CHAPTER 4
Providing High-Quality Instruction for Newcomers

High-quality education for newcomer students builds on their unique strengths and supports their development in ways that enable them to reach their full potential. Newcomers who need to develop English proficiency require instruction that addresses the simultaneous development of English proficiency and grade-level concepts and skills. This chapter includes guidelines for teaching newcomers and, in particular, principles for teaching MLs; common misconceptions about teaching MLs; and a sample list of academic programs for newcomers. The guidelines in this chapter are useful for strengthening existing programs or creating new ones to ensure that all newcomers have access to ambitious, high-quality instruction.

After reading this chapter, readers should be able to

- Understand the components of newcomer programs;
- Identify features of high-quality instruction for newcomers;
- Develop strategies for helping schools provide high-quality instruction to newcomers during times of remote learning;
- Acquire professional development tools for increasing staff's ability to effectively teach newcomers; and
- Continue learning how to provide high-quality instruction for newcomers through an annotated bibliography of resources.

Process and Practice Components of Newcomer Programs

Creating an inclusive school community hospitable to the implementation of high-quality instruction for newcomers requires designing and sustaining school structures and processes that help to ensure newcomers are both welcomed and provided information and the resources they need to thrive in the school environment. This includes a broad spectrum of support, from initial entry through the learning of rigorous academic content, to transitioning to a mainstream program or to postsecondary options in education and careers.

Many of the recommended components listed below are district-based; however, schools may also implement these practices or advocate for particular components.[1]

Newcomer Program Components With Examples of Processes or Practices
Develop a clear vision and goals for newcomers. *Examples:* • Set academic and social goals for the students and build a program to meet those goals. • Define entry criteria and exit criteria for the students in the program. • Hold newcomers to the same high standards as other students, coupled with high support. • Communicate the vision and goals to school, district, and community stakeholders. • Conduct initial intake interviews with students and families in their home language. (See Chapter 2 for further ideas.)

(Continued on next page)

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[1] Castellón, M., Cheuk, T., Greene, R., Mercado-Garcia, D., Santos, M., Skarin, R., & Zerkel, L. (2015, December). *Schools to learn from: How six high schools graduate English language learners college and career ready.* Stanford University, Stanford Graduate School of Education. https://www.lehman.edu/academics/education/middle-high-school-education/documents/SchoolstoLearnFrom-NewWorld-Gashi.pdf

Develop a set of common values about newcomers and accept shared accountability for their education.
Examples:
- Ensure the school or district's mission is focused on preparing newcomers for college and career success.
- Hold a mindset of continuous improvement.
- Recognize that the entire school shares responsibility for newcomers' success.
- Determine the needs of newcomers and their families and design and adapt school structures that meet those needs, with continuous improvement based on evidence.
- View newcomers' prior educational and life experiences as assets that can be leveraged for learning.
- Maintain a strong sense of pride in and respect for all cultures.

Design specific courses for students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE).
Examples:
- Develop a separate literacy course or set of courses for students with interrupted educational backgrounds if the program has both preliterate and literate newcomers.
- Develop numeracy skills courses that prepare newcomer MLs with limited or interrupted formal education to access high school-level math courses, such as algebra.[2]
- Develop introductory-level courses in basic science and social studies that prepare newcomer MLs with limited or interrupted formal education to access content in these subject areas.[3]

Design instruction for newcomers' development of conceptual, analytic, and language practices simultaneously.
Examples:
- Create or adopt a unified language development framework integrating content, analytic practices, and language learning.
- Consider developing bilingual, dual language, or two-way immersion programs to support newcomers' home languages and English.
- Review general education and language assistance programs to ensure that there is an explicit focus on building academic literacy and cultivating English language development.
- Promote cross-disciplinary and cross-grade literacy expectations and teacher collaboration.
- Be aware of the second language acquisition process and be able to detect when a delay may not be due to the language learning process but is the result of a disability instead.

Promote the use and development of newcomers' home languages at school and in the community.
Examples:
- Promote the development of newcomers' native language skills and incorporate native language instruction into the curriculum where possible.
- Promote the use and maintenance of home languages through community partnerships.

Provide alternative school day and school year schedules and structures based on student and family needs.
Examples:
- Provide extra learning time through after-school, summer school, Saturday school, and/or vacation institutes.
- Determine student and family needs and design schedules and structures to meet those needs.
- Optimize student engagement, learning, and effort through creative scheduling and rigorous coursework.

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[2] Custodio, B. (2011). *How to design and implement a newcomer program.* Allyn and Bacon.
[3] Custodio, B. (2011). *How to design and implement a newcomer program.* Allyn and Bacon.

Engage families and community stakeholders in school programs and other supports to ensure newcomers' success.

Examples:

- Engage families by teaching them about schooling in the United States and showing them how to be involved in their children's education. (See EL Toolkit for more information.)
- Create opportunities for family input and involvement in school planning and the implementation of programs. (See Chapter 5 in this toolkit.)
- Plan support groups and activities to address family reunification issues.
- Make connections in the community for social and emotional support, health and mental health services, and immigrant and refugee services.
- Make connections in the community for career exploration, work experience, and internships for high school newcomers.
- Pursue community support for initiatives designed to accelerate achievement among newcomers.

Establish processes for newcomers' transition to mainstream programs or postsecondary options.

Examples:

- Smooth the transition process for students in the exiting newcomer program (e.g., classroom and school visits, field trips, student mentors, auditing a course, cross-program teacher meetings).
- Work on postsecondary options for high school newcomers (e.g., connect with community colleges and trade schools, explore scholarship options, provide career education).
- Create strategic community partnerships for students to expand extracurricular options and explore college and career opportunities.

Check out this RESOURCE

Access the Career and Technical Education: Preparing K–12 Multilingual Learners for Postsecondary Education and Careers infographic to learn how access to career and technical education can benefit MLs and how to support ML participation.

