

CHAPTER 2

Who Are These ELLs?

Foundations, Demographics, and Outcomes

ELL students comprise one student group consistently identified as displaying inadequate academic achievement. For example, in 2012, only 7% of fourth-grade ELLs and 3% of eighth-grade ELLs read at or above proficient level in English reading achievement (compared to 35% and 33%, respectively, for non-ELLs; Snyder & Dillow, 2013). This depressed academic performance makes it difficult for educators to differentiate inherent learning difficulties from the complex process of learning a second language (Keller-Allen, 2006), commonly resulting in the inappropriate referral and identification of ELLs for special education services (see Chapter 7 for more information regarding special education referral and evaluation considerations for ELLs who have not made adequate progress). Determining how to reduce academic risk *and* enhance educational outcomes in the ELL population is an urgent educational priority—as evidenced by federal legislation such as the NCLB of 2001—and particularly in light of the sustained increase of ELLs in U.S. schools in recent decades and the anticipated continued growth in future decades.

Many educational professionals (e.g., regular and special education classroom teachers, administrators, school psychologists, school social workers) report that they received little to no preservice or inservice training to equip them with the competencies, skills, and dispositions necessary to ensure that ELLs make desirable academic progress (Walker & Stone, 2011). Furthermore, teachers have reported being reluctant to work with ELLs, because they feel unprepared to teach ELLs adequately (Walker, Shafer, & Iams, 2004). Even when pre- or inservice training may have occurred, many practices that have been advocated for use with ELLs have not been supported by research; thus, there is the likelihood that the practices are not effective (e.g., failing to teach reading to struggling readers explicitly and systematically), or perhaps worse, that they actually are preventing academic progress. In years past, we may have been able to rely on ESL or bilingual education teachers to provide

educational services to ELLs, usually in pullout programs or segregated ESL classrooms. However, a number of factors work against continuing this dated service delivery model in which the onus of providing core instruction to ELLs falls to a few educators who are bilingual themselves *and* have specific training in providing instruction in a student's native language. First, as we describe in this chapter, Spanish-speaking ELLs account for approximately 70–80% of all ELL students enrolled in U.S. schools (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2013; Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students, 2013), which makes it difficult to ensure that there will be bilingual staff members who speak the primary language for those remaining 20–30% of ELLs whose native language is not Spanish. Second, the increasing enrollment of ELLs in regions of the country that have not previously had ELL enrollment (e.g., states in the Midwest, rural schools) now are likely to have schools with only one or a limited number of ELLs (U.S. Department of Education, 2009), making it challenging for schools and districts to hire bilingual staff or develop bilingual programs for only a few students. A lack of certified bilingual staff members within these areas further complicates the issue. For example, bilingual education and English language acquisition consistently are identified by the U.S. Department of Education (2013) as high-need certification areas. During the 2009–2010 academic year, over 50% of Title III districts indicated that they experienced significant difficulties in recruiting ESL teachers, and 73% of district administrators working in schools with ELLs reported that a lack of expertise among classroom teachers in addressing the needs of ELLs was a moderate or major challenge (U.S. Department of Education, 2012c). Third, even if bilingual staff members and ESL classes were widely available, the fact remains that ELLs spend the majority of their time in the regular education classroom, thus requiring the classroom teacher (and support staff) to continue providing them with high-quality educational services. Finally, all students—ELLs *and* non-ELLs—are English language learners in that all students need to learn English academic language; thus, all students benefit from having classroom teachers and educational support staff who know how to facilitate and foster English academic language and provide quality core instruction and supplemental intervention services.

Because of the likelihood that most classroom teachers will at some point in their careers have at least one ELL in their classroom, we believe all preservice and inservice teachers must be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to work effectively with ELLs. These requirements also are imperative for other student service professionals to possess, including school psychologists, speech–language pathologists, counselors, social workers, and support staff. We believe school psychologists are in a particularly unique position to influence multiple aspects of educational service delivery for students who are ELLs and to promote positive academic and social–emotional outcomes for these students. In their role as instructional consultants, for example, school psychologists can inform teachers about research-based instructional practices for facilitating English language development and academic achievement for ELLs. As assessment experts, school psychologists can make decisions regarding which assessments should be used with ELLs to ensure the appropriateness of the assessments and the purposes for which they are being used. As professionals who also are largely responsible for meeting students' social–

emotional needs and providing school-based mental health services, school psychologists can model and implement best practices that meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of linguistically diverse students.

Given how important it is to have the necessary knowledge and appropriate skills for working with ELLs effectively, one of our guiding principles in writing this book was to describe only those principles and strategies (1) that have been demonstrated to be effective through research and (2) that we have actually seen implemented—or that we ourselves have implemented. The latter principle ensures that we describe strategies that are feasible, realistic, and really do work in actual classrooms with real ELLs. We emphasize the latter in part because so many educational practices are or have been based on what educators think *should* work. Going with your “gut feeling” is not an acceptable practice if you want real results. If you want real results in the classroom, you must begin by testing practices in your classroom that science has identified as *actually* working (albeit in other locations in under different conditions). Moreover, accountability requirements (federal, state, and local) demand that in education we (1) use effective practices based on scientifically sound research and (2) gather effectiveness data (e.g., data-based decision making, documentation of efforts; see Chapter 5 for guidance and worksheets) about student achievement in support of current and future instructional decisions.

