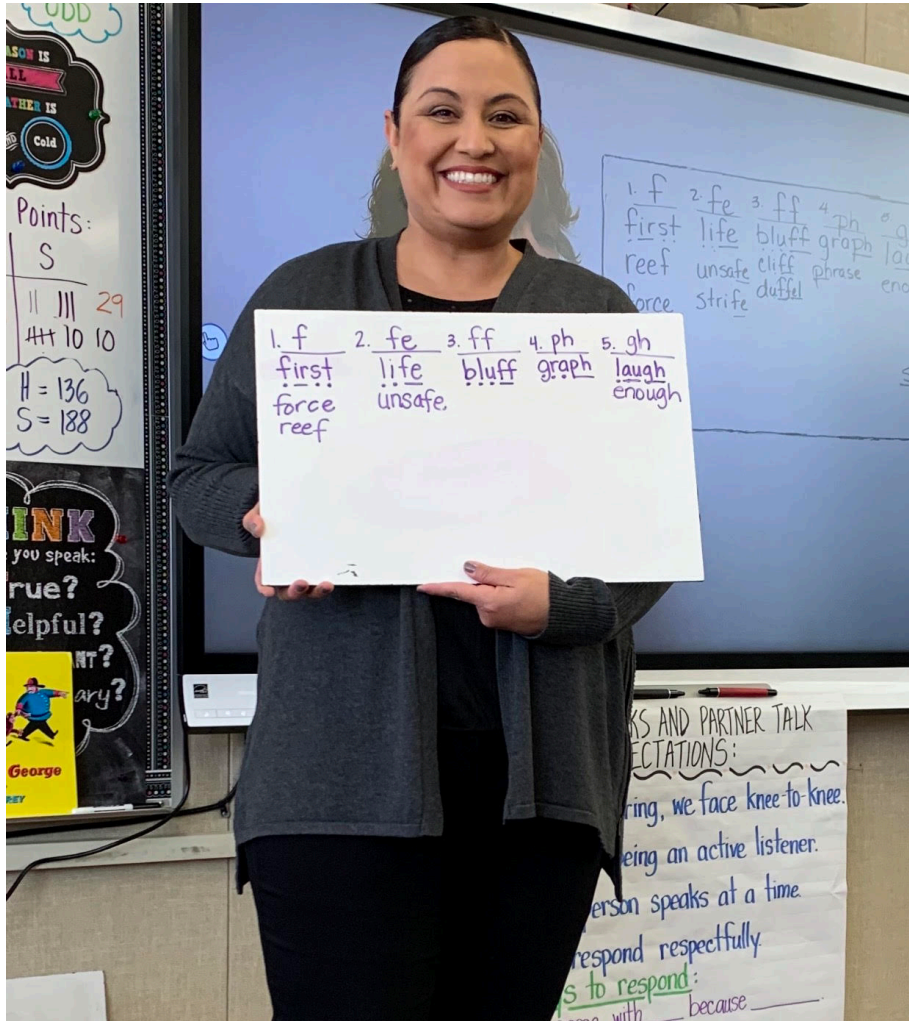


# EBLI and Multilevel Readers

HOW THIS CALIFORNIA TEACHER IMPROVED HER LITERACY TOOLS TO BETTER SUPPORT HER CLASSROOM OF VARIED STUDENTS



Ruth Hernandez teaching her students about sound patterns

"They're willing to try to read, whereas at the beginning of the year they didn't raise their hand to read. Now they get involved in the discussions. They're talking about a fact or character in the story."

- Ruth Hernandez explaining the difference her students experience after they're introduced to EBLI.

