

Quality of instruction trumps language in reading programs for elementary-age ELLs

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WASHINGTON, January 14, 2013—New research synthesizes studies of English reading outcomes for Spanish-dominant English language learners (ELLs) in elementary schools. The review, *Effective Reading Programs for Spanish-dominant English Language Learners (ELLs) in the Elementary Grades: A Synthesis of Research*, appears in the December issue of *Review of Educational Research*, a journal of the American Educational Research Association (AERA).

Conducted by Alan C. K. Cheung, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, and Robert E. Slavin, Johns Hopkins University and the University of York, the research focuses on [language](#) of instruction and on reading approaches for ELLs. Using the language of instruction as the constant, the researchers identified 13 applicable studies and determined that outcomes for elementary-aged children taught in Spanish and transitioned to English are no different from outcomes for those taught only in English.

Multiple reading interventions proved effective. "What is in common across the most promising interventions is their use of extensive professional development, coaching, and cooperative learning," say the researchers. "The findings support a conclusion increasingly being made by researchers and policymakers concerned with optimal outcomes for ELLs and other language minority students: Quality of instruction is more important than language of instruction."

More information: Cheung, Alan C. K., and R.E. Slavin (2012).

Effective Reading Programs for Spanish-dominant English Language Learners (ELLs) in the Elementary Grades: A Synthesis of Research, Review of Educational Research, December 2012, Vol. 82, No. 4, pp. 351-395.

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