Two of our goals in this chapter are (1) to introduce broad concepts that are applicable for working with *all* students, but especially ELLs, and (2) to normalize the apprehension and concern that many classroom teachers and other educators frequently experience when they first begin working with ELLs. Whereas many of you may have extensive experiences working with ELLs and are only seeking to further your knowledge regarding the RTI process, some of you may not be as familiar with the definitions of ELL status, the language acquisition process, or the convoluted assessment and language-monitoring processes, among other topics. Please do not be intimidated! We start in this chapter by discussing the definition of ELL status, followed by a review of statistics illustrating the national trend of increasing enrollment of ELLs and the corresponding educational implications of this increased enrollment, particularly in regions where ELLs have not matriculated previously (e.g., the Midwest). To assist those readers who may have limited knowledge regarding ELL students, we also describe some of the more pertinent and, we believe, unacceptable educational outcomes that have been reported for ELLs as a group of students.

ELL FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS

A thorough understanding of the educational needs of ELLs and specific approaches for addressing these needs requires knowledge regarding various ELL-related concepts; additionally, familiarity with these issues facilitates communication among colleagues and other professionals. Thus, we introduce and examine concepts associated with (1) the definition of ELL status; (2) ELL demographics, including the number of ELLs enrolled in schools and the languages spoken by these students; and (3) educational outcomes associated with ELLs.

Definition of ELLs

The NCLB of 2001 (Public Law 107-110, Part A, Section 9101 (25)(A–D)) of 2001, defines ELLs (referred to as “limited English proficient”) as

an individual—

- (A) who is aged 3 through 21;
- (B) who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school;
- (C)
 - (i) who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English;
 - (ii)
 - (I) who is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas;
 - and
 - (II) who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual’s level of English language proficiency; or
 - (iii) who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and
- (D) whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual—
 - (i) the ability to meet the State’s proficient level of achievement on State assessments described in section 1111(b)(3);
 - (ii) the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or
 - (iii) the opportunity to participate fully in society.

As you will see later in this chapter, a federal definition of ELLs does not ensure that limited English-speaking students are uniformly identified and provided the same level of services in the schools. Rather, identification of ELL students is accomplished using a variety of measures, procedures, and criteria by which a student *could* be identified as an ELL student in one state but not necessarily in another (U.S. Department of Education, 2012c). This phenomenon is similar to the frequently heard criticism regarding the federal definitions of varying disability categories and corresponding eligibility criteria. In some special education eligibility categories (e.g., specific learning disabilities), a student who might be determined to be eligible for special education services in one region of the country (or even within a state or city) might not be eligible in a different region, simply because of the wide interpretation of disability definitions and eligibility criteria. These definitional inconsistencies are believed to result in some students receiving special education services when they may not have an actual disability, and in other students who might actually have a disability being determined not to be eligible to receive services. By providing educational services

within a comprehensive RTI model (as we explore in Chapter 3), all students are provided core instruction and supplemental services based on their *educational needs* rather than on an *eligibility label* (e.g., student with a disability, student classified as an ELL). Even if a student is determined not to be an ELL student, or if a student with significant academic difficulties is determined not to be a student with a disability, the RTI model dictates that appropriate levels of services be directed to the student to address his or her educational needs—*regardless of a label or identified disability*.

ELL Demographics

Enrollment

ELLs represent the fastest growing segment of the school population and are enrolling in public schools across all regions of the United States at such a high rate that education professionals are more likely than ever to work with at least one ELL student—directly or indirectly—at some point in their teaching career. Data provided by the U.S. Department of Education (2012a, 2012b) indicated that during the 2010–2011 academic year, approximately 4.4 million students within U.S. schools (not including Puerto Rico or other U.S. territories) were identified as being ELLs and were participating in school programming for ELLs, representing approximately 8.8% of all public school students (see Table 2.1 for ELL population data by individual states). However, this ELL student enrollment estimate does not include the additional 13% of students who speak a language other than English at home (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2012). Thus, approximately 22% of all public school students in U.S. schools speak a language other than English within the home setting.

Although California schools enroll an estimated one-third of all ELL students (i.e., 1,442,387 ELLs) in the United States, ELLs are enrolled in each of the 50 states, with the percentages of ELL students ranging from a high of 23% in California to a low of 0.6% in West Virginia. The majority of states experienced double-digit percentage increases in the number of ELL students during the past decade, however, with states such as South Carolina, Indiana, and Arkansas reporting increases of 828, 409, and 287%, respectively, between 1997 and 2008 (Batalova & McHugh, 2010). Perhaps more astonishing, however, is the growth in individual districts, with some districts experiencing growth rates of more than 4,000% in the prior 5-year period (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2011). Additionally, data suggest that approximately 68% of all public schools within the United States have at least one ELL student enrolled within their school (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Schools in all types of community settings report having ELL students enrolled, with cities, suburbs, towns, and rural areas indicating that 77, 80, 66, and 50% of their schools, respectively, had at least one ELL student enrolled. Consequently, the likelihood that classroom teachers will have one or more ELL students within their classroom is higher than ever—and that likelihood will likely continue to grow throughout the foreseeable future.

