

Technology-Enhanced Supports for English Learners
GLR Learning Tuesdays | Learning Loss Recovery Challenge Series

November 11, 2025 | 3 pm – 4:30 pm ET

PRESENTER BIOS

PRESENTERS



Veronica Benavides Ed.D.
Founder and CEO
Bilingual Generation

Vero (she/her) has spent her career exploring and advocating for the intersection of identity, language, and learning. Throughout her career in education—as a high school and middle school teacher, a Fulbright scholar, researcher at Harvard, a leadership coach, and the Executive Director of a leading early childhood educational research and training center—she’s always sought to create strengths-based environments where all people and children thrive.

Now, as founder and CEO of Bilingual Generation, Vero works to support the reclamation and flourishing of heritage languages across global contexts. Through learning resources and cohort-based programs for educators and families, Bilingual Generation decolonizes language learning to promote bilingualism in homes and schools.



Robyn Edwards, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Western Michigan University

Dr. Robyn Edwards is an Assistant Professor of TESOL in the Department of Special Education and Literacy Studies at Western Michigan University. Her research focuses on innovative approaches to supporting multilingual learners across K–12 and higher education. She investigates AI-enhanced tools in TESOL teacher education, examining impacts on instruction, classroom interaction, and equitable access. Edwards collaborates with schools and community partners, designs professional development for in-service teachers, and mentors graduate students in research and reflective practice.



Havala Hanson, Ph.D.
Founder
Evergreen Analytics

Dr. Havala Hanson empowers teams to illustrate how policies and programs yield impacts by unifying rich qualitative narratives with robust quantitative results. She specializes in conducting sophisticated analyses, transforming results into actionable findings, and synthesizing complex technical content into accessible information to help policymakers, system leaders, and practitioners easily understand and immediately leverage to make decisions, improve practices, implement better systems, and achieve strategic goals. Dr. Hanson holds a Ph.D. in Statistics, Policy, and Education from the University of Alaska Fairbanks and a master's degree in Urban Education Policy from Brown University.



Steve Sofronas, M.Ed.
Director of Partner Education and Learning Experience
Ellevation Education

With over two decades of experience in K-12 education and educational technology, Steve has dedicated his career to empowering learners, educators, and organizations through innovative strategies, impactful programs, and scalable solutions. He currently leads Ellevation's Partner Education and Learning Experience Team, responsible for designing and deploying a wide variety of resources and learning experience that enhance educators' ability to support multilingual learners. Steve also hosted and produced the Highest Aspirations podcast, where he interviewed over 200 experts and thought leaders in the field of multilingual education. In addition to a Master's in Teaching Spanish, Steve holds a Master's in Learning Design, Innovation, and Technology from Harvard University.

MODERATOR:



Amaya Garcia
Director, PreK-12 Research and Practice
New America

Amaya Garcia is the Director of PreK–12 Research and Practice with the Education Policy program at New America.

Garcia is a national expert on Grow Your Own (GYO) educator programs and policies. She leads New America’s Grow Your Own Educators National Network, a professional learning community for GYO programs across the country. She also conducts research and analysis on English learner policy, bilingual teacher preparation and career pathways, bilingual education, and early education.

Prior to joining New America, Garcia was a policy analyst at the DC State Board of Education and a research associate at the American Institutes of Research. She has worked in a variety of research labs, conducting studies on school finance, reading comprehension, infant learning and memory, and early language development. She has authored numerous blog posts, policy reports, and academic articles. Garcia’s work and commentary have been featured in a variety of publications, including Education Week, U.S. News and World Report, Kappan magazine, the Boston Globe, the Philadelphia Inquirer, Chalkbeat, Journal of Career Development, *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, and the *Handbook of Research on Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers*.

Garcia holds a master’s degree in public policy from the University of Maryland–College Park, a master’s degree in cognitive studies in education from Teachers College, Columbia University, and a bachelor’s degree in English and psychology from the University of Iowa.