



Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services

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Effective Programs for English Language Learners with Interrupted Formal Education

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Effective Programs for English Language Learners with Interrupted Formal Education

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Who are English Language Learner High School Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE)?

- Characteristics of SIFE:
 - newly arriving immigrant high school age English Language Learner students with little or no formal education or whose education began but has been interrupted (by war, migration, lack of educational facilities, cultural and economic circumstances)
 - Several years below their age/grade appropriate level in school related knowledge and skills
 - Low literacy skills in native language
 - Need to simultaneously:
 - Learn English,
 - Develop academic language skills in English
 - Master grade level content in English



Skills in 1st Language

Culture

Personality

Geography

Family Situation

Background



**Factors
that may
affect
student
learning**

English Language Learner

The Learning Environment

Teacher

School/Community

Class Program

The ESL Program

Other Students



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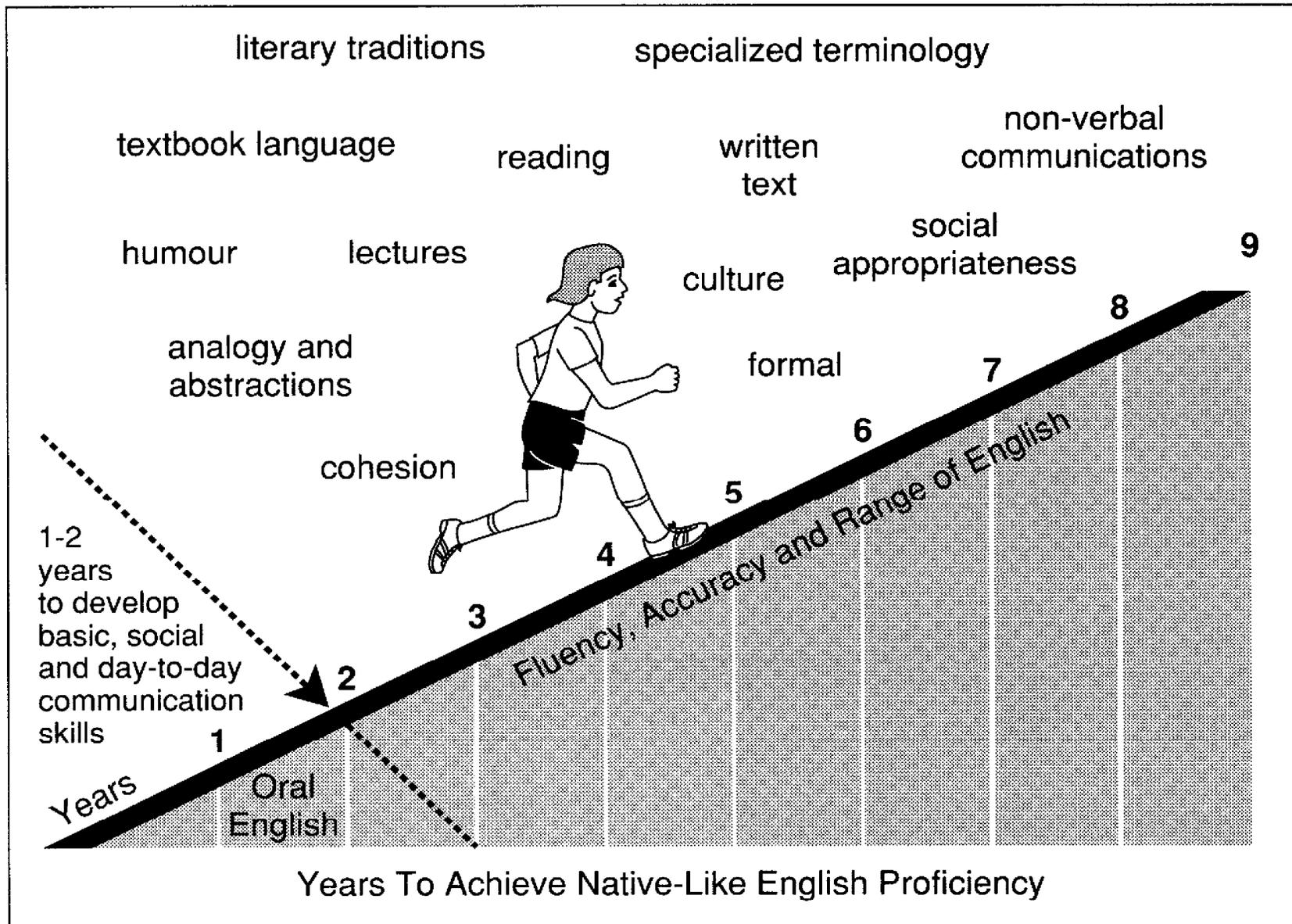


