Focus: Leadership for English Learners

CEEL continues to provide **Education and Research Supports for ELs during COVID-19**. This is the seventh publication in our Communication series based on CEEL's research-based Equitable Distance Learning for English Learners Design Principles.

- **Voices from the Field** - highlighting educators' commendable and intense efforts to serve English Learners and Dual Language Learners in virtual learning spaces during these unprecedented times;

- **Resources and Research** - curated resources focused on ELs/DLLs across a variety of topics such as social and emotional learning, highlights of best practices for distance learning, nstructional materials, professional learning in virtual spaces, leadership, and family-school partnerships.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

A Voice from the Field — Norma Camacho

Norma Camacho's dedication to English Learners means taking initiative to meet the needs of their teachers and parents to ensure student success. As Director of English Learner Services and Categorical Programs in the Azusa Unified School District, her leadership is defined by an assets-based approach to partnering with and supporting others. She honed her knowledge of language development during her 22-year career trajectory in Azuza as a bilingual classroom teacher, coach and professional development provider, and as principal at schools serving large numbers of English Learners. Then COVID-19 arrived and over a weekend in mid-March, instruction changed from classroom-based to distance learning. *"When we moved into this distance learning format, I found myself being an outreach as well as a support person."*

Leadership for English Learners: Resources and Research

Across the state, many school districts and county offices of education have prioritized the contributions of Bilingual/English Learner expert staff to serve in leadership positions in support of their bilingual/EL students. These often *"unsung heroines/heroes"* play a key role during "normal" times, and play an even more critical role in advocating for English Learners and their families during these pandemic times. For many of them, leadership for English Learners began in the classroom, where they built trust and provided expertise to their colleagues and administrators. Many moved into leadership positions, servings as coordinators, directors, school principals and into district level positions. During distance learning, school, district and county office leaders must align structural and instructional practices to provide equitable learning opportunities for English Learners during COVID-19 and plan for post-COVID.

In each of our communications we will continue to highlight voices from the field and education and research resources.

Visit our CEEL Website **to learn more about our research, professional development, policy work, and programs. Contact us at** ceel@lmu.edu **with comments, additional resources, or to share your story.**

Focus: Leadership for English Learners

VOICES FROM THE FIELD
Equity-focused Leadership to Support English Learners during Distance Learning

As Director of English Learner Services and Categorical Programs in the Azusa Unified School District, Norma Camacho remains steadfast in her dedication to English Learners. She leads with the initiative to meet the needs of their teachers and parents to ensure student success.

Faced with changing from in-person to remote learning, Norma's first thought was how to connect with the 70 newcomer students, mainly from Guatemala who spoke Q'eqchi', a dialect no one in the District spoke. Norma quickly discovered that although many families of English Learners immediately contacted the District to pick up Chromebooks and hotspots, the families of recent immigrant students were less likely to reach out. Lacking internet access and even sometimes cell phones, contact with these families was challenging, and news that schools had closed was interpreted to mean instruction had ceased. Understanding that many families resided in nontraditional dwellings, Norma noted, "...*we had to really go out and find where those families were.*" Norma took initiative and involved teachers, community liaisons and principals to reach out to families, even contacting neighbors to find them. The established trusting relations between the families of newcomer students and school personnel proved essential. Norma commented, "... *those are the families who fear being tracked or found for whatever reason...it was really making sure that they were comfortable, feeling safe.*" Since these families did not have internet access, Norma partnered directly with the Instructional Technology department in the district to secure iPads with embedded internet connectivity. With Norma's initiative and outreach, all newcomer students were eventually able to participate in distance learning.

Creating a district strategy for purposeful outreach to families of ELs across the grade spans, Norma also reached out to parents of English Learners who had access to technology and had also received print materials and workbooks in both English and Spanish. Norma met with parents and noted, "*I really wanted to circle back and find out from that group what recommendations they had in terms of distance learning.*" Parents of English Learners in Dual Immersion noted how effectively they were able to support their children. In contrast, parents of students in classes instructed primarily in English with English Language Development (ELD) indicated that support was insufficient, particularly for two groups of English Learners. For the youngest EL students, dual language learners in preschool, transitional kindergarten and kindergarten, parents shared the difficulty "*for families to support that learning at home when they don't read or speak English.*" Parents of high school students, commented "*it was difficult to navigate that content, particularly in math, even with the Spanish print materials, just because of the rigorous content.*" Additionally, although parents shared that they were eager to support their children and expressed their concern that they had never seen a Google classroom and were not able to support their children's use of technology asking, "*How might I be able to learn this so that I can help my child at home?*"

As Norma noted, reflecting on parents' comments led to some important changes to distance learning for Fall 2020. These changes included dedicated time built into the daily schedule at the elementary level for small group Designated English Language Development (DELD) instruction and tutoring at the secondary level to preview (or frontload) language and content needed to access the curriculum. To continue to support families, videos on technology use for parents and parent-led training on technology were developed.

