

UNLOCKING LEARNING II: MATH AS A LEVER FOR ENGLISH LEARNER EQUITY

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PROMISING PRACTICES

The report highlights four key practice areas that support math learning for English learners:

- 1 Honoring and leveraging English learner students' backgrounds, cultures, and home languages, as assets for math learning
- 2 Integrating English language development with math content instruction
- 3 Offering sustained teacher professional learning opportunities to simultaneously support English language development and math achievement for English learners
- 4 Ensuring equitable access to rigorous academic coursework with appropriate supports



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The Common Core State Standards establish the expectation that **all students** will be taught to the same high standards and held to the same rigorous outcomes, regardless of their zip code and home language.

High-quality implementation of the standards is an important step in ensuring that all of California's students are prepared for college and careers. But in order to fully realize this goal, practitioners and policymakers must ensure that the educational needs of English learners — who represent more than 1 in 5 students in California's K-12 schools — are front and center in California's implementation of the standards, assessments, and accountability systems and not simply an afterthought.

But eight years after the adoption of the Common Core, wide and persistent gaps in math achievement continue to separate English learners from their English-proficient peers. **The imperative is clear: We must do more to ensure that English learners have equitable access to rigorous math learning opportunities and are supported to achieve at high levels.**

The good news is that this work is possible. We know achievement and opportunity gaps can be closed by implementing research-supported instructional practices designed for English learners and by providing teachers with the training, time, and support to transform their teaching. Unlocking Learning II: Math as a Lever for English Learner Equity shines a light on how some schools and districts are doing just that. The report highlights four research-supported promising practices (see side bar) along with examples from schools and districts throughout California.

The report also shares specific actions that districts and schools can take now to advance math learning for English learners and concludes with an overview of opportunities and recommendations for state and local policymakers to support practitioners in ensuring English learners are prepared for college and career.

RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE REPORT INCLUDE:

1. **Adopting and/or developing instructional materials** – such as language-rich collaborative math tasks – that deliberately and effectively integrate English language development approaches within the core mathematics curriculum.
2. **Facilitating structured opportunities for ELD and math coaches and specialists** to work together across schools and districts to support teachers and integrate ELD into the math curriculum.
3. **Reducing tracking in math classes and providing open access to advanced courses** with appropriate language supports for ELs.