## Teacher Profile



### Overview

- Teacher: Ruth Hernandez
- School: Lincoln Elementary
- District: Hanford, California
- Grade: Third
- Years Teaching: 13
- Number of Students in class: 20
- Students attending Lincoln Elementary: 400-450



### EBLI Tools

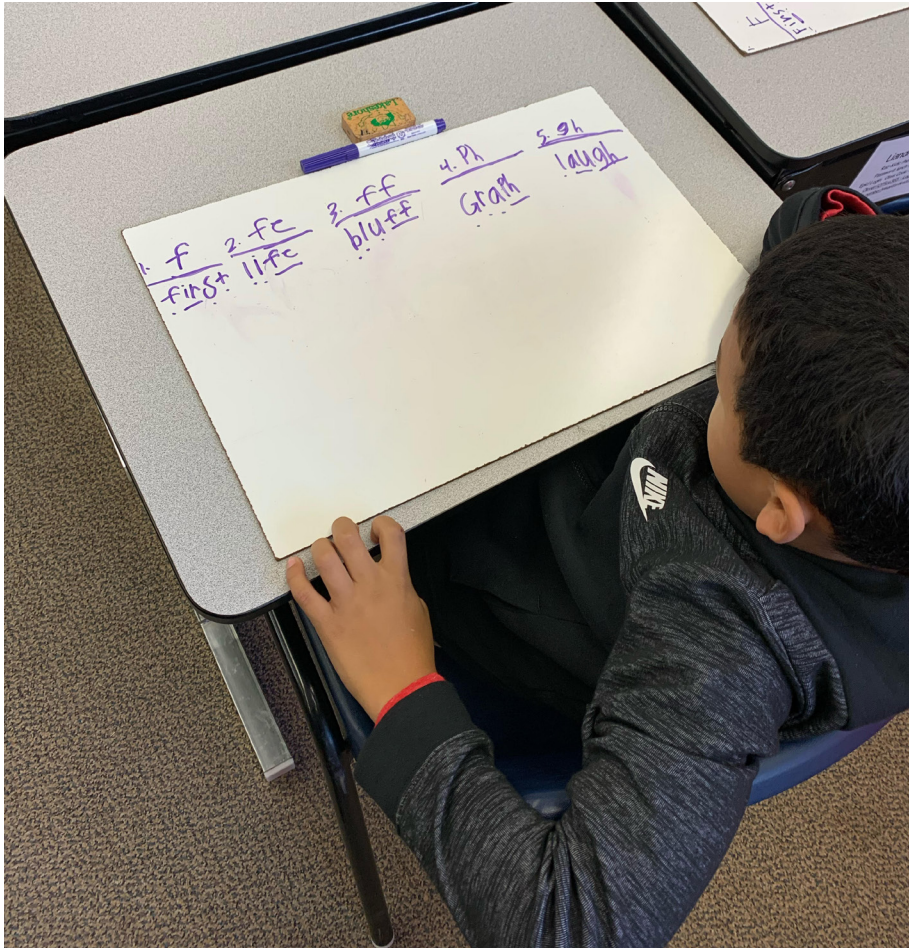
- EBLI In Person Training
- ETSL Training



### Expected Outcomes

- Increased student excitement to learn to write
- Greater student enthusiasm in learning to read
- Time and money saved by the teacher
- Reduced need for additional resources
- More time for students to concentrate on other skills
- Heightened student confidence in literacy

Located halfway between Fresno, CA and Bakersfield, CA, the district of Hanford supports nine elementary schools, totaling well over 5,000 students. Of those students, 407 attend Lincoln Elementary. Lincoln's students range from grades K-6, with a ratio of approximately 25 students per teacher. Ruth Hernandez teaches a third-grade class: "I teach the whole class. My 20th student just started last Thursday!"



Ruth's students practicing their sound sort

In addition to single teachers in the classroom, some or all of Lincoln's district qualifies as low-income. Ruth explains how their district defines that qualification: "We have low-socioeconomic status. Our district qualifies for a program that provides free breakfast and lunch for the district. That's for all of the schools in the district, but in the 2017-2018 school year we had 97% free and reduced lunch."

Statistically, schools with this status see lower gains in reading and math, and Lincoln elementary is no different. According to the state's testing records, Lincoln's students have a score of 29% proficiency in literacy (ELA). Ruth knows the challenges her students face, and her top priority is giving them the skills they need in life. However, she also knows it's a tough job, and sometimes the impact is disheartening.