Recruit, place, and retain qualified teachers and provide ongoing professional learning.

Examples:

- Continue to recruit and retain teachers who are specifically trained to teach newcomers and have English as a Second Language (ESL) or bilingual credentials or endorsements. Provide ongoing professional learning for them.
- Assess district standards for hiring, placing, and retaining teachers, paraprofessionals, and staff members who work directly with newcomers to ensure that these students have access to highly effective personnel.
- Share leadership among principals, assistant principals, teachers, and other staff, and expect them to work collectively to support the school's vision, values, and goals.
- Ensure that all school staff have an appreciation of and sensitivity toward cultural diversity.
- Provide professional learning for mainstream teachers who serve newcomers after they exit temporary newcomer programs.
- Ensure that all teachers of newcomers and MLs have access to high-quality professional learning that provides differentiated instructional strategies, promotes the effective use of student assessment data, and develops skills for supporting second-language acquisition across the curriculum, as well as resources for understanding the impact of early life trauma on the developing child.

Check out this RESOURCE

Access information about the National Professional Development discretionary grants program administered by the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA). The grants program supports the creation and implementation of professional development activities intended to improve instruction for MLs.

Develop protocols to ensure newcomers have access to all course offerings and educational services.
Examples:

• Create processes and structures to ensure that newcomers have access to the entire spectrum of district course offerings, including gifted and talented programs, special education, advanced placement courses, and other programs or courses offered to mainstream students.

• Work with the department in charge of special education to design an eligibility process for newcomers suspected of needing special education services because of a disability, so they can be evaluated and, if found eligible, provided with an individualized education plan (IEP) in a timely manner.

Collect and analyze student and program data to drive continuous improvement.
Examples:

• Collect student data and conduct regular program evaluations.

• Develop a system for tracking multiple measures of newcomers' educational progress.

• Assess student capacities thoughtfully and in detail from entry through graduation and beyond, and update instruction, course offerings, and structures based on the data.

• Work closely with newcomers and their families, both formally and informally, to gather relevant information about the knowledge, background, and needs of newcomers and their families. (See Chapter 2 of this toolkit for more information.)

• Implement extensive formative assessment practices in classrooms to inform instruction.

• Ensure that, if there are concerns of a disability, the student's status as a ML does not delay the eligibility process.

Allocate appropriate resources.
Examples:

• Ensure that resources generated by and allocated for newcomers are properly and effectively expended to provide quality instruction and services.

• Encourage school leadership to seek resources for newcomer programs and services from the district and community partners.

Note. Adapted with permission from *Newcomer Toolkit*, by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition, 2016. Copyright 2016 by the U.S. Department of Education.

Check out this RESOURCE

To learn more about scheduling considerations, academic evaluations, and options for registering newcomer students who arrive without academic credentials or who do not meet state academic requirements, view this OELA webinar *Registering and Enrolling Refugee and Immigrant Students in Secondary Schools*.

Guidelines for Teaching Multilingual Learners and Newcomers

In addition to sound policies and practices at the district and campus levels, high-quality instruction for all students anticipates all students' potential and provides the supports they need to attain challenging academic goals. Students can achieve at high levels and reach their potential by engaging in rigorous, deep, and accelerated learning.

Many newcomers may arrive in the United States needing to learn English. Some newcomer students may also have gaps in content knowledge due to limited or interrupted education. Thus, high-quality education for newcomers is based in large part on quality teaching practices for MLs. Both newcomers and MLs may learn concepts in each core subject through simultaneously engaging in subject-specific analytic practices and related language practices. Students should be encouraged in deliberately constructed, stimulating, and supportive ways to carry out tasks beyond those they can do independently.

Perspectives about high-quality education for MLs that are grounded in sociocultural theories of learning often challenge common assumptions and practices, such as the deficit approach.[4] These perspectives provide a platform for (a) rethinking instruction for both newcomers and MLs and (b) providing a high-quality education that is or does the following:

- **Is future-oriented and asset-oriented, with high expectations for success.** Teaching is focused on students' goals and strengths rather than students' deficits. Thus, instruction should provide supports that help students develop new understandings and skills, understand complex concepts, think analytically, and communicate ideas effectively in both social and academic situations.

- **Provides students authentic opportunities to simultaneously develop language and discourse, analytic and problem-solving skills, and competency in academic subjects, such as mathematics, science, and social studies.** Simultaneous development of these three areas will help students begin to develop their own agency and autonomy as learners and thinkers.[5,6] As students learn new concepts and skills (for example, in mathematics or history), they learn the language. This idea runs counter to the idea proposed by traditional language acquisition curricula and programs which assume that students first need to learn English and then they can learn disciplinary content. That traditional view also holds that language learning is a linear and progressive process (step by step, with increasing difficulty) and that the learner should not move forward until the formal and structural aspects of language (grammar, roots and parts of words, vocabulary, sentence structures, parts of speech, and the like) are learned. Learning is not, however, a linear process; learning a second language is complex, gradual, nonlinear, and dynamic. Thus, instruction that focuses solely on acquiring English is insufficient for newcomers.

- **Provides rich opportunities to learn.** Educators ensure that (a) the curriculum is rich in content and connects disciplinary (subject matter) practices and uses of language in that discipline and (b) instruction intentionally scaffolds newcomer students' participation to enable them to access complex ideas and engage in rigorous analytic and problem-solving skills on the same level as their grade in school. Such scaffolds include inviting students to make intellectual claims based on evidence in their experience or providing academic and linguistic support for expressing ideas in different disciplines

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[4] Gibbons, P. (2015). *Scaffolding language, scaffolding learning: Teaching second language learners in the mainstream classroom.* Heinemann.

[5] Agency is the ability to be proactive in determining one's life path and goals.