TABLE 2.1. Enrollment and Percentage of ELL Students by State, 2010–2011

State	Number of ELL students ^a	Percentage of students ^b	State	Number of ELL students ^a	Percentage of students ^b
Alabama	17,559	2.3	Montana	3,299	2.3
Alaska	14,894	11.3	Nebraska	20,062	6.7
Arizona	70,716	6.6	Nevada	83,351	19.1
Arkansas	31,457	6.5	New Hampshire	3,965	2.0
California	1,442,387 ^c	23.0 ^d	New Jersey	52,580	3.7
Colorado	98,809	11.7	New Mexico	52,029	15.4
Connecticut	29,671	5.3	New York	207,708	7.6
Delaware	6,766	5.2	North Carolina	102,397	6.9
District of Columbia	3,741	5.3	North Dakota	2,788	2.9
Florida	229,659	8.7	Ohio	35,170	2.0
Georgia	80,965	4.8	Oklahoma	41,431	6.3
Hawaii	19,092	10.6	Oregon	58,662	10.3
Idaho	15,361	5.6	Pennsylvania	44,729	2.5
Illinois	174,335	8.3	Rhode Island	7,161	5.0
Indiana	48,574	4.6	South Carolina	36,360	5.0
Iowa	21,733	4.4	South Dakota	4,383	3.5
Kansas	39,323	8.1	Tennessee	29,680	3.0
Kentucky	16,351	2.4	Texas	718,350	14.6
Louisiana	11,617	1.7	Utah	41,805	7.1
Maine	4,792	2.5	Vermont	1,672	1.7
Maryland	45,500	5.3	Virginia	87,752	7.0
Massachusetts	52,610	5.5	Washington	90,282	8.6
Michigan	50,773	3.2	West Virginia	1,786	0.6
Minnesota	40,778	4.9	Wisconsin	43,562	5.0
Mississippi	5,617	1.1	Wyoming	2,602	2.9
Missouri	20,411	2.2	United States	4,367,057	8.8 ^e

^aNumber of ELL students participating in programs for ELLs. Data from U.S. Department of Education (2012a).

^bDenominator based on U.S. Department of Education (2012b).

^cCalifornia did not report numbers of ELL students to the U.S. Department of Education in 2010–2011. The number of California ELLs during the 2010–2011 academic year ($n = 1,442,387$) was obtained from the California Department of Education, Educational Demographics Office website (www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/fb/index.asp).

^dDenominator ($n = 6,217,002$) obtained from www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/cefenrollmentcomp.asp.

^eDenominator (total population = 49,484,181 students enrolled in U.S. schools during fall 2010) based on U.S. Department of Education (2012b).

Languages Spoken

Spanish is the most frequently spoken language by ELLs; data indicate that Spanish is the primary language of up to 80% of ELLs (Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students, 2013), followed by Vietnamese, Chinese, Arabic, and Hmong (see Table 2.2 for the number and percentage of students reported to speak each of these languages during the 2009–2010 academic year). However, more than 460 languages are reportedly spoken in schools throughout the United States, with Spanish *not* being the most commonly spoken language by ELLs in seven states (i.e., Alaska, Hawaii, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Maine, and Vermont; see Table 2.3 for the 5 most commonly spoken non-English languages by ELLs in each state). The Chicago Public Schools (2012), for example, have more than 120 different primary languages represented among their ELLs.

ELL Educational Outcomes

Understanding the varying reports of ELL educational achievement outcomes is challenging because of a number of issues, including the various methods of identifying and assessing English language proficiency (ELP), the type of language instruction provided, and inconsistencies in the types of accommodations that ELLs are allowed to use on standardized achievement tests in English (Kopriva & Albers, 2013). Despite these limitations, the data consistently indicate lagging academic achievement scores for ELLs, resulting in a significant and ongoing achievement gap between ELLs and native English speakers.

NCLB includes multiple state Title III accountability requirements regarding ELL ELP and academic achievement outcomes. State educational agencies establish these requirements, and districts that receive Title III funds must meet the objectives on an annual basis; those districts that fail to meet these objectives for 2 years or more are subject

TABLE 2.2. Most Frequent Primary Spoken Language for ELLs, 2009–2010

Primary language	Number of students	Percentage of ELL students ^a
Spanish	3,544,713	76.3
Vietnamese	85,252	1.8
Chinese	68,743	1.5
Arabic	51,585	1.1
Hmong	46,311	0.9

Note. Data from Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students (2013).

^aBased on an estimated total ELL student population of 4,647,016 from data source.