"Sometimes kids have things happening outside of the classroom. They struggle at home, so that comes into the classroom when they don't want to learn, so I have to motivate them. It's not just about teaching, but about motivating them, because when they're having a tough day and don't want to work, it can be draining – for them and for me."

Ruth is working hard to provide the best care for her students, no matter their reading level: "I have kids reading at all different levels. Some are reading at the kindergarten grade level, some are reading at first or second grade level, and some are reading at third grade level or above. It can be challenging to keep them motivated daily."

Ruth wants to give her students the best opportunities possible, but she needed a better set of tools and strategies to achieve her goals in the classroom.

## The Challenge

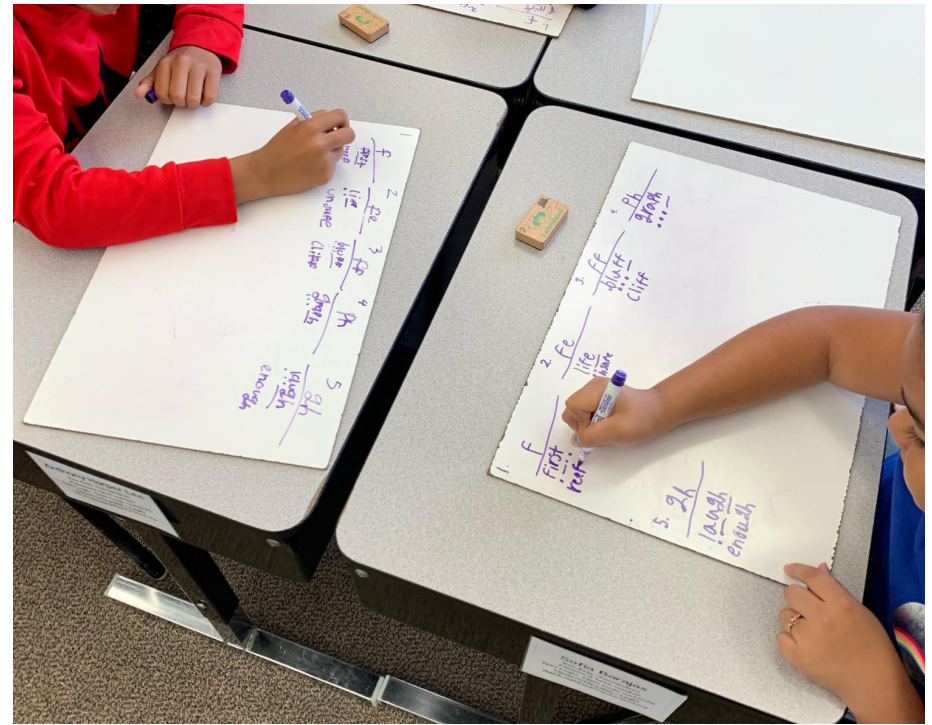
With a classroom marked by a wide range of reading levels, and only herself to instruct her students, Ruth has felt the challenge of supporting her entire class.

“I’m trying to meet the needs of all the students while making sure to help the kids who are at grade level, helping them to go beyond that. Plus, you’re supporting the students who are struggling. It’s not easy but we’re doing the best we can with the resources we have.”

Ruth’s focus is to prepare her students for their future: “You want them to feel successful and meet their goals, but it can be challenging. You need to find a balance. At times, it can be hard, and you need to remind yourself that you are making a difference.”

With the determination to find the best solutions for the students in her classroom, Ruth wanted to improve her tools for literacy learning. “We didn’t have a specific program that we used. We teach guided reading in small groups, bringing students together who were at the same reading level to focus on decoding and comprehension. We used leveled readers and set goals for the students.”

Luckily, Ruth’s district was about to take advantage of an opportunity to explore better tools for literacy instruction. In 2018, a Kings County School Board Member founded the Kings Literacy Impact Pact (KLIP) to fight illiteracy in the district and approached the district with a system that KLIP believed would benefit students.



Ruth's students working on their EBLI boards

To achieve their goals, the school board selected several schools in low-income areas that exhibited low test scores to pilot this new instruction system. Ruth’s third grade class was chosen as a member of the pilot group.