[6] Autonomy is encouraging students to independently apply learning to new challenges, in and out of school.

(e.g., describing their observations and proposing hypotheses in science, or explaining their solutions to mathematical problems).[7] Providing the appropriate kind of support and the intellectual push required for students to work beyond their current competence builds their autonomy in the field of study.

■ **Reflects a cultural orientation.** Educators recognize and use the rich cognitive, cultural, pragmatic, and linguistic resources that newcomers bring to their classrooms. By recognizing that newcomer students arrive with valuable knowledge, skills, and language that frame their social, physical, and symbolic worlds, teachers can use these assets to leverage student learning.[8] High quality instruction pays close attention to the language, academic and life experiences, and proficiencies of students. Students build schemas (clusters of interrelated understandings) that increase content learning and language development simultaneously.[9] Knowing that their family and community culture(s) and language(s) are valued in school develops newcomers' confidence in their new environment and learning. Viewing newcomers as valued contributors to the school and community may provide connections between the new contexts of U.S. school and students' prior experiences. This, in turn, may strengthen new learning.

■ **Develops student autonomy and agency by fostering metacognition.** Educators help students become self-aware about their developing skills and knowledge, and they provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills in a variety of academic areas and in problem-solving settings. Providing students the strategies for engaging in academic dialogue with others (for asking questions and analyzing information) and giving them the tools to choose those strategies when needed are setting the stage for their autonomy and agency as learners. Newcomers need a range of supports to participate in grade-level disciplinary learning while learning a new language. Ongoing assessment can provide feedback about how a student's conceptual, analytical, and language development is progressing.

■ **Implements purposeful student grouping configurations that vary between homogeneous and heterogeneous, depending on students' literacy and language skills.**[10] Heterogeneous groups provide students who are not strong English speakers with peer modeling and support. Homogeneous groups help teachers to pay close attention to students' needs related to the theme of the lesson or the discipline-specific uses of English. In all circumstances, schools should carry out their chosen programs in the least segregated manner consistent with achieving the program's stated educational goals.[11]

Evidence-Based Practices

Schools can use evidence-based practices to update and enhance their current curriculum and instruction for newcomers. Newcomers require more than basic reading and writing skills to help them meet their future goals. They should be able to access grade-level content while simultaneously developing proficiency and autonomy in the use of academic English and advanced literacy skills necessary to engage with complex content

[7] Kibler, A., Valdés, G., & Walqui, A. (2014, September). What does standards-based educational reform mean for English language learner populations in primary and secondary schools? *TESOL Quarterly, 48*(3), 433–453.

[8] Walqui, A., & van Lier, L. (2010). *Scaffolding the academic success of adolescent English language learners: A pedagogy of promise.* WestEd.

[9] Walqui, A. (2000, June). *Strategies for success: Engaging immigrant students in secondary schools* (ERIC Digest No. ED442300).

[10] Saunders, W., Goldenberg, C., & Marcelletti, D. (2013). English language development: Guidelines for instruction. *American Educator, 37*(2), 13-39.

[11] U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, & U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division (2015, January). Fact sheet: *Ensuring English learner students can participate meaningfully and equally in educational programs.* U.S. Department of Education https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/dcl-factsheet-el-students-201501.pdf

and express their ideas in ways appropriate to the content area. Here are five evidence-based instructional practices from OELA's teaching brief that schools can help educators implement:[12]

1. Provide MLs with opportunities to build content knowledge and language competence in tandem.

2. Leverage MLs' home language(s), prior knowledge, and cultural assets.

3. Engage MLs in productive interactions with peers.

4. Provide direct and explicit instruction focusing on key aspects of literacy.

5. Regularly incorporate opportunities to develop written language skills.

Check out these **RESOURCES**

Access NCELA Teaching Practice briefs to learn more about evidence-based practices for supporting MLs in math, STEM, and early childhood.

These practices below were drawn from the encouraging practices published in *Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English: Promising Futures*.[13] The practices were selected based on the frequency with which they appeared in the report, the strength of their supporting evidence, and their practical application for K-12 educators. The practices are meant to help guide educators and administrators as they align instruction with standards.

Each of the evidence-based practices are described below with suggested considerations for newcomers.

Provide MLs with opportunities to build content knowledge and language competence in tandem.

Learning is a process that requires teachers to intentionally design learning opportunities that integrate reading, writing, speaking, and listening with the practices of each discipline. In order for newcomers to develop proficiency in the academic English in various subject areas, teachers should consider making the language of their content areas comprehensible for students and intentionally plan instruction that allows students to develop their language skills within the context of the subjects being taught.

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[12] U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Education (2020). *Implementing evidenced-practices for English learners: Using research to guide practice.* https://ncela.ed.gov/resources/podcast-implementing-evidence-based-instructional-practices-for-english-learners-using

[13] National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2017). *Promoting the educational success of children and youth learning English: Promising futures.* The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/24677 These three documents (i.e., the P*romising Futures* report and the two IES Practice Guides) provide the evidence base for the practices in this report, but this report does not make claims about how these practices correspond to the evidence tiers of ESEA as amended by the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*. Guidance about how the What Works Clearinghouse standards relate to the *ESEA evidence* definition may be found here: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/essa. Meanwhile, the *Promising Futures* report does not state how its recommendations, which are based on an extensive review process by 19 national experts (see pp. 17–20 of the report), relate to the *ESEA* evidence definition.

Ideas in ACTION

Manhattan Bridges High School is located in the Hell's Kitchen neighborhood of Manhattan and serves approximately 500 students, many of whom are English learners. *U.S. News & World Report* identified Manhattan Bridges as one of the best high schools in the nation in 2015, and it has a significantly higher graduation rate (94 percent) than the city in general (70 percent).

