AERA Open Special Topic Call for Papers

Understanding and Supporting Literacy Development among English Language Learners:
A Deep Dive into the Role of Language Comprehension

Special Topic Editor: Jeannette Mancilla-Martinez

Increased flows of immigrants and refugees across international borders has raised the importance of the education of non-native speakers of national languages. In the United States, the persistent achievement gaps between English language learners (ELLs) and their English proficient peers (including former ELLs and/or native English speakers) is well documented. With the growing ELL population across early childhood education settings and K-12 contexts, educators continue to search for best practices and relevant scholarly knowledge on how to support these students’ academic achievement, particularly as it relates to language and literacy development.

This special topic focuses on the relationship between ELLs’ English literacy outcomes and their language comprehension skills, in English and/or the native language. A robust body of research demonstrates that ELLs can and do develop adequate word reading skills and yet struggle with higher-level literacy skills, such as comprehension. A growing body of research also points to language comprehension skills, broadly defined, as a potential leverage point to help ELLs develop literacy skills that will allow them to fully access the curriculum. We seek a wide range of studies, stemming from multiple epistemological and methodological approaches, and conducted in various contexts (home, school, community) that attend to ELLs’ language comprehension skills and their relationship to literacy outcomes. Research that attends to the role of poverty in language and literacy is of special interest, as is research conducted in bilingual education settings.

Interested authors should submit a single-spaced, one-page abstract describing their proposed article. Authors chosen from the pool of abstracts will be invited to submit a full manuscript. Invited manuscripts will be peer-reviewed, meaning that invitation to submit a full manuscript is not a guarantee of acceptance. Accepted manuscripts are subject to AERA Open’s one-time open access fee (see https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/journal/aera-open#submission-guidelines for details).

Publication Timeline:
June 1, 2018: Submission deadline for abstracts (submit to AERAOpenEditors@aera.net)
August 1, 2018: Invitation to authors to submit a manuscript
December 1, 2018: Manuscripts due
From Spring 2019 on: Articles published as completed

Please direct questions regarding the special topic to Jeannette Mancilla-Martinez (jeannette.mancilla-martinez@vanderbilt.edu). Please consult the AERA Open website (above) for general guidelines on manuscript submission.

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