TABLE 2.3. Top Five Non-English Languages Spoken in Each State, 2007–2008

State	Top five languages spoken	State	Top five languages spoken
Alabama	Spanish, Korean, Arabic, Russian, Japanese	Montana	Blackfeet, Crow, Other American Indian, Cheyenne, German
Alaska	Yup'ik, Inupiac, Spanish, Filipino, Samoan	Nebraska	Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic, Nuer, Somali
Arizona	Spanish, Navajo, Other Non-Indian, Vietnamese, Arabic	Nevada ^a	Spanish, Tagalog, Chinese
Arkansas	Spanish, Marshallese, Hmong, Laotian, Vietnamese	New Hampshire	Spanish, Portuguese, Bosnian, Arabic, Vietnamese
California	Spanish, Vietnamese, Filipino, Cantonese, Hmong	New Jersey	Spanish, Korean, Arabic, Portuguese, Gujarati
Colorado	Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, Korean, Hmong	New Mexico	Spanish, Navajo, Zuni, Keres, Vietnamese
Connecticut	Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Polish, Creole-Haitian	New York	Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Bengali, Haitian Creole
Delaware	Spanish, Creole, Chinese, Gujarati, Korean	North Carolina	Spanish, Hmong, Vietnamese, Arabic/Egyptian, Korean
District of Columbia	Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Amharic, French	North Dakota	Ojibwa, Spanish, Dakota/Lakota, North American Indian, Bosnian
Florida	Spanish, Haitian-Creole, Portuguese, Arabic	Ohio	Spanish, Other, Somali, Arabic, German
Georgia	Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, Other, Chinese	Oklahoma	Spanish, Cherokee, Vietnamese, Hmong, Korean
Hawaii	Ilokano, Tagalog, Marshallese, Chuukese, Spanish	Oregon	Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, Fante or Fanti (Ghana), Chinese
Idaho	Spanish, Shoshone, Russian, Bosnian, Serbo-Croatian	Pennsylvania	Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Russian, Arabic
Illinois	Spanish, Polish, Arabic, Chinese, Urdu	Rhode Island	Spanish, Portug., Creole/pidgins/other Portuguese, Chinese, Khmer
Indiana	Spanish, Amish German, Arabic, Mandarin, Punjabi	South Carolina	Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, Portuguese, Arabic
Iowa	Spanish, Vietnamese, Bosnian, Lao, Undetermined	South Dakota	Lakota, Spanish, Hutterite, Dakota, German
Kansas	Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic, German, Lao	Tennessee	Spanish, Arabic, Vietnamese, Kurdish, Chinese
Kentucky	Spanish, Japanese, Bosnian, Vietnamese, Mandarin Chinese	Texas	Spanish, Vietnamese, Urdu, Arabic, Korean
Louisiana	Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic, Chinese, French	Utah	Spanish, Navajo, Tongan, Vietnamese, Samoan
Maine	Somali, Spanish, French, Khmer, Chinese	Vermont	Serbo-Croatian, Spanish, Vietnamese, Maay, Chinese
Maryland	Spanish, French, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese	Virginia	Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, Arabic, Urdu
Massachusetts	Spanish, Portuguese, Khmer/Khmer, Haitian Creole, Vietnamese	Washington	Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, Ukrainian, Somali
Michigan	Spanish, Arabic, Chaldean, Albanian, Japanese	West Virginia	Spanish, Arabic, Mandarin Chinese, Vietnamese, Russian
Minnesota	Spanish, Hmong, Somali, Vietnamese, Russian	Wisconsin	Spanish, Hmong, Russian, Mandarin Chinese, Standard Arabic
Mississippi	Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic, Cantonese, Chinese	Wyoming	Spanish, Japanese, Hindi, Filipino, Mandarin Chinese
Missouri	Spanish, Bos/Croat/Serb, Vietnamese, Arabic/Sudanese, Somali		

Note. Data from Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students (2013).

^aOnly the top three languages were provided.

to state sanctions. These objectives, known as Annual Measureable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs), include the following:

- AMAO 1: Annual increases in the number or percentage of ELLs making progress in learning English (i.e., Are ELLs *progressing* toward English proficiency?).
- AMAO 2: Annual increases in the number or percentage of ELLs attaining ELP (i.e., Are ELLs *attaining* English proficiency?).
- AMAO 3: Adequate yearly progress (AYP) for ELL subgroup in meeting grade-level academic standards in English language arts and mathematics (i.e., Are ELLs *making* AYP in academic content areas?).

The most recent available AMAO data (U.S. Department of Education, 2012c) demonstrate the clear need to improve educational services provided to ELLs, because only 10 states (i.e., Alabama, Delaware, Maine, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Jersey, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Wisconsin) reported meeting their AMAOs in the 2008–2009 academic year. At the district level, 55% of Title III districts reported having met all three AMAOs, but these 55% of districts only enrolled 39% of the total ELL population. Furthermore, 30% of districts with large (i.e., > 1,000) numbers of ELLs missed their AMAOs for 2 years consecutively, whereas 24, 20, and 16% of medium (i.e., 301–1,000 ELLs), small (i.e., 151–300 ELLs), and very small (i.e., 1–150 ELLs) districts, respectively, missed their AMAOs for 2 consecutive years.