At Manhattan Bridges, teachers embrace the idea of scaffolding students' language acquisition while maintaining a focus on content instruction, and they regularly collaborate to strategically develop and embed schoolwide language scaffolds across content areas. For example, they introduced a schoolwide focus on argumentative writing in response to the argument writing requirement on the New York State Regents Exam for English Language Arts. The MEAL writing support acronym was first introduced to the students in their targeted English language development classrooms and then incorporated throughout the day in the content area classrooms where argument writing conforms to the same structure:

- **M**ain Idea
- **E**vidence
- **A**nalysis
- **L**ink to Argument

2. Leverage MLs' home language(s), prior knowledge, and cultural assets.

As discussed in Chapter 1 of this toolkit, newcomers arrive at school with rich backgrounds and cultural knowledge, as well as language and skills that enable them to engage in academic learning. They often have literacy skills and content knowledge developed in their home language and through prior school and out-of-school experiences. Students who have literacy skills in their home language have knowledge and skills they can draw upon when learning to read English. Research has demonstrated that there are significant positive correlations between literacy skills in English learners' first language and the development of literacy skills in English, their additional language.[14] Some newcomers who are SLIFE may have limited or no literacy skills when entering school in the United States. Instead, their prior knowledge may be more pragmatic, based on experience, and acquired orally.[15] It is therefore important for educators to remember that oral language may be a tool they can leverage in the classroom when supporting SLIFE.

Check out this RESOURCE

Read and listen to the story of an immigrant ML in which she recounts her life in her home country, her journey to the U.S., and her life and experiences at the Teaching Channel: *The Power of Story for ELLs and Newcomers: Identity and Empathy.*

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[14] National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2017). *Promoting the educational success of children and youth learning English: Promising futures.* The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/24677

[15] DeCapua, A., & Marshall, H. W. (2011) *Breaking new ground: Teaching students with limited or interrupted formal education in U.S. secondary schools.* University of Michigan Press.

> **Consideration For Newcomers**
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> Funds of Knowledge is a conceptual framework centered on the principle that the best way to learn about student knowledge is to focus on their lives and experiences. Research shows that students draw from an intercultural and hybrid knowledge base to support them in their new environment. To support the learning of newcomer students successfully, teachers need to build their knowledge of students' backgrounds and experiences. This can enable teachers to scaffold students' learning from the familiar to the new and to validate newcomer students' knowledge and life values.
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> Source: Hogg, L. (2010). Funds of knowledge: An investigation of coherence within the literature. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 27*(3), 666-677.

3. Engage MLs in productive interactions with peers.

Newcomers must learn to use a broad repertoire of strategies to construct meaning from academic talk and complex text, to participate in academic discussions, and to express themselves in writing across a variety of academic situations. Several studies have demonstrated positive learning outcomes following the integration of opportunities for students to discuss content in pairs or small groups.[16] By providing well-structured opportunities for students to engage in discussion, teachers can ensure that interactions are equitable (not dominated by one partner or group member) and that students respond to each other by building onto, clarifying, and respectfully challenging each other's ideas.

Ideas in ACTION

> Lawrence, Massachusetts, a city with a deep immigrant history and the home of **ENLACE (Engaging Newcomers in Language and Content Education) Academy**, serves newcomer students within Lawrence High School. ENLACE's approach to working with newcomers requires that lessons provide students with opportunities to learn and practice language as they read, write, speak, and listen about meaningful topics in their community. Through this approach, ENLACE empowers students to develop their multilingual and multicultural identities proudly and purposefully.
>
> Learn more about this program by visiting the school's website at https://www.enlaceacademy.org/.

4. Provide direct and explicit instruction focusing on key aspects of literacy.

Supporting newcomers to interact with complex texts is paramount. "The only place ELs are likely to encounter the words, grammatical structures, and rhetorical features of academic language is in written texts. Thus, it is only through meaningful engagement with such language in written texts that students can learn academic language at all."[17] Learning to engage with complex texts requires continuous interaction and teacher support around written language and its forms, structures, and functions. In order to advance students' reading skills, it is important to provide students with abundant opportunity and appropriate support to read and interact with texts that are beyond their independent reading level. Students with developing levels of English proficiency

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[16] August, D., & Shanahan, T. (Eds.). (2006). *Developing literacy in second-language Learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth* (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315094922

[17] National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2017). *Promoting the educational success of children and youth learning English: Promising futures.* The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/24677

will require instruction that carefully supports their understanding and use of emerging language as they participate in these activities.

Teachers should explicitly draw students' attention to the thinking and strategies that experienced readers use while interpreting complex texts. Consider the following sample practices for comprehension instruction:

Sample Practices

Before Reading	■ Leverage students existing background knowledge. ■ Focus students' attention on concepts to be developed. ■ Introduce vocabulary in context.
During Reading	■ Provide multiple opportunities for students to collaboratively construct ideas about the text. ■ Draw on students' home language knowledge, such as developing cognate awareness. ■ Provide visual and multimedia supports. ■ Teach students to monitor their understanding and to identify and repair breakdowns in understanding. ■ Explicitly teach how to use context clues to determine the meaning of unknown words during reading. ■ Provide explicit instruction on taking notes and using graphic organizers. ■ Model thinking aloud as you read, making explicit reference to the strategies you use (e.g., visualizing, predicting). ■ Provide multiple opportunities for students to practice comprehension strategies. ■ Deconstruct text by focusing on understanding a chunk, reconnect the chunk to the whole text, and establish connections between ideas within the text. ■ Explicitly teach the structure and linguistic features of specific text genres (e.g., narrative, argument, explanation) and how to analyze them.
After Reading	■ Explicitly teach high-utility vocabulary words found in complex texts. ■ Make connections to ideas from other texts to the outside world or to large conceptual questions. ■ Apply newly gained knowledge to novel situations or problem-solving. ■ Create products based on new understandings.

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5. Regularly incorporate opportunities to develop written language skills.