Ensuring access to language and content instruction. With devices and internet access available, the focus quickly shifted to instruction. For Norma, the essential question became, "...*how do we maintain that focus on language development in distance learning?*" During the last four years, the district emphasized integration of academic language throughout the curriculum with teaching strategies to engage students in collaborative conversations on complex topics. These partner and small group conversations for understanding and analyzing content proved challenging to implement during distance learning. Facing this challenge, Norma collaborated with teachers to co-plan lessons that intentionally identified the linguistic features and the technology use that would support Integrated English Language Development (IELD), language development in the content areas. Norma and a social studies teacher co-planned lessons on the Great Depression to support language development among English Learners. Lesson planning included determining "...*what the academic language focus was and the function of language they were going to focus on in this particular lesson....*" Together, Norma and this particular teacher worked on "*building language frames into a Google slide presentation so that the kids would have access, and then [use the] embedded links to record their oral rehearsal.*" Teachers' lessons augmented the basic textbook and on-line presentation to include the specific linguistic components needed by English Learners to remain engaged and continue their linguistic progress.

Teachers also shared their challenge of meeting students' language needs without assessment data from the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC). From Norma's point of view, this is both a challenge and a wonderful opportunity to help teachers develop a deeper understanding of the California English Language Development (ELD) Standards and the progression from emerging to expanding and to the bridging proficiency levels. For the new school year, coaching and training on ELD will have a deeper emphasis on being able to analyze the language they hear and see students using in speech and writing and learning how to support progress in language development. For Norma, working with teachers to dig deeply into the meaning of the standards, the advice in the new English Learner Roadmap Teacher Toolkits, and their ability to enrich language development is an exciting time. While no one wished for a pandemic, and the shift to distance learning has been challenging, Norma's equity-focused leadership has strengthened teaching, learning, and parent engagement in meaningful and responsive ways.

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RESOURCES AND RESEARCH

The California English Learner Roadmap policy requires that education systems are explicitly aligned, coherent and research-based in order to ensure that educators provide equitable schooling experiences for our state's 1.2 million English Learners. These resources have been carefully reviewed and selected to provide school, district and county office leaders with promising practices and decision-making guidance to promote equity for English Learners during COVID-19.

Title: CDE Additional Coronavirus (COVID-19) Resources
Link: https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/coronavirusadtlinfo.asp#englishlearner
Summary: The California Department of Education has curated a list of resources for schools and districts that include information about English Learners, Health and Safety, School Nutrition, School Fiscal and Business Services, and School Cleaning, among many others.

Title: Community Schools: A COVID-19 Recovery Strategy
Link: https://edpolicyinca.org/publications/community-schools?utm_source=PACE+All&utm_campaign=f7e418c156-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_08_29_05_32_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_9f1af6b121-f7e418c156-581975270
Summary: This brief from PACE (Policy Analysis for California Education) argues for the creation of community schools as a way to diminish the educational and social impact of Covid-19. In light of the economic and racial disparities revealed by the disease, community schools can respond to conditions of economic, housing, and food insecurity by partnering with community organizations and using resources to create an integrated effort to augment academics, health/social services, youth development, and community engagement. Suggestions for how to establish community schools are enumerated.

Title: COVID-19 Pandemic Resources & Support
Link: https://greatlakesequity.org/covid-19-pandemic-resources-support
Summary: The Great Lakes Equity Center (GLEC) offers considerations for how to provide equity during the time of on-line and distance learning. The Center provides links to other organizations that address teaching ELs during the pandemic and students' social-emotional well-being. The website also has information about anti-racist and equity resources as well as professional learning events.

Title: COVID-19 Spotlights the Inequities Facing English Learner Students, as Nonprofit Organizations Seek to Mitigate Challenges
Link: https://www.migrationpolicy.org/news/covid-19-inequities-english-learner-students
Summary: This commentary by the Migration Policy Institute makes the case for the critical collaboration between states, districts, and established immigrant-serving nonprofit organizations. It presents examples of programs/resources that respond to the challenges of distance learning, food insecurity, economic assistance, and communication of important information in the language of immigrant communities.

Title: Culturally Responsive – Sustaining Remote Education
Link: https://crehub.org/remote-learning
Summary: CRE HUB (Culturally Responsive Education) provides guidance on how to keep focused on equity, access, and culturally responsive-sustaining education as teaching and learning shifts online? The complete document, Guidance on Culturally Responsive – Sustaining Remote Education, can be downloaded.

Title: Distance Learning Resources and Updates
Link: https://mailchi.mp/ccee-ca.org/distance-learning-resources-and-updates?e=596af6117a
Summary: The California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) provides links to ongoing professional learning opportunities for educators, administrators, parents, and community members. Links to upcoming and archived webinars and other programs are available. Topics on the "Distance Teaching and Learning" page are extensive and include material on strategies for distance learning, continuity, links to professional learning modules/lessons/units of study from the consortium of County offices, a rapid response "toolkit" for District planning and immediate needs, information on setting up virtual systems, special education, and community engagement.