Student-level data also illustrate the lagging achievement levels of many ELLs. At the national level, the average 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading scale score for fourth-grade ELL students enrolled in public schools was 188 (Below Basic achievement level), whereas for non-ELLs, the average scale score was 224 (Basic achievement level; see Table 2.4 for NAEP reading scale scores for each state). This achievement gap was present for each of the 46 states (plus the District of Columbia) that reported student scores. This same pattern of scores and corresponding reading achievement gaps were also present for eighth-grade ELLs as compared to non-ELLs (see Table 2.5).

Figures 2.1 and 2.2 illustrate the differences in distributions between ELLs and non-ELLs for fourth- and eighth-grade students on the NAEP reading assessment. Nationwide, approximately 70% of fourth-grade ELLs scored in the Below Basic achievement category on the reading portion of the 2011 NAEP, which is substantially higher than the 30% of non-ELLs who scored within this level. Similarly, only 7% of ELLs scored within the Proficient or Advanced achievement levels, whereas 35% of the non-ELLs performed at the Proficient or Advanced achievement levels. Figure 2.2 illustrates the similar distribution of performance scores for eighth-grade ELLs.

It is not uncommon to encounter educators, support staff, parents, and community members who assume that students' lack of ELP only impacts literacy domains; however, mathematics achievement also appears to be heavily impacted by language proficiency levels, particularly in more complex mathematics concepts and processes. Once again, the NAEP data demonstrate the existence of an achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs in mathematics, as seen in Figures 2.3 and 2.4. At the fourth-grade level, 86% of ELLs scored at the Basic or Below Basic levels on the mathematics portion of the NAEP, whereas

TABLE 2.4. NAEP Reading Scale Scores by State for ELL and Non-ELL Students, Fourth Grade, 2011

State	ELL students	Non-ELL students	State	ELL students	Non-ELL students
Alabama	189	221	Montana	174	226
Alaska	153	216	Nebraska	191	226
Arizona	171	218	Nevada	193	220
Arkansas	197	218	New Hampshire	203	231
California	186	223	New Jersey	— ^a	232
Colorado	184	231	New Mexico	171	214
Connecticut	178	230	New York	187	226
Delaware	187	226	North Carolina	189	224
District of Columbia	179	202	North Dakota	198	226
Florida	195	227	Ohio	206	224
Georgia	191	222	Oklahoma	186	217
Hawaii	180	217	Oregon	183	222
Idaho	166	223	Pennsylvania	183	228
Illinois	180	223	Rhode Island	180	225
Indiana	197	223	South Carolina	207	215
Iowa	189	223	South Dakota	175	222
Kansas	203	226	Tennessee	177	216
Kentucky	— ^a	225	Texas	197	223
Louisiana	197	211	Utah	167	224
Maine	186	223	Vermont	189	228
Maryland	205	232	Virginia	190	229
Massachusetts	204	239	Washington	172	226
Michigan	192	220	West Virginia	— ^a	214
Minnesota	187	226	Wisconsin	195	223
Mississippi	— ^a	210	Wyoming	190	225
Missouri	189	221	United States	188	225

Note. Proficiency levels corresponding to scale scores are Below Basic < 208, Basic 208–237, Proficient 238–267, and Advanced > 267. Data from U.S. Department of Education (2011b).

^aStandards for reporting were not met.

TABLE 2.5. NAEP Reading Scale Scores by State for ELL and Non-ELL Students, Eighth Grade, 2011

State	ELL students	Non-ELL students	State	ELL students	Non-ELL students
Alabama	— ^a	259	Montana	— ^a	273
Alaska	215	267	Nebraska	— ^a	268
Arizona	— ^a	261	Nevada	215	263
Arkansas	239	260	New Hampshire	— ^a	273
California	220	262	New Jersey	— ^a	276
Colorado	224	274	New Mexico	218	260
Connecticut	224	277	New York	216	268
Delaware	— ^a	266	North Carolina	233	264
District of Columbia	215	244	North Dakota	— ^a	269
Florida	225	264	Ohio	224	269
Georgia	— ^a	263	Oklahoma	— ^a	261
Hawaii	220	260	Oregon	215	267
Idaho	231	269	Pennsylvania	220	269
Illinois	224	267	Rhode Island	219	267
Indiana	235	266	South Carolina	251	261
Iowa	231	266	South Dakota	— ^a	270
Kansas	242	269	Tennessee	— ^a	260
Kentucky	— ^a	269	Texas	225	264
Louisiana	— ^a	255	Utah	222	269
Maine	— ^a	271	Vermont	— ^a	274
Maryland	— ^a	272	Virginia	241	269
Massachusetts	211	277	Washington	222	270
Michigan	237	266	West Virginia	— ^a	256
Minnesota	233	272	Wisconsin	240	269
Mississippi	— ^a	254	Wyoming	— ^a	270
Missouri	— ^a	267	United States	223	266

Note. Proficiency levels corresponding to scale scores are Below Basic < 243, Basic 243–280, Proficient 281–322, and Advanced > 322. Data from U.S. Department of Education (2011b).