In order to be successful in school and beyond, newcomers must be able to effectively communicate their ideas in writing for varied purposes. As such, college- and career-readiness standards include the expectation that students routinely engage in a range of discipline-specific writing tasks. As newcomers move up in the grades, writing expectations become more rigorous; students are expected to produce longer, more complex pieces of analytical writing in which they support their ideas with reasons and relevant evidence. Research has demonstrated that providing students with regular, structured opportunities to develop written language skills promotes increased writing ability.[18]

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[18] Baker, S., Lesaux, N., Jayanthi, M., Dimino, J., Proctor, C. P., Morris, J., Gersten, R., Haymond, K., Kieffer, M. J., Linan-Thompson, S., & Newman-Gonchar, R. (2014). *Teaching academic content and literacy to English learners in elementary and middle school* (NCEE 2014-4012). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE). https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/practiceguide/english_learners_pg_040114.pdf

Ideas in ACTION

Funded by the Department of Education's Investing in Innovation (i3) grant, the Leading with Learning research team worked with Rowell Elementary School in Fresno, California, to focus on two key aspects of writing instruction with teachers:

- Teachers need to demystify how language works in different genres so that students have the tools to communicate their ideas across content areas, in a variety of genres, and to a range of audiences.

- Writing needs to be authentic and relevant to students' lives, to what they are learning, and to the world around them so they can connect more deeply with content through writing and see how their writing can make an impact on the world.

Students are often asked to explore the social purpose, organization, and linguistic choices that authors make to create meaning in text. In one unit, 5th-grade students learn about threats to local owl populations while also analyzing the language of explanation texts. A sampling of their learning activities includes the following:

- Reading and discussing informational texts about owls to gain core conceptual understandings

- Investigating the owl's role in the food chain by engaging in an owl pellet dissection task and taking field notes in their science journals

- Engaging in a text jumble game in which they reassemble sections of an explanation text based on what they know about the structure and organization of explanations

- Identifying cohesive language that helps explanation texts hang together and flow (e.g., text connectives, referencing, and summarizing nouns such as "these actions")

- Writing their own explanation texts about threats to owl populations

Activities such as these help students understand that effective writing is not formulaic or about following a set of rules; it involves making informed decisions about language use based on the specific purpose for communicating.

Source: Spycher, P., Austin, K., and Fabian, T. (2018, April). *The writing centered classroom*. Educational Leadership.

Formative Assessment

An essential component of implementing evidence-based instructional practices for newcomers is assessment. Formative assessment is an informal and ongoing assessment process that helps provide students and teachers with information about students' knowledge and skills throughout a course of learning. It is important to conduct formative assessment in all learning. Educators should make sure that formative assessment practices are culturally appropriate. In working with newcomers and MLs, formative assessment will help teachers to

- Understand that newcomers are a heterogeneous group and that each student learns differently;

- Continually assess achievement;

- Obtain evidence of how students' thinking and language use evolve during the learning process;

- Determine if students act on what they hear and see in real time;

- Continually monitor the emergence of language and adapt to students' needs by designing new strategies that advance language learning; and

- Observe student performance to change instruction while it is happening and provide feedback and support that allows the student to self-assess performance.[19]

Culturally appropriate formative assessment will also help teachers discern whether a newcomer requires an evaluation to determine whether he or she has a disability and as a result requires special education or other aids and services under the *IDEA* or Section 504. (See Special Education Needs on page 64.)

Using formative assessment also involves newcomers in the process; it enhances their agency in the learning process and helps them self-monitor and determine if they need any type of support. This is an opportunity for teachers and students to collaborate in monitoring learning progress and planning and adjusting immediate learning accordingly. When newcomers engage in formative assessment, they may

- Analyze their performance against what they understand counts as optimal performance and begin to realize the distance between one and the other;

- Plan future action to increasingly approximate the model;

- Gain control of their own learning and identify what they see they must accomplish;

- Provide opportunity for personal reflections; and

- Receive timely information that is pivotal in developing subject-area knowledge, analytical skills, and language proficiency.[20]

Just as with instruction for MLs and newcomers, language proficiency of the students and language demands of the assessment should be considered when assessing MLs and newcomers in any context. Research has demonstrated that language proficiency of students has significant influence on their assessment performance. Varying levels of language proficiency often affect the validity of assessment by measuring language instead of content knowledge.[21] It is therefore essential to consider language background in developing, selecting, and administering assessment, as well as in interpreting ML and newcomers' assessment results.

Response to Intervention and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

Response to Intervention (RTI) and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) are service delivery models that can be beneficial for academic learning and the social, emotional, and mental health needs of MLs and newcomers, in particular. Both service models use a multi-tiered structure of increasingly intensive and focused supports, are data driven, and rely on evidence-based practices.

The issue of overrepresentation, as well as the under referral of MLs and culturally and linguistically diverse students to special education services, has been well documented and remains a concern for educators.[22] Both RTI and MTSS models aim to ensure that when a referral to special education is made, it is appropriate and is not due to misinterpretation of language acquisition and/or cultural differences as a learning disability.

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[19] Heritage, M. (2010, September). *Formative assessment and next-generation assessment systems: Are we losing an opportunity?* Council of Chief State School Officers.

[20] Heritage, M., Walqui, A., & Linquanti, R. (2015). *English language learners and the new standards. Developing language, content knowledge, and analytical practices in the classroom*. Harvard Education Press.

[21] Abedi, J. (2002). Standardized achievement tests and English language learners: Psychometrics issues. *Educational Assessment, 8*(3), 231–257;

[22] deBettencourt, L. U., Hoover, J. J., Rude, H. A., & Taylor, S. (2016). Preparing special education higher education faculty: The influences of contemporary education issues and policy recommendations. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 39,* 121–133; Ortiz, A. A., Robertson, P. M., Wilkinson, C. Y., Liu, Y. J., McGhee, B. D., & Kushner, M. I. (2011). The role of bilingual education teachers in preventing inappropriate referrals of ELLs to special education: Implications for response to intervention. *Bilingual Research Journal, 34*(3), 316–333.

