

**Subject:** How to support intermediate English learners

**From:** "Tan Huynh and Beth Skelton" <info@k12.corwin.com>

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**To:** "mcateed@mokena159.org" <mcateed@mokena159.org>

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Affirm the linguistic, cultural, and experiential assets that multilinguals bring into the classroom. [Learn More.](#)

## Who are experienced multilinguals?

One of the largest sub-groups of secondary multilinguals, those who have been studying in English for 5 or more years are currently labeled “long-term English learner” or LTELs. We believe this label is problematic because it focuses a deficit lens on these learners. If educators believe students are taking a “long time” to develop English, they may believe there is something wrong with these students. They may have lower expectations for these students or even give them less rigorous work. *We encourage educators to make the shift to an assets-based approach towards these learners by building on their life experiences and their multilingual background.*

[Learn more about Experienced Multilinguals](#)

## What do experienced multilinguals need?

Experienced multilinguals can achieve and exceed grade level standards if all secondary content area teachers explicitly teach the academic language expectations of their discipline. *Although these students generally have a strong command of social English, they still need explicit instruction in the academic language expectations of a lab report, a literary analysis, an historical argument, or a mathematical explanation.* Content area teachers are perfectly situated to create the conditions for students to gain this academic language. The graphic below gives an example of how experienced multilinguals may sound in a science classroom and indicates the support they may need in order to become academically proficient.

## Additional guidance for content teachers

We were so honored to have shared our book on [Jennifer Gonzalez's Cult of Pedagogy's](#) podcast. In the podcast, we talk about specific strategies to support experienced multilinguals. Since Jennifer's listeners may not all be English language specialists, we shared how content teachers can use this book to serve their middle and high school students without years of

specialized coursework.  
Thank you for reading!

Sincerely,

Tan & Beth

[Headshots of Tan Huynh and Beth Skelton](#)

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2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks, CA 91320, USA | (800) 233-9936  
Level 20, 114 William Street, Melbourne, VIC 3000, Australia | (03) 8612 2000  
[www.corwin.com](http://www.corwin.com) | [au.corwin.com](http://au.corwin.com) | [ca.corwin.com](http://ca.corwin.com)

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