^aStandards for reporting were not met.

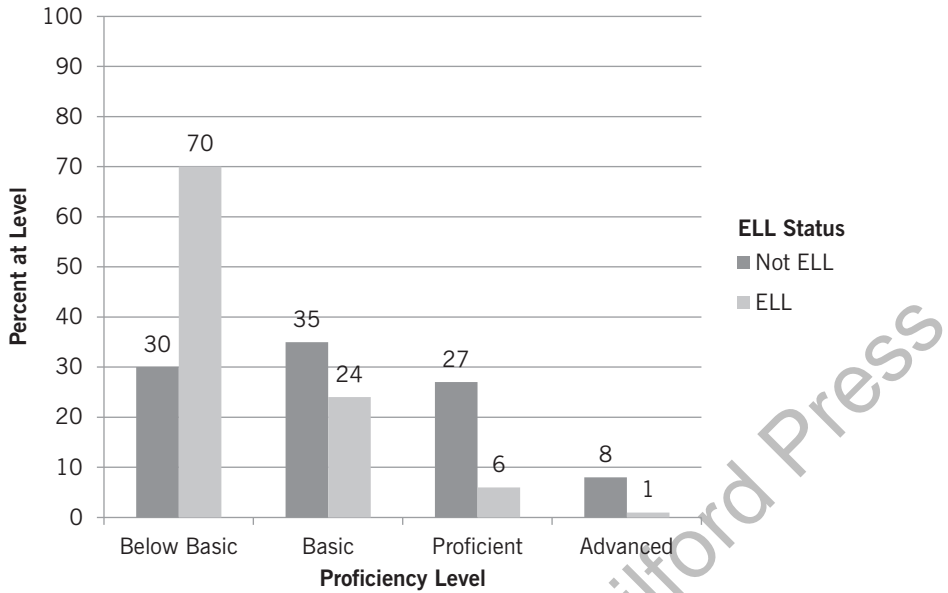


FIGURE 2.1. The percentage of fourth-grade ELLs and non-ELLs at the achievement levels of Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced on the 2011 NAEP Reading assessment. Data from U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2011 Reading Assessment.

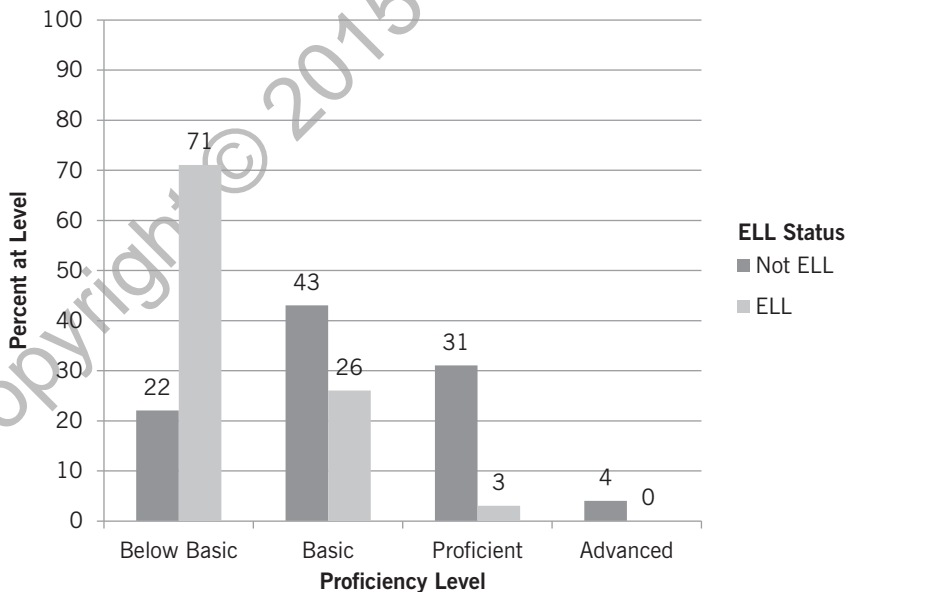


FIGURE 2.2. The percentage of eighth-grade ELLs and non-ELLs at the achievement levels of Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced on the 2011 NAEP Reading assessment. Data from U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2011 Reading Assessment.