Common Features of an Effective Program for SIFE Students

- Literacy and content courses that are **thematically** coordinated and encourage transfer of learning across content areas;
- Follow-up on thematic content and skill development, provided by **double-period** ESL classes;
- **Small** classes that allow individualized attention from teachers;
- **Common** planning periods that give bilingual and ESL teachers an opportunity to coordinate their work;
- **Modified** course structure that allows students to learn at their own pace.
- Effective programs put together **a team** to work with students with interrupted formal education.
- In addition to that, many SIFE students may need extensive long-term **remedial** instruction and tutoring.



Types of Language Skills Students Need to Acquire to be Truly Proficient in English



From *Teaching to Diversity: Teaching and Learning in the Multi-Ethnic Classroom* by Mary Meyers

High School Language Minority SIFE Students

- Create structures that transcend high school academic departmental divisions in order to support simultaneous linguistic and academic development of SIFE ELLs.
- Implement flexible scheduling.
- Align high school program with higher education and adult education.



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After-School and Saturday Programs

Credit-bearing classes in content-area subjects and English as a second language after regular dismissal time. In credit-bearing classes, students follow the general curriculum, use the regular textbooks, and receive grades.

Non-credit-bearing after-school or Saturday programs are similar to tutoring programs. Allow for more flexibility than extended-day programs do because they don't have to closely follow the regular curriculum and can be geared toward individual student needs. After-school and Saturday programs can easily incorporate small study groups and individualized instruction.



Newcomer Programs

Essential Factors for immigrant adolescents with limited schooling:

- Specialized learning environment for a half-day newcomer school-within-mainstream school program. Programs vary in the types of specialized classes offered, the ways in which students are integrated with students from other linguistic and cultural backgrounds and of other ages, and the length of time students attend special programs or classes before making the transition to mainstream classes.
- To prepare for academic success, these students need access to courses that focus on literacy and study skills, and sheltered content courses that are taught in English and adapted to make the content more accessible.

Betty Mace-Matluck, Rosalind Alexander-Kasparik, and Robin M. Queen in the book *Through the Golden Door: Educational Approaches for Immigrant Adolescents with Limited Schooling*

Best Practices for SIFE students

Content Based ESL

Fluency in academic English is the primary goal of content based ESL. Through ESL and mainstream teachers' collaboration students learn English using as much as possible important basic academic concepts, principles, and vocabulary from the mainstream curriculum. Teachers should meet regularly, usually weekly or biweekly, to discuss each SIFE student's progress in all subject areas, clarifying both strengths and areas needing extra work.

Sheltered Instruction

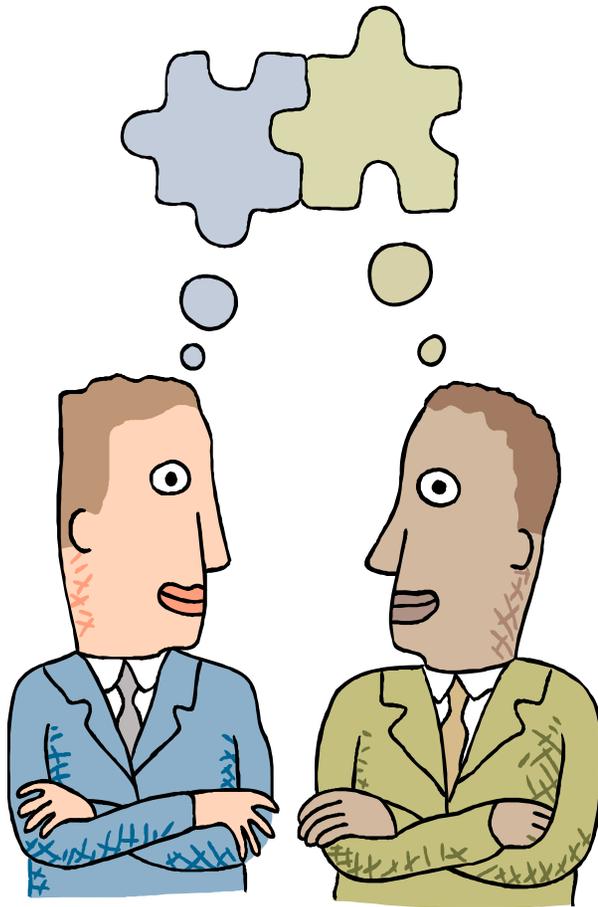
The teacher modifies the academic material from a language and skills perspective to make it accessible and comprehensible to the learners.