“My Principal approached my third grade team and asked if I wanted to receive EBLI training. I didn’t know anyone who had taught EBLI before.”

Ruth didn’t know it yet, but EBLI would change the way her students experienced literacy learning.

## Training with EBLI

Lincoln Elementary selected its third-grade instructors to lead the pilot for their EBLI test. According to Ruth, “I believe that one reason we started with third grade was that the administration wanted to look at the progress of one grade level at a time.” The third-grade instructors made a great team, and were able to support each other and maintain consistent instructional practices.



Ruth joined other teachers, admins, and parents during her live training with Nora

Before the first training session, the teachers were assigned a little homework of their own: “We were given books with the research to learn where the ideas came from. We had some reading to do, and then we were able to attend the EBLI training.”

During the training, Ruth found a community of teachers and administrators from her neighborhood who all felt strongly about giving their students better literacy options. Nora Chahbazi, founder of EBLI, gave the training herself. “Being able to experience EBLI in person, to have Nora live, was great,” Ruth says.

Working with Nora gave Ruth the knowledge and confidence to bring EBLI back to her classroom, but it also made her realize that she hasn't had the support she needed over the years. EBLI is backed by science, and provides the best tools to support literacy experts in the classroom so they can continue to evolve their teaching strategies over time, while simultaneously easing some of the challenges and distractions that students face every day. Ruth knew that EBLI was onto something, and even picked up a few new lessons for herself.

“You know a lot about words and sounds and it kind of made you think, ‘Oh my goodness, we still have a lot to learn.’”

## Adding ETSL

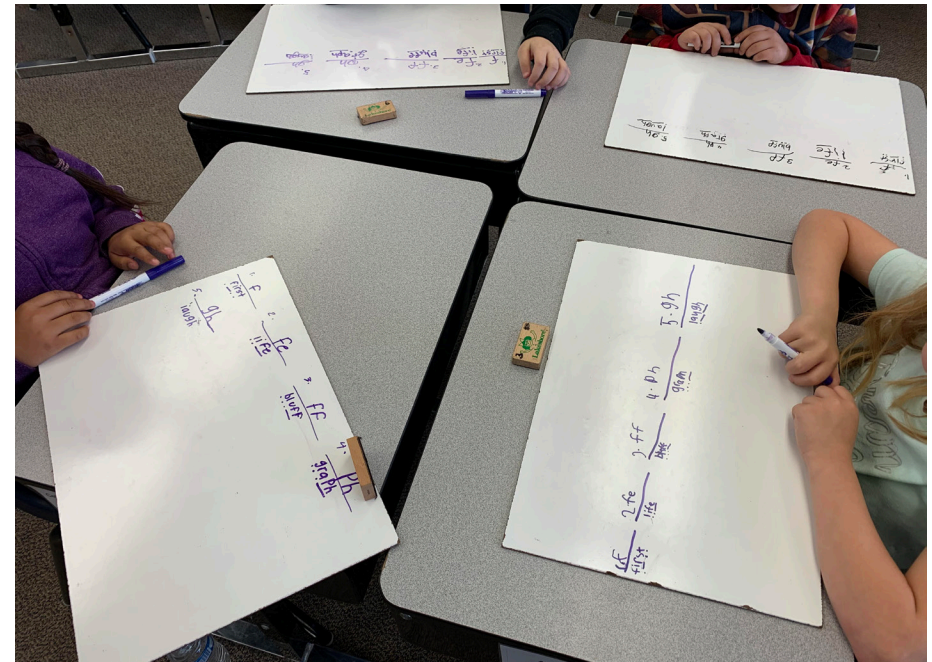
In addition to Ruth's training with EBLI, her school opted to provide her with EBLI Training & Student Lessons (ETSL), EBLI's new virtual solution to provide practice and expertise in the EBLI style of literacy instruction.

ETSL works by giving teachers continued instruction in video format, along with guides and lessons. Ruth tells us, "I love having ETSL. It's a great support when you're back in the classroom. There is time between your training and when you start school – sometimes you're in the midst of getting your classroom ready and you may forget some things. Having ETSL there felt like, 'I remember this. I remember Nora going over this.' I feel like that was great to have as a support."