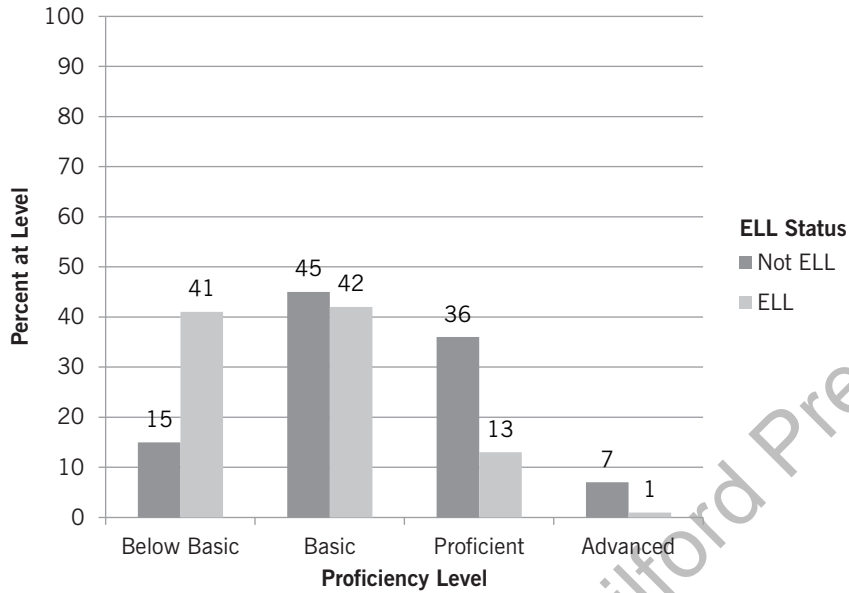


FIGURE 2.3. The percentage of fourth-grade ELLs and non-ELLs at the achievement levels of Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced on the 2011 NAEP Mathematics assessment. Data from U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2011 Reading Assessment.

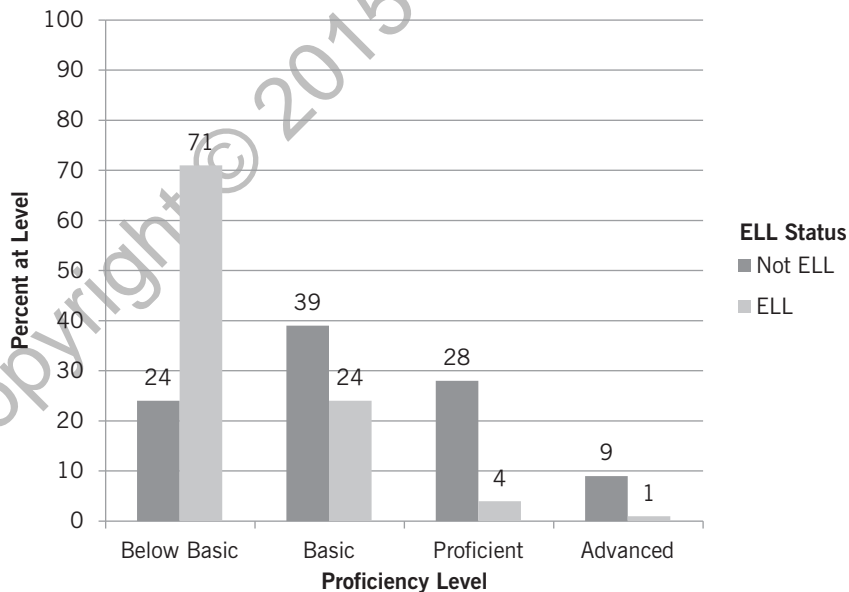


FIGURE 2.4. The percentage of eighth-grade ELLs and non-ELLs at the achievement levels of Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced on the 2011 NAEP Mathematics assessment. Data from U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2011 Reading Assessment.

57% of non-ELLs scored at the same level or below. In eighth grade, 95% of ELLs scored at the Basic or Below Basic levels, compared to 63% of non-ELLs. Conversely, 5% of fourth-grade ELLs scored at the Proficient or Advanced levels, and 37% of non-ELLs scored at the Proficient or Advanced levels. Thus, it is entirely reasonable to presume that facilitating the acquisition of ELP may very likely enhance the mathematics outcomes of many ELLs.

It is often presumed that ELLs experience heightened risk of poor academic achievement because of the demands of not only learning academic content but also, concurrently, the English language. Clearly, such a dual demand impacts academic performance (e.g., Baker, Kame'enui, & Simmons, 2002); however, ELLs also tend to experience additional environmental demands that further increase their degree of risk for academic underachievement. For example, in 2000, 68% of ELLs enrolled in kindergarten through fifth grade were considered to be from low-income environments, which was almost twice as high as the percentage of non-ELLs living in low-income environments (U.S. Department of Education, 2012c). Research has clearly demonstrated the enhanced risk of experiencing poor academic outcomes for students raised in low-income environments (e.g., McLoyd, 1998; Sirin, 2005). To examine the impact of poverty on ELLs' academic achievement, Kieffer (2008) controlled demographic risk factors, including poverty, to compare English reading growth trajectories in two groups of ELL students: (1) ELLs entering kindergarten who were considered to be proficient in oral English and (2) ELLs entering kindergarten with limited oral English proficiency. The comparison of both groups to native English speakers indicated that ELLs who entered kindergarten with oral English proficiency had similar reading achievement growth to that of native English speakers, whereas those ELLs who entered kindergarten with limited oral English proficiency had lower English reading trajectories than native English speakers, with the differences between these two groups described as large by fifth grade. However, when researchers controlled for poverty, the differences in reading achievement decreased (but did not disappear) for ELLs. These data were interpreted as being clear indicators of the need to provide literacy intervention for students with limited English skills who are entering public schools, and provided justification for early intervention as a way to facilitate the English academic achievement of ELLs.