RTI is a model that focuses on academic achievement and aims to identify and address the specific needs of those students who struggle academically. The model is composed of three tiers. The first tier ensures that classroom instruction reflects best practices and meets academic and linguistic needs of all students by providing effective and differentiated instruction. This stage of RTI implementation is essential for newcomer MLs who may require substantial academic and linguistic support. During tier 1, teachers may consider designing and delivering lessons that utilize research-based components of systematic, explicit, and intensive instruction, such as Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP).[23] The second tier of the RTI model aims to provide supplemental instructional services to those students who are not responding to the instructional practices in tier 1. For MLs and newcomers, such practices may include intensive English language and literacy supports that are delivered in a variety of grouping formats, i.e., small groups or individually. Tier 2 services are usually supplemental, short-term supports that are provided along with tier 1 and can be administered by classroom teachers or specialists. The third stage of RTI supports is provided to those students who are still struggling academically despite the quality implementation of the two previous tiers of the model. Typically, approximately only 5–10 percent of students require tier 3 supports. Supports in this stage may take various forms. In some cases, special education instruction is provided to those students who have been identified as having a learning disability, and in other cases, intensive instructional interventions are provided to those students who do not meet grade-level expectations.[24]

While the RTI model focuses predominantly on academic achievement, the MTSS model has a broader scope and, in addition to the academic needs of the students, also focuses on non-academic areas, such as social, emotional, and mental health needs, behavior, community and family engagement, etc. The aim of MTSS is to provide a comprehensive and responsive framework for systematically addressing barriers to learning that results in improved academic and social outcomes for all students.

As with RTI, MTSS has three tiers of service delivery. In tier 1, core curriculum is delivered to all students. In tier 2, supplemental instruction is provided to those students who struggle after receiving instruction in tier 1, and in tier 3, application of intensive instructional interventions is implemented that may or may not include special education.[25] In addition to providing increasingly intensive instructional supports, MTSS aims to establish systemwide structures that aid in removing challenges and barriers that may hinder student success. This may include providing professional development to educators and activating and sustaining family and community engagement, as well as establishing and utilizing partnerships with entities that support education, mental health, social services, juvenile justice, recreation, and cultural services.[26]

Implementation of the RTI and MTSS models may have significant implications for MLs and newcomer students. Both models rely significantly on evidence of student performance that is collected through formal and informal assessment. These assessments may involve screenings, benchmark assessments, progress monitoring, diagnostic, and outcomes assessments. It is therefore essential that the unique linguistic needs of

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[23] Echevarría, J., & Hasbrouck J. (2009, July). *Response to intervention and English learners*. Center for Research on the Educational Achievement and Teaching of English Language Learners (CREATE). https://education.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/casei/RtIandELL.pdf

[24] Echevarría, J., & Hasbrouck J. (2009, July). *Response to intervention and English learners.* Center for Research on the Educational Achievement and Teaching of English Language Learners (CREATE). https://education.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/casei/RtIandELL.pdf

[25] Averill, O. H., & Rinaldi, C. (2013). *Research brief: Multi-tier system of support (MTSS).* Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative. https://www.academia.edu/5345629/Research_Brief_Multi_tier_System_of_Support_MTSS_Introduction_From_RTI_and_PBIS_to_MTSS

[26] Averill, O. H., & Rinaldi, C. (2013). *Research brief: Multi-tier system of support (MTSS).* Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative. https://www.academia.edu/5345629/Research_Brief_Multi_tier_System_of_Support_MTSS_Introduction_From_RTI_and_PBIS_to_MTSS

MLs and newcomer students are considered when assessments are selected and administered and when their results are interpreted.[27]

A feature that both models have in common is the idea that before making any decision regarding student progress in a particular tier, it is important to first examine the quality of instruction and support that the students are receiving. Both models acknowledge that the quality of instruction and/or contextual issues, rather than student inability, could be the reason for underperformance. For MLs and newcomer students, this may mean ensuring that students are receiving effective instruction that provides them with access to the core academic curriculum. Features of such instruction should include explicitly teaching grade-level academic language, activating students' background knowledge, providing comprehensible input, explicit vocabulary instruction, etc. For a more detailed description of instructional practices for MLs and newcomers, see previous sections of this chapter.

Ideas in ACTION

Read a research study about implementation of MTSS and its impact on teacher performance in three rural elementary schools with a high population of MLs. Through a university-district partnership that promoted the development of sustainability plans to implement MTSS for MLs, one year after the study, 80 percent of participating teachers rated the professional development (PD) they received through the partnership as beneficial or highly beneficial. In addition, a year after the study began, 75 percent of the participants indicated that they were still participating in PD structures that the partnership implemented, such as taking part in professional learning communities (PLCs) or attending co-planning meetings between ML and general education teachers. Moreover, site visit data revealed that participants were able to sustain culturally and linguistically responsive instructional practices one year after initial implementation, including the use of students' native languages during instruction and incorporating students' family values and cultures during lesson planning and facilitation.

Source: Hoover, J. J., Soltero-González, L., Wang, C., & Herron, S. (2020). Sustaining a multitiered system of supports for English learners in rural community elementary schools. *Rural Special Education Quarterly, Vol. 39*(I), 4–16. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1243119

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[27] Echevarría, J., & Hasbrouck J. (2009, July). *Response to intervention and English learners.* Center for Research on the Educational Achievement and Teaching of English Language Learners (CREATE). https://education.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/casei/RtIandELL.pdf

Special Education Needs

The *IDEA* and Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* address the rights of students with disabilities in school and other educational settings. If an ML is suspected of having one or more disabilities, the LEA (local educational agency) must evaluate the ML promptly to determine if the ML has a disability or disabilities and whether the ML needs disability-related services (which are special education and related services under the *IDEA* or regular or special education and related aids and services under Section 504).

