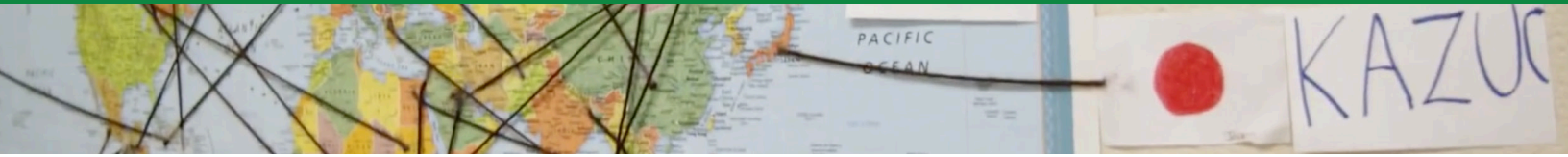


DOCUMENTARY VIEWING GUIDE



About the documentary

An estimated 4.6 million students in America's public school system are learning English as a new language.¹ Consequentially, there is a vital need to learn more about evidence-based approaches to support English learner students. In partnership with Cleveland's WVIZ/PBS ideastream, REL Midwest created a 30-minute public television documentary² that covers the research on academic supports for English learner students. The documentary shows how certain evidence-based approaches work in real-life settings through stories from the Cleveland Metropolitan School District's (CMSD's) Multilingual Multicultural Education Program. These stories highlight real students, teachers, and school and district leaders from CMSD.

"I want to caution people from thinking that modifying a lesson for an English learner is 'watering it down.' That is not what we're talking about here. We're using certain routines and strategies to make it more understandable and accessible to the English learner."

– Lynn Smolen, Ph.D., Professor of Education, TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) Program Director, University of Akron

Intended audience

REL Midwest created this documentary as a tool for state and local education agency staff and school-level staff who work with English learner students. The documentary focuses on examples from Ohio, but the information and evidence shared in the program offer important learnings for people and groups based outside the state. REL Midwest hopes viewers will watch the program and use the following discussion questions as a starting point for a conversation on ways to improve the educational experience for students learning English.

Discussion questions

- Were there instructional programs or methods covered in the documentary that stood out to you as particularly promising? Why did these programs or methods stand out to you?
- What challenges do you or your organization face in supporting English learner students? How do you overcome these challenges?
- Are there approaches discussed in this documentary that you plan to try?
- Are there promising approaches that the documentary did not cover?
- What kind of education or assistance do teachers and other educators need to support English learner students effectively?
- What challenges might English learner students face that would benefit from community support beyond the school or district? What strategies could educators use to try to involve the community?

About REL Midwest

REL Midwest is part of a network of 10 regional educational laboratories funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences. REL Midwest works in partnership with practitioners in seven Midwest states to conduct applied research and provide training, coaching, and technical support to create a more evidence-based education system. Please visit the REL Midwest website to learn more: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midwest/default.aspx>.

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¹ National Center for Education Statistics. (2013). *English Language learners in public schools*. Washington, DC: Author. National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved January 5, 2018, from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cgf.asp.

² Please visit this link to watch the documentary: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midwest/events/archived_events/2017/september_13.aspx.