Ruth knows she's taking on a big task by changing her literacy lessons to the EBLI style, but with ETSL, she now has the network and support she needs to make the entire process easy and fun. "Even though you're given a binder, and a spiral-bound book with all the lessons, it's still a lot. With ETSL, you can say, 'Okay, I learned how to do it in person and now this is going to be here to support me.'"

The video instruction Ruth receives via ETSL fills in the gaps as she's continuing to learn the EBLI method. "They have two lessons – one where you can teach, and one where you watch Nora teach another class. It refreshes my memory of how it should sound. I'm holding the kids accountable and making sure they're saying those sounds and learning it. But also, the EBLI team is always there if we need help. They'll get on Zoom and talk everything out."

Ultimately, ETSL gives Ruth the boost she needs when she's prepping her lessons. "You're confident. You're feeling like, 'I got this – I can do it.'"



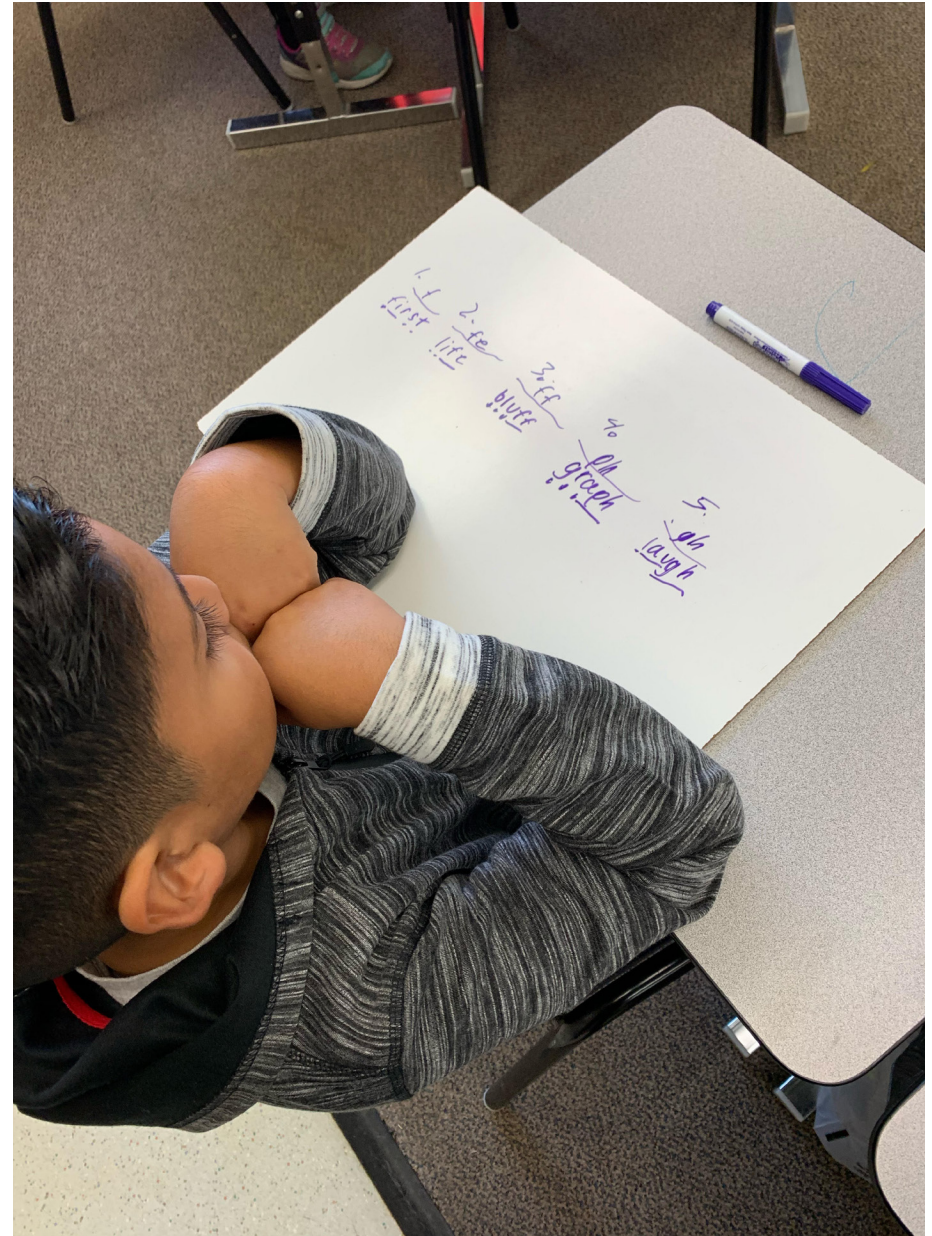
## EBLI In The Classroom

Since starting EBLI and using ETSL in the classroom, Ruth has seen a lot of changes. "Kids would tell me, 'I can't write,' because they didn't know how to spell," Ruth explains that before, when her students didn't know how to spell a certain word, they would simply give up and it would keep them from continuing to try. "Now, they say, 'I don't know what to write.' It's very different. There's been so much progress with the kids. They may not know how to spell everything correctly, but they're using the sounds. As the teacher, I'm not telling them what sounds they make, they're telling me!"

Ruth's students are becoming more engaged as time goes on. "They are excited to get their EBLI supplies out, and the excitement for reading in general has improved. Like I said, for writing, I don't get students who tell me, 'I don't know how to spell so I can't write.' We're working on our writing stamina, but the kids are more willing to try."

Other areas have improved as well. "Spelling is another one where kids are recognizing more words, whether it's a word that we've been working on with EBLI or a spelling word, they notice those patterns in their own reading. And they see it too. Once we work through some of those multi-syllable words, they see some of those big words in the reading and they feel like, 'We can read this!'"

However, the most important thing is that the kids are learning skills that will stick with them. "They retain it. We'll go through strategies, like 'read, read back, read again,' and the next day we go back over those words, the kids don't hesitate to read them. They remember those patterns and they are able to read it. It's been really good."