Disability evaluations may not be delayed because of a student's limited English language proficiency (ELP) or a student's participation in a language instruction educational program (LIEP). Furthermore, a student's ELP cannot be the basis for determining that a student has a disability.

It is important for educators to accurately determine whether MLs are eligible for disability-related services. Researchers have identified four potential factors that may contribute to the misidentification of special education needs, and learning disabilities in particular, among students who are MLs: (1) the evaluating professional's lack of knowledge of second-language development and disabilities, (2) poor instructional practices, (3) weak intervention strategies, and (4) inappropriate assessment tools.[28]

Appropriate disability identification processes that evaluate the student's disability-related educational needs and not the student's English language skills will help school personnel to accurately identify students in need of disability-related services. In addition, LEAs must ensure that a student's special education evaluation is provided and administered in the student's native language or other mode of communication and in the form most likely to yield accurate information about what the student knows and can do, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so.

Assessing whether a student has a disability in his or her native language or other mode of communication can help educators ascertain whether a need stems from a lack of ELP and/or a student's disability-related educational needs.

When an ML student is determined to be a child with a disability—as defined in the *IDEA* or an individual with a disability under the broader definition of disability in Section 504—the student's language assistance and disability-related educational needs must be met. For ML students, in addition to the required individualized education program (IEP) team participants under the *IDEA*, it is essential that the IEP team include participants who have knowledge of the student's language needs. It is also important that the IEP team include professionals with training, and preferably expertise, in second-language acquisition and how to differentiate between the student's needs stemming from a disability or lack of ELP.

In addition, under the *IDEA* (Section 300.322(e)), the LEA must take whatever action is necessary to ensure that the student's family understands the proceedings of the IEP team meeting, including arranging for an interpreter for families with limited English proficiency (LEP) or family members who are deaf. Under Title VI of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964* and the *Equal Educational Opportunities Act,* for LEP families to have meaningful access to an IEP or Section 504 plan meeting, it also may be necessary to have the IEP, Section 504 plan, or related documents translated into the family's primary language.

Source: Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA). (2015, September). Tools and resources for addressing English learners with disabilities. *English Learner Tool Kit (*Chapter 6). U.S. Department of Education. http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap6.pdf

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[28] Sánchez, M. T., Parker, C., Akbayin, B., & McTigue, A. (2010). Processes and challenges in identifying learning disabilities among students who are English language learners in three New York state districts. *Issues & Answers.* REL 2010-No. 085. Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast & Islands. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED508343

Common Misconceptions About Newcomers

Schools often need support in implementing evidence-based educational practices. This may encompass recognizing and helping to shift schools and educators' misconceptions about educating newcomers and MLs. Without consciously addressing misconceptions and bias, schools may not be able to develop specifically designed policies, procedures, and strategies to help newcomers learn content and language as rapidly and effectively as needed.

Below are four common misconceptions about educating newcomers, along with current understandings and suggested practices that may help prepare newcomers to acquire the skills needed to actively participate in their education and community environments.

Misconceptions, Current Understandings, and Suggested Practices

MISCONCEPTION 1: Students can learn only one language at a time, and bilingualism is counterproductive. Use of a student's home language will negatively affect academic and language learning.

Current Understanding: Literacy in a student's first language positively affects the learning of a new language.

Suggested Practices:

- Develop programs in which the student's first language supports learning a new language, such as bilingual or dual language programs and classes.[29]

- Help students learn English by using the home language as a tool for learning English and academic content.[30]
  Examples:
  – Provide amplified models of how to use English appropriately in academic contexts. In doing so, accept the students' need to create and share meaning in their native language(s).
  – Draw students' attention to academic vocabulary cognates in their native language(s).
  – Encourage students and their families to develop their native language by reading books and speaking the language.

Check out this RESOURCE

Reading Rockets has an article, *Using Cognates to Develop Comprehension*, that addresses strategies for teaching cognates to MLs with the goal of developing comprehension of academic language.

MISCONCEPTION 2: Newcomers must develop significant language proficiency prior to participating in disciplinary learning.

Current Understanding: Students learn language to do things in the world. To help students develop academic language, they need to participate in meaningful and authentic activities about academic ideas and concepts.[31] It is therefore essential for newcomer MLs with varying English proficiency levels to have access to classroom academic tasks.

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29 Gort, M. (2019). Developing bilingualism and biliteracy in early and middle childhood. *Language Arts, 96*(4), 229–243.

30 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2017). *Promoting the educational success of children and youth learning English: Promising futures.* The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/24677

31 National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition. (2021) *English learners in secondary schools: Trajectories, transition points and promising practices* [Webinar]. U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition; National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition. (2021) *English Learners in secondary schools: Trajectories, transition points and promising practices, Parts I & II* [Podcast]. U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition.

Suggested Practices:

- Orient students to the different types of texts they use in school and how language is used in each content area.
- Help students use academic language to promote English language development and support academic learning.

  Example: Provide newcomers with diverse types of text and help them understand different types of text (e.g., narratives, temporary expressions such as "first" and "later") and content-specific language. This will help students create their own academic practices and language.

- Focus on how students use key phrases associated with the type of text and convey meaning about the content through written, oral, visual, and symbolic texts, thus moving away from a focus on errors (such as verb tense and pronunciation). Initially, student efforts may be inaccurate, but proficiency will evolve.

  Example: Observe students' written and oral expression, and support and check on their development over time. Also, create opportunities for newcomers to use language in a variety of academic situations, both formal and informal, helping the student to increasingly use subject-specific English.