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The Need for Collaboration

Evidence from national reports and regional data:



Teacher collaboration is **No. 1** determinant of the success of LEP students at a given school or school corporation.



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Instructional Strategies

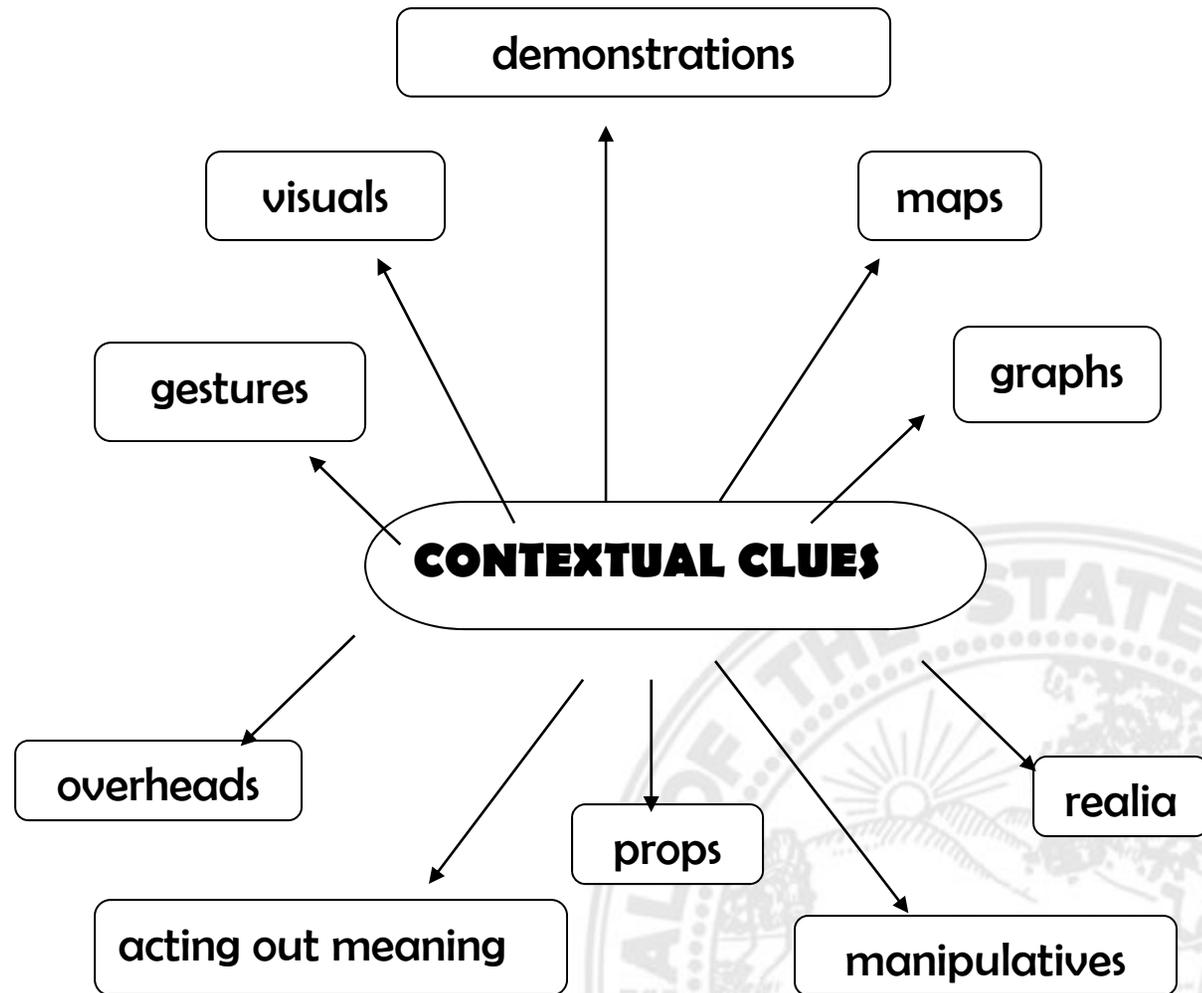
What a mainstream teacher
needs to do for SIFE LEP students:

- 1. Increase** comprehension.
- 2. Increase** practice/interaction.
- 3. Decrease** the workload. Concentrate on the most important concepts and vocabulary ONLY.
Simplify. Provide modifications/adaptations.



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Making Lessons Comprehensible



Instructional Strategies

Tell me, I'll forget. Show me, I may remember.

But involve me, and I'll understand.

-Chinese Proverb

Engagement: 30% or 100%?

Provide meaningful activities that integrate **lesson concepts** with **language practice** opportunities (listening, speaking, reading and writing)

- Instructional conversations
- Experiential learning
- Collaborative learning, interaction
- Graphic organizers, models, games
- Think-alouds, paraphrasing
- Structured overviews, clarification



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Literacy Development

Key Components of Reading:

- phonemic awareness
- phonics
- fluency
- vocabulary
- text comprehension

Word-level skills in literacy - *decoding, word recognition and spelling*

(ELLs attain levels of performance close to those of native English speakers).

Text-level skills - *reading comprehension and writing*

(ELLs struggle to approach the same levels of proficiency in text-level skills achieved by native English speakers. Specifically, English vocabulary knowledge, the ability to provide definitions of words, sentence/phrase structure skills, and listening comprehension, are linked to English reading and writing proficiency. These findings help explain why many language-minority students can keep pace with their native English-speaking peers when the instructional focus is on word-level skills, but lag behind when the instructional focus turns to reading comprehension and writing).



Literacy Development

Oral proficiency in English

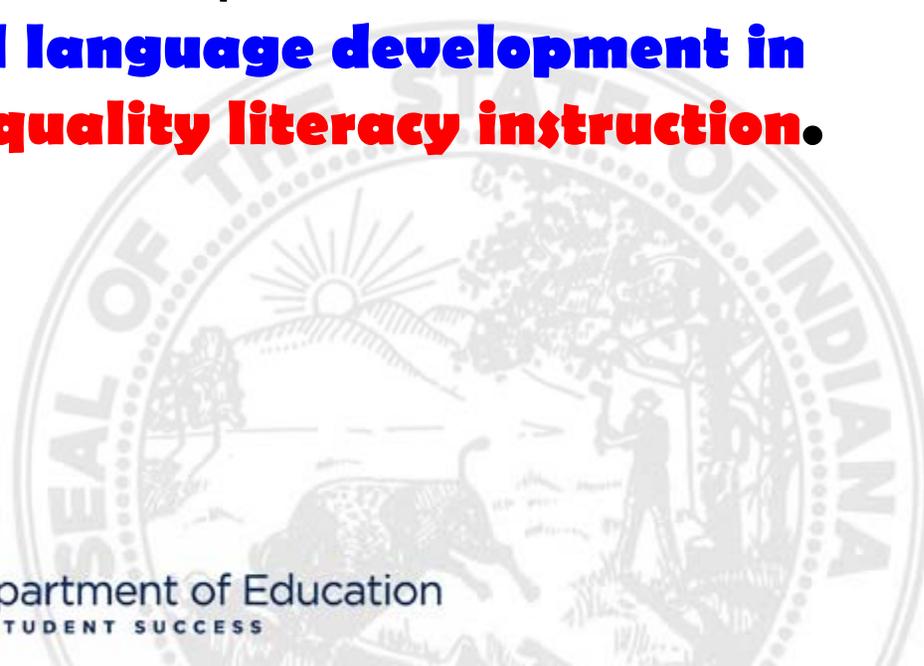
is associated with English reading comprehension and writing skills for ELL students.

