

This spring, we have had over 125 teachers attend various conferences throughout the state. Math, technology, MAKER, NGSS, and EL education are just of the few content areas addressed as teacher teams move out to learn more. This spring, several people attended the CABE 2016 Conference to learn more about the trends and legislation that revolve around the world of bilingual education. Here you will find feedback from six of our own as they return to continue the good work they do with our EL students.

The 2016 CABE (California Association for Bilingual Education) conference provided a plethora of information and practical teaching strategies that I have already begun to implement in my classroom. The most impactful take-aways from the conference for me, however, were the strategies on how to better teach and motivate LTEL (Long Term English Learner) students, and how to prevent students from becoming LTELs. In California, three out of five English Language Learners in grades 6–12 are Long Term. At the middle school level a majority of the English Learners that I teach have reached LTEL status, and therefore it is imperative to actively work to motivate these students to reclassify. While there are many reasons why students reach LTEL status, and many strategies for teachers to help LTELs, perhaps the most impactful approach is for teachers to use positive, supportive language that complements a student's intellect, not just their actions, in order to ultimately change their self-image and their academic passivity, which will help speed up their progress. I am looking forward to the opportunity to share what I have learned at CABE with my co-workers so that, together, we can serve these students more effectively, in both the integrated and designated settings.

- Gabe Flynn, Paulding Middle School

EL students need to receive quality literacy instruction in the classroom. The core instruction these students take in should be grade level content, using complex text with appropriate scaffolds. Integrated ELD happens in the classroom during content lessons that use targeted, explicit, and intentional language. Designated ELD extends students' learning using the same concepts, skills, and vocabulary they have been acquiring in their classroom. There should be a protected time during the day that EL students get this instruction. Designated ELD lessons provide intentional, multiple exposure to targeted language, creating a redundancy of language that is necessary for students to hasten and solidify their language acquisition. A clear lesson objective should be communicated to the students.

What researchers have found regarding LTELs is the they have learned passivity, non engagement, and feel an underlying discomfort in class. They tend to not ask questions, ask for help or complete homework. They do not know they are doing poorly. They think they know English. Possible reasons for having so many LTELs in California is that students have not been receiving quality and targeted ELD instruction. Tier 2 words are not taught. Students need 12 production opportunities to own a word.

- Lea Ojeda, Dana Elementary

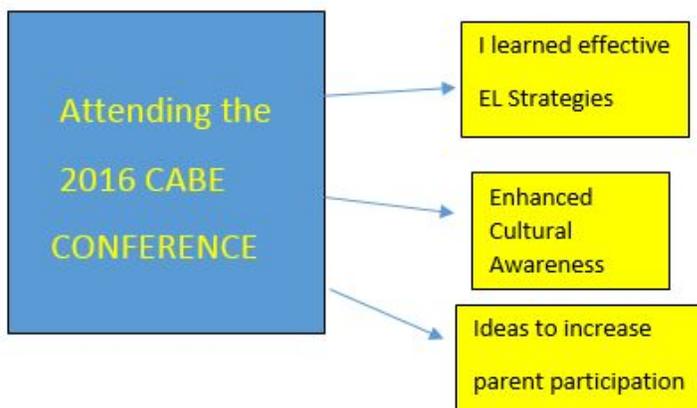
My big take-away from CABE 2016 was that our English Learners need ways to keep encouraged throughout their academics. Being at the high school, we see long term ELs who have lost their motivation and drive due to poor grades from when they were still acquiring their basic language. A great and easy way to keep these students positive is through "Growth Posters." On the left side of the poster, students would write their name if they did well on the test. Teachers decide what "well" means. On the right side, students would write their names if they IMPROVED from the previous assessment. That way, students learn that growth is just as important as doing well. Also, if a student sees positive recognition, she/he is more likely to stay motivated to one day move to the left side of the poster. To keep students encouraged, it is all about the small things we do.

- Stephanie Li, Nipomo High School

In reading the "Contextual Factors in Second Language Acquisition" I came across a digest focused on how schools and communities can approach adolescent English Learning. The contextual factors mentioned have a framework of individual, social, and societal. The implementation of these theoretical frameworks was very visible throughout the CAFE conference and beyond. First of all, holistically evaluating learners through ethnographic studies can reveal important information for guiding discourse such as academic proficiency in the student's first language, universal skills of learning, and metalinguistic development as mentioned by Aida Walqui. Once students have been placed in the classrooms, offering multiple opportunities for interdisciplinary academic language discussions and student's collaborations can be exemplified by the extensive work of Lily Wong Fillmore. In San Francisco Unified School District I found a successful collaboration with parents and students applying for DACA and DAPA through community workshops, which includes working with nonprofit organizations and donors to help low income families with application fees. In terms of diversifying homogeneous curricula, El Rancho Unified School District was first in incorporating ethnic studies in graduation plans. Video documentaries that give a voice to the struggles of recent immigrants was a popular expose along with other aesthetically visual and performing arts, which captured the essence of a dynamic rich fabric of multiculturalistic expression. Additionally, community's attitudes towards students learning a second language can be positively influenced as demonstrated by the guided efforts of Lucia Mar Unified School District's organization of a district wide reclassification ceremony.

- Roque Ballesteros, Arroyo Grande High School

Cheryl Whitford, Nipomo Elementary School, created a Thinking Map to explain her takeaways.



I believe that Dr. John King Jr., U.S. Department of Education Secretary said it best at CAFE. "We should celebrate bilingual education it is an asset and strength. Students who are bilingual have an advantage in problem solving, community values and a better sense of diversity. The majority of employers want people who are bilingual. We want students who have strong literacy skills, are biliterate, artistic and have musical background. Students in a dual language program have higher academic outcomes than other students. We want equality through education." Lucia Mar Unified School District is working towards 21st century skills for all of the students including EL learners.

- Bonnie Kraemer, Harloe Elementary School