TECHNOLOGY CAN BRING EQUITY TO ELL STUDENTS

Key Takeaways from Dr. Musetti
ELLs are a diverse group of about five million students in the U.S. who speak a primary language other than English and are not yet proficient in English. They represent about 10 percent of enrollment in U.S. schools and are the fastest growing subgroup of students.

There is a wide disparity between ELL and monolingual English-speaking students on attainment and achievement measures, including the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Consider the point difference in average math and reading scores for ELL students in 2015:

- 25: 4th grade math
- 36: 4th grade reading
- 38: 8th grade math
- 44: 8th grade reading

To catch and keep up with their native English speaking peers, ELLs need more instructional time and specialized instruction, including specially designed materials and advanced educational tools to accelerate their learning. If that does not happen, ELLs risk running out of time and failing to earn the credits they need to graduate.

- 80% of ELLs speak Spanish as their primary language
- 40% of PK-12 students will be ELLs by 2030
- 63% Graduation rate for ELLs
- 82% Graduation rate for students overall
Information and communication technologies (ICT) promote English language learning in numerous ways. Yet there is strong evidence of a digital divide.

The digital divide is important in the current era of computer-based standardized testing, where a lack of familiarity with the technology often puts ELL students at an additional disadvantage. Consider the average scale score on the 2014 NAEP assessment of Technology and Information Literacy:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>Score for ELLs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>152</td>
<td>Score for non-ELLs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ELLs can benefit greatly from technology tools that allow them to practice and receive feedback on their performance, such as voice recognition to promote listening and speaking skills and modeled language use.

Technology can accelerate language learning and significantly impact a student’s educational trajectory and life chances, particularly if it promotes language development that results in reclassification from English Learner status to fully English proficient status.

4-7

Years for ELLs to acquire academic English
Blended learning is one potentially powerful approach to improving instruction and outcomes for ELLs. Technology is used to “blend” learning so students can benefit from an experience that:

- Combines face-to-face classroom learning with technology-mediated learning
- Gives the student some control over elements such as time, pace, and content
- Promotes learner autonomy and independent learning

One popular use of blended learning is the approach of reversing the lecture and homework aspects of the course. This allows the student to arrive to class familiar with the lecture, and class time is devoted to discussion, problem solving, etc. This allows ELLs to:

- Work through the material at their own pace
- Involve parents and others

“Learners who worked with teachers alongside their online experience were much more likely to say that they developed an interest in the subject and increased their academic standing.” — Darling-Hammond, Zielezinski & Goldman

One way to accelerate learning for ELLs is to use technology that allows for:

- More time on tasks that promote language development and content area learning
- Additional practice developing and using language meaningfully
- Feedback on language production and progress

“Technology can bring equity to ELL students.”
There is a large body of research showing that students are more successful when their parents are involved in their education.

Many parents of ELLs would benefit from learning English, especially when learning is accessible, comprehensive, and fun. This may be accomplished through classes offered:

- In the community or the school
- As language learning tools using technology that provides access anywhere and at any time

Some school districts allow all second-language learners and their families unlimited access to technology-based language-learning programs.

This can open exciting possibilities for language and learning. Engaging parents as users of technology helps families:

- Close the digital divide
- Become involved in joint production of projects and the sharing of expertise
Technology can be used to improve educational outcomes for ELLs and to promote school engagement for their families. Technology tools can help accelerate language development while minimizing the digital divide and the “learning gap” for ELLs and their families.

Blended learning, when done well, is a complementary approach to what we know works with English Learners and helps to meet the critical needs of more:

- Time for learning
- Language and content access
- Differentiated instruction
- Formative assessment

Well utilized state-of-the-art technology tools can transform not only learning but academic success itself for ELLs and their families.

To read the complete white paper and learn more about Rosetta Stone, go to k12hub.rosettastone.com