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## This month's focus: English Learner Literacy



***"English learners are one of the lowest academically performing groups of students, and the achievement gap widens as students progress through school. Equal access to a quality education is the civil rights issue of our generation, and we must work in every way to make educational opportunity a reality."***

- Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, IDRA President and CEO

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- Infographic - Preparing Teachers to Serve Today's Classrooms
- IDRA's 3-Day Literacy Learning Series on Instructional Strategies for Building Inferencing Skills
- Podcast episodes: A Principal on Leadership for a Turnaround School - Part 1 -Episode 168 and Part 2 - Episode 169
- Brochure: Semillitas de Aprendizaje™
- See video clips from the Storytelling & Storyreading Videos DVD
- Podcast episode: Readers Theatre in Early Childhood Ed" - IDRA Classnotes Podcast #134

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## English Learner Literacy

### School Leaders Improve English Learner Literacy with Focus on Inferencing

*by Nilka Avilés, Ed.D.*

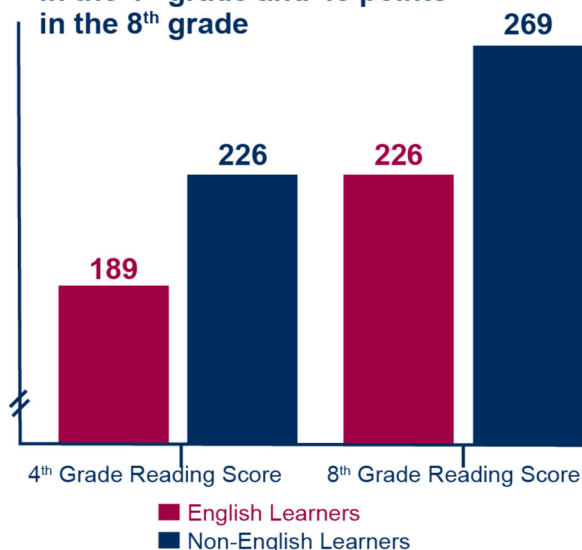
Inferencing and literacy skills are vital to students' success. With leaders at five schools, IDRA provided customized teacher professional development focused on inferencing and reasoning skills. Through this program, the schools improved literacy scores and helped close the achievement gap between English learner and non-English learner students.

This work of IDRA's School Turn-Around and Re-energizing for Success (STAARS) Leaders project also found effective implementation practices for improving leader and teacher capacity for educating EL students, improving school climate.



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The gaps in reading scores between English learner and non-English learner students nationally is 37 points in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade and 43 points in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade



Data source: Reading Performance, Condition of Education 2018.  
[https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/coe\\_cnb.pdf](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/coe_cnb.pdf)

2018, Intercultural Development Research Association

## Creating Effective Diverse Classrooms through Accelerated Teacher Certification

by Felix Montes, Ph.D.

Many schools in Texas do not have well-prepared teachers to serve in increasingly diverse classrooms, especially in bilingual/ESL, special education, and STEM subjects. IDRA, with funding from the U.S. Department of Education, directly addressed this shortage through their Transition to Teaching program, a collaborative effort with higher education teacher preparation programs and 55 urban and rural high-needs districts across the state.

IDRA's [synthesis report](#) published this month shows that the organization recruited 935 prospective teachers. Out of these men and women, 815 completed the program and 768 started teaching in high-needs classrooms fully certified.

These teachers were not only well prepared but also demographically resembled the students in their classrooms better than other teachers in Texas .

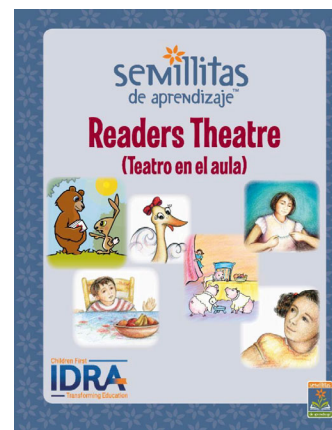


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## Readers Theatre - Teatro en el Aula New IDRA Semillitas de Aprendizaje™ Product for Young Learners

IDRA's new Semillitas de Aprendizaje product provides a new level of engagement to young children through the use of Teatro en el Aula, or Readers Theater, through further engaging students in developing oral fluency, a critical factor necessary for reading comprehension.

Readers Theater is the performance of a written script that calls for repeated and assisted reading that is focused on engaging and delivering meaning to the audience. The benefits for bilingual children are many - motivation, meaningful contextualization, group performance for self-expression, and engaging in active listening and sharing.



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## IDRA Annual Report Released

### Keeping the Promise - Profiles in Leadership and Education

IDRA's annual report for 2017, [Keeping the Promise: Profiles in Leadership and Education](#), features leaders in education, family, community and youth - Jacquelyn Carter Thigpen; Alexander Yang; Gregory Rivers; Eva Carranza and her daughter Andrea; Linda Darling-Hammond; and Tery Medina.

The report tells how their commitment to keeping the promise of quality public education for all children has been woven into their paths and how they work with a community of partners and colleagues to keep this promise.



## Call for Applications - 2018 IDRA José A. Cárdenas School Finance Fellows Program

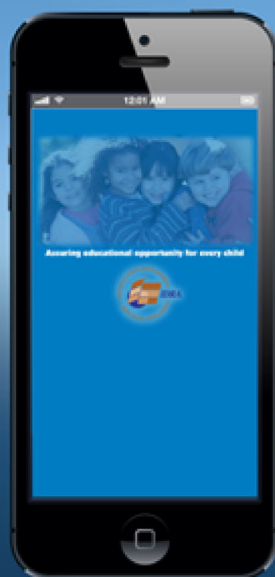
IDRA is inviting research applications for the IDRA José A. Cárdenas School Finance Fellows Program. This will be the third round of this fellows program to support research that will inform efforts to secure equitable funding of public schools across the country.

Under the leadership of Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, IDRA President & CEO, the program was established by IDRA to honor the memory of IDRA founder, Dr. José Angel Cárdenas.

IDRA will select one or more fellows who will dedicate themselves to a period of intense study and writing in school finance. We will hold a symposium that includes release of the fellows program paper. The paper and findings will be published in the symposium proceedings and disseminated to the education research and policymaker community.

**Get details and help us spread the word!**



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The Intercultural Development Research Association is an independent, non-profit organization. Our mission is to achieve equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college. IDRA strengthens and transforms public education by providing dynamic training; useful research, evaluation, and frameworks for action; timely policy analyses; and innovative materials and programs.

We are committed to the IDRA valuing philosophy, respecting the knowledge and skills of the individuals we work with and build on the strengths of the students and parents in their schools.