

Task Order 27

Study of Digital Learning Resources for Instructing English Learner Students

Task 4.4 (Part 7) Survey: Correspondence with Survey Sites and Respondents

July 11, 2016

Submitted to:
U.S. Department of Education
Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development

Submitted by:
Westat
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Study of Digital Learning Resources for Instructing English Learner Students

Task 4.4 (Part 7) Survey: Correspondence with Survey Sites and Respondents

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Survey: District Notification Letter

Study of Digital Learning Resources (DLRs) for Instructing English Learner Students

Date

Title

School District name

Address

City, State, ZIP

Dear Superintendent /name/:

Your district has been selected to participate in the U.S. Department of Education's *Study of Digital Learning Resources (DLRs) for Instructing English Learner Students*. Westat and SRI International are conducting the study for the U.S. Department of Education's Policy and Program Studies Service, on behalf of the Office of English Language Acquisition and the Office of Educational Technology. The goals of the study are to identify the types of DLRs used in instructing English learner (EL) students, how these are used, and in what ways these support EL student's second language learning of academic English and learning of core academic content.

This will be a nationally representative study of approximately 1,000 school districts and 1,200 teachers of EL students (mainstream and EL-specialist teachers). The study will gather information on how districts make decisions regarding investments in DLRs, what barriers exist to EL students' use of existing DLRs, and how districts define successful outcomes in using technology to support EL students. Similarly, teachers will provide information on the types of DLRs they use, how they identify and select DLRs for ELs and other students, and how they use these in instruction. The district and teacher respondents will also provide information on where they believe there are gaps in the DLRs available and the types of DLRs they would like to see developed.

The findings are anticipated to offer insights as to how DLR developers and practitioners could improve the usefulness of tools for teaching EL students. These will help to inform the development of a guide for educators and a guide for technology developers.

We are asking for your district's participation in a district survey to be conducted in fall 2016. In some districts, we will also request participation of two teachers from one school in your district to complete a teacher survey in late fall 2016. Your participation is voluntary. However, your participation is very important, even if your district includes only a very few EL students, since your responses will represent many other similar districts in the country. We recognize that you are very busy and we will appreciate your time and contributions to this important effort. A Westat staff member will call you soon to:

- 1) Answer questions about the study;
- 2) Identify the person in your district who will be designated as the study liaison;
- 3) Obtain contact information for the study liaison;
- 4) Determine whether a research application for your district is required; and
- 5) Obtain information about the number of EL students and teachers, and grade levels served for each school in your district.

In fall 2016, we will begin the district survey and will send your designated liaison to the study a link to the DLRS-ELS Study web survey. It will require approximately 55 minutes to complete.

Thank you for your consideration of this request for participation in this important initiative on the part of the U.S. Department of Education to understand more about how DLRs are being used in K–12 education for EL students.

If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact us at 1-855-241-7535 or by email at DLRS-ELS@westat.com. We look forward to working with your district to make this study a success. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,

Annette M. Zehler
Project Director

Phil Vahey
Deputy Director

Attached: Study Description

CONFIDENTIALITY

We will not present any personally identifiable information in any report or publication resulting from the study; we will not identify your school or district in any study report or publication; and no responses will be linked with any identifying information in any final data files created for the study. All responses will be aggregated and summarized across respondents. The study team will protect or maintain confidentiality of your responses except as may be required by law. No individuals other than research staff will see any individually identifying data (for example, names or addresses). Your participation is voluntary; however, your district's participation is very important to providing policymakers with accurate and complete information. Data collection is being conducted in only a sample of districts throughout the nation. This greatly increases the importance of your response since it represents many other districts.

If you have any questions about the study, please call 855-241-7535. If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, please call the Westat Human Subjects Protections office at 1-888-920-7631. Please leave a message with your full name, the name of the study (*Study of DLRs for Instructing English Learner Students*), and a phone number beginning with the area code. A research office staff person will return your call as soon as possible.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such a collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is xxxx-xxxx. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 55 minutes per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate or suggestions for improving the survey, please write: U.S. Department of Education, Washington D.C. 20202-4651. If you have comments or concerns regarding the contents or the status of your individual survey, write directly to: Study of the Use of Digital Learning Resources (DLRs) in Instructing EL Students, Policy and Program Studies Service, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, 400 Maryland Ave, SW, Washington DC 20202.

