EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION. Improve school readiness through curriculum and teacher training using COLLTS (Cultivating Oral Language and Literacy Talent in Students), a research-based program to prepare prekindergarten and kindergarten dual-language learners for mastering kindergarten English language arts standards.

K–12 CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION. Assist districts and schools as they implement curriculum and instruction to meet the new College and Career Readiness Standards; provide teacher training to revise and enhance curriculum and English language arts lessons.

TEACHER EVALUATION AND SUPPORT. Ensure state and district teacher evaluation systems support effective English language instruction; provide guidance on alternative assessments and accommodations for English language learners; develop student learning objectives to measure performance.

DISTRICT AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT. Review current programs and policies, helping identify English language learners who are at risk (as well as those English language learners who are excelling); develop resources and structures to improve outcomes for English language learners.

Center for ENGLISH LANGUAGE Learners at American Institutes for Research

About the Center for English Language Learners

The Center for English Language Learners at AIR is committed to reducing the achievement gap and improving outcomes for English language learners by conducting rigorous research and connecting research to policy and practice. Diane August, Ph.D., Jennifer O’Day, Ph.D., and Patricia Garcia-Arena, Ph.D., distinguished researchers in the ELL field, lead the center. They are supported by a skilled AIR team with experience working with numerous schools, districts, universities, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies to help English language learners achieve success.

About American Institutes for Research

Established in 1946, American Institutes for Research (AIR) is an independent, nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization that conducts behavioral and social science research on important social issues and delivers technical assistance, both domestically and internationally, in the areas of education, health, and workforce productivity.
AIR EXPERTS are adept at solving district- and school-level challenges. Here are some questions we hear from the field:

- How do we structure classes and best use curricular resources for English language learners in a landscape of shifting priorities?
- Our English language learners are spread out in 10 different classrooms. How can we most effectively instruct these students, with minimal disruption, based on levels of English proficiency and content knowledge?
- How do we prepare teachers to serve English language learners in heterogeneous classrooms?
- How can we best support English language learners who can read and write in their first languages but not in English and who have well-developed content knowledge?
- How can recently arrived English language learners become proficient in English without falling behind in other subjects?

WE LISTEN. We understand that each district is unique—from the wide range of students’ backgrounds, to the allocation of qualified teachers, to the resources available to support students. We know you need an individualized plan to help English language learners succeed.

WE OBSERVE. In classrooms, we evaluate the way students interact, how curriculum is aligned to core standards, how well instructional methods support English language learners in mastering core content, and how well teachers monitor student progress. At the district level, we review teacher qualifications, allocations of teachers to students, the ways in which students are grouped for instruction, and the resources available for curriculum and materials. Using these observations, we tailor an approach to meet your needs.

WE PREPARE, TRAIN, AND EVALUATE. We assist district leaders in allocating resources effectively and in implementing successful ELL (English language learner) programs. We train teachers to scaffold grade-appropriate curricular content, to examine data on student progress to determine which students are at risk for failure, and to meet core curriculum standards—all to ensure students develop solid English proficiency and core content knowledge. We continually evaluate teaching and learning and provide step-by-step interaction with district- and school-level staff to strengthen ELL instruction.

“Air’s findings and recommendations are a key part of our strategy to close the learning gap between our ELL and non-ELL students.”

Chief of Early literacy and Parent Engagement, Hartford (Connecticut) Public Schools

WE HELP DISTRICTS SUCCEED. At the request of the superintendent and school board for Hartford (Connecticut) Public Schools, AIR ELL specialists conducted document reviews, classroom observations, and interviews with district-level leads, school administrators, ELL (English as a second language) specialists, and classroom teachers. Our final report made recommendations for strengthening ELL practices in both elementary and secondary schools across the Hartford district.

In Poughkeepsie (New York) Public Schools, with support from the American Federation of Teachers Innovation Fund, AIR specialists worked with ESL secondary school teachers in developing curriculum and teaching methods to help students meet the Common Core State Standards in English language arts.

“In Puerto Rico, I have found the professional development provided by the AIR ELL specialists extremely useful and of the highest quality. I’m thrilled to be part of such a worthwhile project.”

ESL Teacher, Poughkeepsie (New York) Public Schools

AIR collaborated with WETA, public television in Washington, D.C., to produce videos of ESL-trained teachers using methods developed in Poughkeepsie. These videos are available at http://www.colorincolorado.org, a bilingual website for teachers and families of English language learners. Classroom materials developed in Albuquerque have become national exemplars and are also available on this site.

“Three projects were a trailblazing effort for the American Federation of Teachers, and the AIR ELL specialists’ extraordinary skills were pivotal in making them a success.”

Associate Director, Educational Issues, American Federation of Teachers