

English Learners



STUDENTS WITH
unique or special
circumstances

Defined:

Students who do not speak English or whose native language is not English. This group also includes individuals who need to enhance their abilities in the areas of speaking, reading, writing, and understanding the English language.

English learner refers to the subset of language minority students who need support to access curricula in English. For ELs in college, we do not restrict this term to students whom K-12 institutions have formally identified as non-native learners of English. This broad definition encompasses ELs in college who may not have experienced K-12 schooling in the United States or whose English language skills may not have been formally assessed prior to college.

*** English language learners (ELLs) are the fastest-growing student group in the US.**

***Community colleges are increasingly a haven for the more than 20 million adult immigrants with limited English proficiency and hope to improve their careers. English language learners are more likely to attend a community college than a four-year institution, with second-generation Americans accounting for nearly one-quarter of all U.S. community college students.**

***2023 Data**

Program Examples:

Center for English Language Learning (Cell)
Intensive English Program
English as a Second Language (ESL)

Access and Equity Considerations:

- Allow students to use a dictionary and/or thesaurus; this can help them a great deal in understanding instructions and content to help them answer questions on a test, quiz, or any other form of assessment.
- Give students extra time - ELLs often need extra time to decipher and understand the meaning of an assessment's content. They also need extra time to formulate their thoughts and ideas into sentences and paragraphs.
- Position English Learners programs within academic areas for equal access.
- Provide an alternate method of teaching and learning. Provide information, instructions, and content through an alternative method, such as visual or audio. This allows ELLs to connect with the content not just through words but also through other senses.
- Allow translations because many ELL students need to write in their first language and then translate it into English.
- Create a resource center for students and parents, ensuring they can access the information they need, ideally in their native language.
- Provide clear and effective ESL sequences, degree and transfer pathways, and stronger student support, including advising, placement, and information about available degrees and certificates.
- As colleges redesign their ESL programs, working alongside non-credit ESL programs, adult education schools, and community-based ESL programs could help ensure that colleges keep ESL students' diverse needs in mind.
- Students may face other challenges, too — for example, many students without legal documentation have graduated from college in this country. Still, they can't work because they don't have the legal right to work in the U.S. It's important when working with ELLs to make sure they know their options and find the people best qualified to support them.

Current Literature, Research and Information for English Learners

Current Literature and Research:

- A New Federal Equity Agenda for Dual Language Learners and English Learners. By Conor P. Williams. December 2021
- Creating a College-Going Culture for English Language Learners. By Frances Contreras. Unk date.
- Instructional Initiatives for English as a Second Language (ESL) Students in Introductory Courses. By Helen Chang. 2013
- Equity for English-Language Learners. By Rusul Alrubail. 2016
- Research and Policy Considerations for English Learner Equity. By Joseph P. Robinson-Cimpian, 2016
- The Role of Equity in the Assessment of English Learners. By Teresa Krastel. August 2019
- What Does Equity Really Mean for Multilingual Learners? By Jon Nordmeyer, Tim Boals, Rita MacDonald, and Ruslana Westerlund. March 2021
- Why are community colleges doubling-down on language learning? By Katharine Nelson. 2020

Additional Information

Organizations

- American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education
- Center for Equity for English Learners
- Excelencia in Education
- Hispanic Alliance for Career Enhancement
- Hispanic Organization of Colleges and Universities
- National Association for Bilingual Education
- Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
- The Coalition for English Learner Equity
- The National Association for Multicultural Education

Initiatives

- Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI)
- Minority Serving Institutions (MSI)

Services

- College Bound
- Developing Programs for English Language Learners: Other Resources
- English Learner Roadmap and Resource Hub
- Hispanic College Fund
- How Community College Reforms Could Help English Learners
- Resource Guide for Working With ESL Students
- What Works Clearinghouse