Survey: District Notification Letter for the District Subsample
Study of Digital Learning Resources (DLRs) for Instructing English Learner Students

Date

Title

School District name

Address

City, State, ZIP

Dear Superintendent /name/:

Thank you for your district's participation in the U.S. Department of Education's *Study of Digital Learning Resources (DLRs) for Instructing English Learner Students*. Your district has been randomly selected to be included in the teacher survey portion of the study. We are writing to request your district's approval to identify a total of **two teachers of English learner (EL) students** from one school in your district. We will randomly select the school and the teachers who will be asked to complete the study's teacher survey on use of DLRs in instruction.

Your district will be asked to:

- Update and complete the attached School Roster.
- Provide approval for one school to participate. The school will be randomly selected by Westat from the School Roster you provide. The school will be asked to provide a teacher roster from which we will randomly select two teachers of EL students for participation in the teacher survey. (Teachers will receive a \$25 incentive for completion of the 35-minute online survey.)

Your support for this study is very important, and even if your district has a small number of EL students enrolled, the information your teachers will provide will assist the Department of Education in identifying needs for additional areas of research and guidance for educators and DLR developers. Your participation is voluntary; however, your participation is very important since your district will represent many other similar districts in the country.

Please review the enclosed instructions and update the attached School Roster and return it to [-----] via email at DLRS-ELS@westat.com. If you have any questions about the study or the School Roster, please contact us at DLRS-ELS@westat.com or you may call the DLRS-ELS study help line at: 855-241-7535

We look forward to working with your district to make this study a success. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,

Annette M. Zehler
Project Director

Phil Vahey
Deputy Director

Attached: School Roster and Instructions
 Study Description

CONFIDENTIALITY

We will not present any personally identifiable information in any report or publication resulting from the study; we will not identify your school or district in any study report or publication; and no responses will be linked with any identifying information in any final data files created for the study. All responses will be aggregated and summarized across respondents. The study team will protect or maintain confidentiality of your responses except as may be required by law. No individuals other than research staff will see any individually identifying data (for example, names or addresses). Your participation is voluntary; however, your district's participation is very important to providing policymakers with accurate and complete information. Data collection is being conducted in only a sample of districts throughout the nation. This greatly increases the importance of your response since it represents many other districts.

If you have any questions about the study, please call 855-241-7535. If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, please call the Westat Human Subjects Protections office at 1-888-920-7631. Please leave a message with your full name, the name of the study (*Study of DLRs for Instructing English Learner Students*), and a phone number beginning with the area code. A research office staff person will return your call as soon as possible.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such a collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is xxxx-xxxx. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 30 minutes per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate or suggestions for improving the survey, please write: U.S. Department of Education, Washington D.C. 20202-4651. If you have comments or concerns regarding the contents or the status of your individual survey, write directly to: Study of the Use of Digital Learning Resources (DLRs) in Instructing EL Students, Policy and Program Studies Service, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, 400 Maryland Ave, SW, Washington DC 20202.

Survey: School Notification Letter – Request for Teacher Roster
Study of Digital Learning Resources (DLRs) for Instructing English Learner Students

Date

Title

School Name

Address

City, State, ZIP

Dear Principal /name/:

Your school has been selected to participate in the U.S. Department of Education's study of Digital Learning Resources (DLRs) for Instructing English Learner Students, conducted by Westat and SRI International.

The study will identify the types of DLRs that used in instructing English learner (EL) students, how these are used, and in what ways these support EL student's second language learning of academic English and core academic content. This will be a nationally representative study of approximately 1,000 school districts and 1,200 teachers of EL students (mainstream and EL-specialist teachers). The study will gather information on how districts and schools make decisions regarding investments in DLRs, how teachers of EL students use DLRs, what barriers exist to EL students' use of existing DLRs, and how districts and schools define successful outcomes in using technology to support EL students. The findings will also provide insights as to how DLR developers and practitioners could improve the usefulness of tools for teaching EL students, and will inform the development of a guide for educators and a guide for technology developers.

We realize that your time is valuable and we will do our best to make your school's participation in this study as easy as possible. We ask that you or your designee complete the enclosed **Teacher Roster within the next 2 weeks**. We will use the roster to select two teachers from your school to complete the teacher survey. These teachers will be asked to complete a 35-minute survey about their use of DLRs and will receive \$25 for their time.

