Supporting Non-SLIFE Newcomers

Students with Limited and/or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE)

Who Are Non-SLIFE Newcomers?

Non-SLIFE newcomers students who enroll in grades 2–12 with developed academic backgrounds and advanced literacy in their home language. These students often bring strong reading comprehension, writing skills, and content knowledge, making them ready to engage with grade-level material as they develop English proficiency.

What Do Non-SLIFE Newcomers Need?

Non-SLIFE newcomers benefit from supports that build on their academic strengths while addressing the challenges of learning in a new language and school system. Many may also be experiencing difficult transitions. It is important to be mindful of their experiences and try to engage families as partners. They benefit from:

- Targeted academic English support
- Meaningful language use in listening, speaking, reading, and writing
- Support with U.S. school routines, norms, and expectations
- Rigorous content instruction
- Culturally responsive teaching that values students' identities and prior learning experiences
- Family engagement strategies that recognize parents as partners and build trust through multilingual communication and outreach

Non-SLIFE newcomers bring rich academic backgrounds & language assets. With targeted support, they excel academically while mastering English and adapting confidently to new school environments.

Effective Classroom Practices

Leverage Home Language

- Encourage use of home language for complex ideas or new concepts
- Provide bilingual resources, peer partnerships, and technology tools (translation apps, multilingual dictionaries) to support comprehension and expression
- Integrate students' cultural knowledge & prior schooling into lessons

Target Academic Language

- Explicitly teach academic & content-specific vocabulary
- Use sentence frames, graphic organizers, & writing scaffolds
- Model & practice varied academic sentence structures & text types

Differentiate for Proficiency Levels

- Assess students' English skills to differentiate support
- Preview & review key vocabulary to support comprehension
- Use collaborative tasks to build oral language skills

Build Cultural & School Knowledge

- Clearly explain classroom routines, expectations, & assessment formats
- Use visuals, charts, & step-by-step instructions to clarify norms
- Invite students to share educational experiences & cultural perspectives

Foster Engagement & Confidence

- Design assignments that relate to students' experiences & backgrounds
- Offer varied ways to show understanding (speaking, writing, visuals)
- Give timely, specific feedback that highlights progress and encourages ongoing growth

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