The challenges for many ELL students are also supported by the well-documented finding that linguistic-minority students tend to be overrepresented in special education programs and underrepresented in advanced courses and in gifted and talented programs (e.g., Artiles, Rueda, Salazar, & Higareda, 2005; Artiles & Trent, 1994; Donovan & Cross, 2002; Ford, 1998; Zhang & Katsiyannis, 2002). In particular, Hispanic students (although not necessarily ELL Hispanic students) have a long history of being overrepresented in the specific learning disability (SLD) category of special education (e.g., Chinn & Hughes, 1987; Donovan & Cross, 2002; Rueda & Windmueller, 2006; Salend, Garrick Duhaney, & Montgomery, 2002). ELL students' linguistic diversity and frequent language barriers are often cited as salient reasons for their overrepresentation and underrepresentation in various special education categories (Klingner, Artiles, & Barletta, 2006; Rueda & Windmueller, 2006). Overrepresentation partially occurs as a result of conducting special education evaluations either when an ELL student displays low levels of English proficiency after a set period of time, or when the ELL student demonstrates academic underachievement and

school failure (McCardle, Mele-McCarthy, Cutting, Leos, & D’Emilio, 2005). Artiles and colleagues (2005) examined the identification of ELL students for special education eligibility within California urban school districts. The authors reported that ELL students, particularly those with first and second levels (i.e., low levels) of ELP, were at a greater risk for special education identification and eligibility (compared to ELL students at higher levels of proficiency) as they progress through the grade levels. Results also suggested that special education services were relied on the most for ELL students in English immersion classrooms, whereas ELL students in bilingual educational settings or modified English immersion programs were referred for special education evaluations less frequently. Regarding underrepresentation, evidence suggests that teachers may be hesitant to refer ELL students for a special education evaluation, because they assume that these students’ academic difficulties are the result of second-language acquisition difficulties or because they are already receiving ESL services (Klingner et al., 2006; Limbos & Geva, 2002). Thus, it is clear that a student’s second-language status has significant implications for his or her eventual educational attainment.

Social–Emotional Outcomes

The difficulties we just outlined regarding the development of basic and advanced academic skills clearly play a significant role in the negative academic and related outcomes experienced by many ELL students and immigrant families. We know that academic skills significantly impact future physical, emotional, and vocational wellness (Brown-Chidsey, 2005; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2005). For example, limited academic skills have been associated with increased rates of pregnancy (Matson & Haglund, 2000), incarceration (Strom, 2000), mental illness (Harlow, 2003), and poorer health and long-term wellness (CDC, 2005).

The evidence also suggests that many ELL students are at significant risk for emotional difficulties. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2001), “Hispanic American youth are at significantly higher risk for poor mental health than white youth are by virtue of higher rates of depressive and anxiety symptoms, as well as higher rates of suicidal ideation and suicide attempts” (p. 11). Linguistically diverse individuals’ mental health, according to Gibbs and Huang (1998), can be impacted by their cultural and ethnic background by (1) shaping their belief system about mental health and illness, (2) impacting the way that they cope with mental illness or show symptoms, (3) affecting how parents deal with a child’s mental illness and what professionals/paraprofessionals they will bring them to see, and (4) affecting treatment of a mental illness, particularly if the treatment chosen does not match children’s ethnic beliefs and traditions. In addition, many minority families may have less access to mental health care services or may choose not to seek help for linguistic or cultural reasons (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001), such as the view of mental illness as a “dishonor” to the family in some cultures (Esquivel & Keitel, 1990).

ELL students face additional issues affecting mental health. These include factors such as lifestyle changes and separation from family members left behind in their native country

(Gopaul-McNicol & Thomas-Presswood, 1998). Children of migrant farm worker families may face specific challenges requiring professionals to consider their background (e.g., war or other trauma in their native country), including factors (e.g., prejudice or racism in the community) that specifically may hinder their sufficient acquisition of English. School staff members may not always be informed of critical experiences in a child's background history (e.g., traumatic experiences in the native country or during the emigration process) or the additional stressors (e.g., death of a parent or witness to violence) that affect a child's mental health and most certainly require additional investigation by school personnel (e.g., school counselor, school social worker, school psychologist).

SO, NOW WHAT?

We have discussed how it is not uncommon for ELLs—as a group—to struggle in an academic context in the United States; this likely is not news to most readers of this book given the frequent media coverage and political discussion regarding global underachievement within our schools. What may be surprising, however, is the link between the chronic and widespread nature of these difficulties and the corresponding deleterious associations with basic emotional wellness later in life. This clarifies that, without a doubt, the *modus operandi* in schools cannot continue. Nevertheless, the question remains: “Why do ELLs, as a group, struggle to perform at similar achievement levels to non-ELL students?” Of course, this is likely due to multiple interacting factors; however, because of the need to learn Academic English, the question now—and the task that lies ahead for all educators—is how to facilitate this obligatory English language and academic growth. We begin to examine this question in Chapter 3.