Teacher participation is critical to the success of the study. Although teacher participation is voluntary, it is important that every selected school and teacher participate to ensure the completeness and accuracy of study results. All data collected for this study will be kept strictly confidential, except as required by law.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and participation in this study. You are contributing to an important initiative on the part of the U.S. Department of Education to understand more about how DLRs are being used in K–12 education for EL students in schools today. If you have any questions about the study, please contact xxx by calling 1-855-241-7535 or by emailing DLRS-ELS@westat.com. We look forward to working with you to make this study a success!

Sincerely,

Annette M. Zehler
Project Director

Phil Vahey
Deputy Director

Attached: Teacher Roster and Instructions
 Study Description

CONFIDENTIALITY

We will not present any personally identifiable information in any report or publication resulting from the study; we will not identify your school or district in any study report or publication; and no responses will be linked with any identifying information in any final data files created for the study. All responses will be aggregated and summarized across respondents. The study team will protect or maintain confidentiality of your responses except as may be required by law. No individuals other than research staff will see any individually identifying data (for example, names or addresses). Your participation is voluntary; however, your district's participation is very important to providing policymakers with accurate and complete information. Data collection is being conducted in only a sample of districts throughout the nation. This greatly increases the importance of your response since it represents many other districts.

If you have any questions about the study, please call 855-241-7535. If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, please call the Westat Human Subjects Protections office at 1-888-920-7631. Please leave a message with your full name, the name of the study (*Study of DLRs for Instructing English Learner Students*), and a phone number beginning with the area code. A research office staff person will return your call as soon as possible.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such a collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is xxxx-xxxx. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 40 minutes per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate or suggestions for improving the survey, please write: U.S. Department of Education, Washington D.C. 20202-4651. If you have comments or concerns regarding the contents or the status of your individual survey, write directly to: Study of the Use of Digital Learning Resources (DLRs) in Instructing EL Students, Policy and Program Studies Service, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, 400 Maryland Ave, SW, Washington DC 20202.

Survey: Teacher Notification Letter

Study of Digital Learning Resources (DLRs) for Instructing English Learner Students

Date

Title

School Name

Address

City, State, ZIP

Dear Teacher /name/:

You have been selected to participate in the U.S. Department of Education’s study of Digital Learning Resources (DLRs) for Instructing English Learner Students, conducted by Westat and SRI International. The study will answer important questions about how districts and schools make decisions regarding investments in DLRs, how teachers of EL students use DLRs, what barriers exist to EL students’ use of existing DLRs, and how districts and schools define successful outcomes in using technology to support EL students. The study will also investigate how DLR developers and practitioners could improve the usefulness of tools for teaching EL students. In addition to a final report, the study will develop a guide for educators and a guide for technology developers.

This two-year study will identify DLRs available for K–12 instruction to support EL student’s second language learning of academic English and learning of core academic content. The study includes a nationally representative sample of 1,000 school districts and 1,200 teachers. The teachers responding to the survey will include those who instruct only one or a few EL students as well as those who teach all EL students. It is very important to include all of these types of teacher experience in working with EL students.

We realize that your time is valuable and we will do our best to make your participation in this study as easy as possible. **Your participation involves completion of an online survey about your experiences using Digital Learning Resources for instructing your English learner students.** We are requesting that you **complete your survey within the next 2 weeks**. The survey will take approximately **35 minutes** to complete. As compensation for your time, you will receive a \$25 incentive within six to eight weeks after submission of your completed survey. You’ll receive a friendly reminder if your survey is not completed by the end of first week.

Your participation is critical to the success of the study. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and participation in this study. You are contributing to an important initiative on the part of the U.S. Department of Education to understand how DLRs are used in K–12 education for EL students. Your participation is voluntary but is needed to ensure that the findings of the study are accurate. Your responses will represent many other teachers in similar instructional roles. All data collected for this study will be protected to maintain confidentiality, except as required by law, and no individual person, school or district will be identified in any reports or other descriptions of findings.

Below and attached is the link to your DLRS-ELS Teacher Online Survey. Thank you in advance for your participation in this study. If you have any questions about the study, please contact xxxx by calling 1-855-241-7535 or by emailing xxxxx. We look forward to working with you to make this study a success!

If you have any questions about the study, please contact xxxx by calling 1-855-241-7535 or by emailing DLRS-ELS@westat.com. We look forward to working with you to make this study a success!

Sincerely,

Annette M. Zehler
Project Director

Phil Vahey
Deputy Director

Attached: Teacher Online Survey Link
 Study Description

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