

English learners more successful when they stick with one program, especially if it supports their home language

April 28 2022, by Amy McCaig



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A new research brief from Rice University's Kinder Institute for Urban Research has found that English learners have the most success when

they stick with a single program—regardless of program type—and skills from their home language are incorporated in their education.

The research comes as the number of long-term English learners (LTELs) in Texas has increased by 90% in the last decade. LTELs are [students](#) who have not reclassified as English-proficient after five years in school. The research was published online today by the Kinder Institute's Houston Education Research Consortium (HERC). It utilizes data from 10 public school districts in the Houston area and builds on several of its previous studies examining English learners and LTELs.

"English learners are a diverse group of students. Many English learners reclassify as English proficient early in their educational careers and go on to achieve [academic success](#)," said Lizzy Cashiola, the brief's lead author. "Long-term English learners, on the other hand, are at risk for negative educational outcomes in middle and high school. The fact that the percent of these students has risen so much over the past decade is something that we should be concerned about."

Texas has three different types of programs for English learners, and each of them utilizes different teaching techniques. The researchers found that students who participated in a single program throughout [elementary school](#)—regardless of which type—had the greatest success. But English learners who participated in two or more different types of programs, or switched programs during elementary school, had a greater risk of becoming long-term English learners.

For English learners involved in a single program, courses supporting the student's home language (such as a bilingual or dual-immersion programs) did a better job of preparing students to become proficient at English than English-only programs.

"We hope that these findings help point to ways to support English

learners," Cashiola said. "Next, we will focus our research on the middle- and [high-school](#) outcomes of long-term English learners. We'll also look at early warning indicators to help [school districts](#) identify which students are most at risk for becoming long-term English learners, with the goal of intervening with these students early on."

"What factors are associated with the likelihood of an English learner becoming a long-term English learner?" was co-authored by researchers Camila Cigarroa Kennedy, Hao Ma, Dylan Nguyen and Daniel Potter.

More information: What factors are associated with the likelihood of an English learner becoming a long-term English learner?

rice.app.box.com/s/labknqaqlky...2amht5i435j78ekvmyrf

Provided by Rice University

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