The most successful literacy instructional practices for ELLs:

instructional support of oral language development in English, aligned with high-quality literacy instruction.



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Teaching Math to ELLs with Interrupted Formal Education

- Creating a **plan** for how to help ELL students acquire the language of mathematics.
- Directly teaching **math vocabulary** which can be further reinforced by an ESL teacher.
- Having key terms and concepts **on display** all the time.
- Using drawings, diagrams, graphs and other **visual aids** to help the students to develop concepts and understanding.
- Using **models or manipulatives** to demonstrate concepts and/or processes.
- Using **small groups**.
- Using a “**think-aloud**” technique to solve the problem.
- Presenting activities that involve application of problems in contextual situations to make learning **relevant to real-life experiences**.
- Using the students’ **native language**, if it is helpful in clarifying ideas and concepts.
- Focusing on meaning ELL students are conveying, not on their grammar and usage of the language. Increasing the **focus on reasoning** and decreasing the focus on language.



Teaching Math to ELLs with Interrupted Formal Education

Helpful resources:

FAST Math designed by Fairfax County Public Schools, *Fairfax, VA* is available online and can be downloaded for free. FAST Math provides math instruction to newly arrived limited English proficient (LEP) students with interrupted formal education in grades 4-12 who are two or more years below grade level in mathematics. The curriculum is comprised of two levels: elementary and pre-algebra. The FAST Math curriculum integrates English content language and mathematics skills: SIFE ELLs acquire mathematics skills in preparation for grade-level courses as they simultaneously develop their English language proficiency. FAST Math, description of the program, Department of Instructional Services, Fairfax County Public Schools, Fairfax, VA:

<<http://www.fcps.edu/DIS/OESOL/fastmath.htm>>

Fast Math: Volume I, II, and III. Free mathematics curriculum materials available online. All files are in Adobe Acrobat (PDF.) format.

<<http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/resabout/curriculum/fastmath/>>



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Teaching Math to ELLs with Interrupted Formal Education

Helpful resources:

Multilingual online Math Glossary, Free Glossary of Math terminology, definitions and formulas in languages: Arabic, Bengali, Brazilian, Chinese, English, Haitian Creole, Hmong, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Urdu, Vietnamese. Free resource from Glencoe, a division of the Educational and Professional Publishing Group of The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. (public right to use confirmed by McGraw-Hill Education company).

<<http://www.glencoe.com/sec/math/mlg/mlg.php>>



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Assessment Strategies

1. **Anecdotal records**
(asking a question, recording response)
2. **Performance sampling**
(student is observed while performing a task and evaluated with the help of rubrics or checklists)
3. **Portfolio assessment**
(gathering observations and performance samples in a folder and evaluating work during semester)



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Testing Alternatives

- Simplify test formats for students
 - Essay vs. fill-in-blank vs. multiple choice, etc.
 - No word problems in math
- Read exams to students and allow oral answers
- Give students extended time for tests
- Allow student to take open book/notes tests
- Scribe for student
- Small group testing

See [Authentic Assessment](#) articles on the website





Grading Alternatives

- Develop a contract with the student
 - “To get an A (B, C, etc.) you must...”
- Personalize goals to demonstrate achievement
 - “I want the student of Level 2 to know/be able to...”
- Provide grades based on mastery of concepts
- Give students extended time for assignments
- Develop a portfolio to track individual progress
- Lower the weights of tests and assignments



Grading Content Knowledge

Content area teachers should implement forms of assessment in which LEP students can demonstrate their knowledge of the content, not their level of English proficiency.

Content area teachers should focus on the LEP student's meaning, not on the language or grammar in which the meaning is communicated.



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Language Level-Appropriate Approach to Awarding the Grades

Grades should be based on:

- **LEP student' improvement/effort/meaningful participation** in classroom assignments to the degree that student's English language proficiency allows.
- **LEP student' demonstration** of his/her knowledge in the ways that are appropriate to that student's level of English proficiency.



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Language Level-Appropriate Approach to Awarding the Grades

is based on:

1. Student's language level
2. Individual Learning Plan (ILP)
3. English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards
4. Students' portfolio



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