## Looking to the Future

Seeing the kids change their attitudes toward learning has been one of the most rewarding parts of the experience for Ruth, because she knows that EBLI is making an impact on their abilities.

*“They’re willing to try to read, whereas maybe at the beginning of the year they didn’t raise their hand to read. But now they get involved in the discussions. They’re talking about a fact in the story or a character in a story. They’re more willing to talk because they understand what’s happening. I feel like it is going on, and even in other subjects. Think about math and word problems, and they’re using EBLI to help them with vocabulary. It helps in other areas too.”*

Reflecting on what she enjoys most about her new set of tools, Ruth tells us, “I feel like the best part is the excitement with the kids.” Her students now have the tools to work out their challenges with reading and writing, and they’re eager to use them. “If the kids are struggling with a word, it’s easy to say, ‘Wait a minute, we worked on this pattern already. Let’s go back,’ and refer back to the materials. Now, EBLI is ingrained in everything we do throughout the day.”

Ruth is excited to see EBLI grow at Lincoln Elementary, and hopes that every teacher is able to receive EBLI and ETSL training, “I wish we could get kinder through second grade in there to solidify the foundation for the kids. The reading gaps would be smaller if more teachers were trained so it was consistent. It’s been so great, but we need more teachers on board here. That’s my hope for the future.”



*Teaching the World to Read.™*

# PARTNERING WITH EBLI

The EBLI Team believes that no one should suffer from not being properly taught how to read.

Teachers are the experts, and they need the right tools to help their students succeed. To create stronger literacy learning, bolster educational engagement among students, and increase performance for reading and writing, EBLI offers training and support solutions for literacy instructors, administrators, parents, and anyone who wants to enhance their literacy skill set.

EBLI has helped thousands of teachers across the globe to successfully implement the #1 evidence based literacy instruction program. To learn more about how EBLI can help your struggling students, stay up to date on the latest literacy research, and be the first to know about upcoming trainings, join our email list at [www.ebli.com](http://www.ebli.com).



Evidence-Based  
Literacy Instruction™



