
- Project-based learning to encourage social interactions
- Culturally inclusive for students to share unique backgrounds
- Challenging content to boost student learning outcomes
Visit MiddleburyInteractive.com to:

- Schedule a Demo
- Read Success Stories
- View Classroom Resources

Learn More About Our ELL Curriculum

Explore our digital English language curriculum through a guided demo.

REQUEST DEMO

New Partnerships Leads to Greater Success for ELLs

Harford Public Schools has teamed up with Middlebury Interactive to develop a new curriculum for English Language Learners.

Connecticut’s Harford Public Schools has the largest percentage of English-language learners in the state, with close to 30 percent of its students learning English as a second language.

These 1,000 students come from very diverse backgrounds and speak more than 80 different languages, and they see a very transient student body—often there is a student who’s learning English as a second language for the district, said Vanessa Quinn, director of EL services.

“We wanted a solution that could help meet the needs of our most challenging ELL students with a curriculum that was delivered in gradel level and not watered down,” Quinn said. “We also wanted to take a blended-learning approach that would offer content in different modalities, while giving students the flexibility to work at their own pace.”

To develop such a solution, district leaders turned to Middlebury Interactive Languages, a company with a proven record of success in delivering a blend of online and face-to-face instruction in world languages.

In collaboration with Hartford teachers and ELL coordinators, Middlebury developed a series of supplemental, active modules for ELLs. Students in grades 4-8, and Hartford teachers are piloting the new content in eight middle schools this year. The pilot program also includes significant professional development for participating ELL teachers.

The curriculum aligns with content areas the students already are studying, as well as the Common Core standards. The content addresses one of five themes in grades K-3 and a different set of themes in grades 4-8, such asliberal arts and environmental studies, mythology, narrative, and human society.

Middlebury Interactive Languages has been a leader in working with English language learners to enhance vocabulary and skills in four key areas—reading, writing, speaking and listening.

“We wanted to ensure that students were learning by doing,” said Alfre Speranza-Rodriguez, Ph.D., Chief Development Officer for Middlebury Interactive and a tenured linguistics professor at Middlebury College. “Not only we established the activities so they can adapt to students at different levels.”

Middlebury Interactive Languages is an online course developer and publisher of educational materials for students worldwide. It offers a comprehensive line of interactive learning products that challenge, motivate, and engage students of all ages in learning a new language and expanding their cultural knowledge. By tapping into the latest advances in technology and pedagogy, Middlebury Interactive Languages empowers students to achieve their goals in language learning.
An on-demand archive of this webinar will be available at www.edweek.org/go/webinar in less than 24 hrs.
Required Reading from *Education Week*:

**Spotlight on English-Language Learners**

In this Spotlight, read about ESSA's impact on English-learners, learn what research suggests about best-practice, and rethink common misconceptions about teaching ELLs.