Title: Ensuring Continuity of Learning and Operations
Link: https://ncela.ed.gov/new-ensuring-continuity-learning-and-operations/sub-page3
Summary: Examples of plans and resource materials on what districts and States are doing to continue learning for English Learners during school closures are provided by NCELA (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition). There are links to more detailed distance learning plans from States and districts described on the webpage.

Title: Equity and Learning During Covid-19
Link: https://maec.org/covid-19/
Summary: With a focus on vulnerable populations during the pandemic, the Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium (MAEC) has made available links to resources for educators and families including on-line conversations, webinars, a weekly newsletter, and updates to the website. There are resources, among many others, that address equity and access issues, how to address challenges in language learning for ELs, homelessness, students with special needs, and undocumented communities.

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Title: **GTL Center Insights on Covid-19**
Link: https://gtlcenter.org/covid-19
Summary: The Center on Great Teachers & Leaders at the American Institutes for Research is collecting and sharing on this website practical resources for educators, districts, and states on a wide range of topics including strategies for distance learning, considerations for students with disabilities, English Language Learners, early education, supporting well-being for teachers and students, and impacts of Covid-19 on policy for K-12.

Title: **Lead with Equity: What California's Leaders Must Do Next to Advance Student Learning during COVID-19**
Link: https://edpolicyinca.org/publications/lead-with-equity?utm_source=PACE+All&utm_campaign=4ad-0f25c9f-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_08_29_05_32_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_9f1af6b121-4ad0f25c9f-581975282
Summary: PACE (Policy Analysis for California Education) provides access to a new policy brief with an infographic that outlines what state leaders can do to bolster equity and guarantee quality instruction for California's students in response to the Governor's announcement that most impacted counties would be required to teach remotely. The impact of lost learning will be most severe for low-income, Black, and Latinx students. With a focus on equity, this brief calls for strengthening expectations beyond minimal requirements and ensuring sufficient monitoring, support, and resources.

Title: **Providing Services to English Learners During the Covid-19 Outbreak (Fact Sheet)**
Link: https://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/covid-19-el-factsheet.pdf
Summary: This resource from the United States Department of Education/Office of Elementary and Secondary Education delineates States' and local educational agencies' obligations to ELs and their parents during school closures and transition to remote learning during the Covid-19 emergency. This Fact Sheet addresses issues regarding annual ELP assessments, instruction, placement, exit decisions, funding, and other services for ELs.

Title: **Rethink Education: How are Some States Turning the Challenge of Covid-19 into an Opportunity?**
Link: https://education-first.com/rethink-education-how-are-some-states-turning-the-challenge-of-covid-19-into-an-opportunity/
Summary: On their website, Education First shares their analysis and observations that grew out of work done by the organization in assisting nine states to develop their applications for the U.S. Department of Education's Rethink K-12 Education Models Discretionary Grant Program. The intent of the grant was to help states speed up plans to create a system for remote learning options designed to meet the needs of all constituents. A link to the entire publication, Opportunities in the Midst of Covid 19: Innovative Ways States are Using this Moment to Rethink Education, is available on the website.

Title: **School Leaders' Toolkit for Responding to COVID-19**
Link: https://us.corwin.com/en-us/nam/school-leaders'-on-line-toolkit
Summary: Corwin Publishing has brought together information for school leaders about communication with staff, families, and community, partnering with local businesses and organizations, and connecting with colleagues during the pandemic, among other topics. Formats include a blog, social media, daily virtual coffee breaks, and webinars.

Title: **Supporting Learning in the Covid-19 Context: Research to Guide Distance and Blended Instruction**
Link: https://edpolicyinca.org/publications/supporting-learning-covid-19-context?utm_source=PACE+All&utm_campaign=4ad0f25c9f-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_08_29_05_32_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_9f1af6b121-4ad0f-25c9f-581975282
Summary: PACE (Policy Analysis for California Education) provides access to this new publication that includes a report, policy brief, infographic, and video that offer recommendations for educators and district leaders for implementation of quality distance and blended learning that prioritizes interaction/collaboration, feedback to students, and a focus on differentiated instruction of grade level content.

Title: **Strategic Resource Management in Response to COVID-19 Webinar Series**
Link: https://www.wested.org/wested-news/covid19-resource-reallocation-webinar-series/
Summary: WestEd has made available a webinar series that presents best practices for district leaders in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Information and guidance about budget, use of funds from the CARES Act, leveraging education resources, funding flexibility, resource planning for students with disabilities, and mitigating the impact of Covid-19 for the most vulnerable students are provided.

Title: **Systematic Implementation of Equity Toolkit**
Link: https://www.hanoverresearch.com/reports-and-briefs/systemic-implementation-of-equity-toolkit/
Summary: Hanover Research has created a toolkit to support district leaders and equity committee members in prioritizing equity for all students as they plan for the upcoming academic year amid the Covid-19 pandemic. The report includes strategies for development a district-wide equity mindset, aligning decision making with equity goals, and tools/resources/guiding questions for implementation and integration of an equity mindset.