MISCONCEPTION 3: Students need simplified content and language as they learn English.

Current Understanding: Simplified language decreases, rather than increases, meaning. Removing connections between sentences and paragraphs and using simple sentences reduce the content and meaning of a text. Instead, texts for newcomers should be amplified, not simplified.[32]

Suggested Practices:

- Develop connections between sentences and paragraphs to help students navigate a text.

  Example: Identify text that contains illustrative examples and connections in both sentences and paragraphs. These include embedding definitions, repeating and rewording key terms, and adding connections between sentences and paragraphs.

- Expose and invite students to participate in content-related discussions in English.

MISCONCEPTION 4: Not all educators working with MLs or newcomers need to be specially trained. If teachers speak English, they can teach English.

Current Understanding: Teachers need specialized knowledge to teach English and academic content to MLs and to support the other needs of newcomers. Without pedagogical and social and emotional supports for MLs and newcomers in particular, we may fail to support the attainment of ambitious futures by these students.

Suggested Practices:

- Provide teachers, administrators, curriculum specialists, and ML teachers with sustained and high-quality professional learning opportunities about strategies for supporting the academic content and language development of newcomers.[33]
- Focus professional learning on effective pedagogical and social and emotional supports for newcomers.

  Example: Enrich and contextualize academic language to increase its accessibility for ML and newcomer students, particularly in upper grades.

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[32] Walqui, A. & Bunch, G. C. (Eds.). (2019). *Amplifying the curriculum: Designing quality learning opportunities for English learners.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

[33] Duguay, A. L., Vdovina, T. (2019). *CAL Commentary: Effective, engaging, and sustained professional development for educators of linguistically and culturally diverse students.* Center for Applied Linguistics.

High-Quality Core Academic Programs for Newcomer Students

High-quality core academic programs for newcomers provide the support needed to participate in rigorous, grade-level academic learning. High-quality programs build on the newcomers' assets and provide supports for students to learn both English and academic content. All teachers and staff are responsible for students' academic success and supporting their social, emotional, and mental health needs. Programs for newcomers include both of the following:

- **Integrated programs** are designed to meet the needs of varied populations—including newcomers, children of immigrant families, and English-only students at the same time—and are usually dual or bilingual language programs that enroll newcomers, children of immigrants, and English-only students in varying combinations.

- **Designated programs** are designed specifically to meet the unique needs of newcomers enrolled in a district and include newcomer centers and international schools that provide academic and social, emotional, and mental health support and development to students who attend until they transition to elementary or secondary schools within a district.

Dual Language, Integrated Programs

Two-way and one-way dual language programs may benefit MLs and newcomers because their home languages are used in teaching and learning. Two-way programs refer to those programs that serve students from more than one language group (e.g., MLs who are speakers of the partner language and non-ELs who are native English speakers). One-way programs usually serve one group of students (e.g., native English speakers or MLs who are speakers of the partner language). See the table on page 68 for detailed descriptions of dual language programs.

Using an ML's native language in a strong, supportive learning environment can build their confidence as learners, build English skills, and help them acquire academic content to become successful in school. In a randomized study of dual language outcomes in one large district, both ML and non-EL students receiving dual language instruction (DLI) performed better on the state reading assessments than their peers not participating in DLI. Dual language instruction has also been shown to be effective in helping MLs achieve English proficiency and exit from language assistance service programs more quickly than those MLs not enrolled in dual language programs.[34]

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[34] Steele, J. L., Slater, R. O., Zamarro, G., Miller, T., Li, J., Burkhauser, S., & Bacon, M. (2017). Effects of dual-language immersion on students' achievement: Evidence from lottery data. *American Educational Research Journal*, *54*, 282–306.

Key Attributes of Dual Language Education Programs by Program Type

	Two-Way Dual Language Programs*	One-Way Dual Language Programs		
	Two-Way Immersion/ Dual Language Immersion	World Language Immersion Programs	Developmental Bilingual Education Programs	Heritage Language Immersion
Student Population Served	MLs and non-ELs (ideally, 50 percent in each group or a minimum of 33 percent)	Primarily English speakers; can include MLs and heritage speakers	MLs and students formerly requiring language assistance service programs only	Students whose families' heritage language is/was the partner language
Languages	English and the MLs' home language	English and a partner language	English and the MLs' home language	English and the heritage language
Staffing	One bilingual teacher who teaches in both languages or one teacher per language	One bilingual teacher who teaches in both languages or one teacher per language	One bilingual teacher who teaches in both languages or one teacher per language	One bilingual teacher who teaches in both languages or one teacher per language
Time Allocation per Language	Primarily 50:50 or a combination that starts with more of the partner language (90:10, 80:20, and so on)			
Language of Academic Subjects	Varies by program			
Language Allocation	Language of instruction allocated by time, content area, or teacher			
Duration of Program	Throughout elementary school, with some programs continuing at the secondary level			
Size of Program	Strand or whole school			

*Two-way dual language programs, also known as two-way immersion or dual language immersion programs, serve a student population consisting of both MLs and non-ELs (ideally, 50 percent in each group or a minimum of 33 percent).

Source: Boyle, A., August, D., Tabaku, L., Cole, S., & Simpson-Baird, A. (2015, December). *Dual language education programs: Current state policies and practices.* American Institutes for Research. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED601041

Designated Core Academic Programs for Newcomers

High-quality designated programs for newcomers have the potential to provide students with the academic as well as social, emotional, and mental health support and development that students need to engage in rigorous, grade-level academic learning. Designated programs such as newcomer centers and international schools enroll only newcomer students. Newcomer centers are the entry point for many students enrolled in districts with large numbers of newcomers. Students enroll in these programs until they are prepared to transition to a school in the district (typically, no more than one year). In contrast, students at international schools usually remain in the school until they graduate.

However, newcomer programs for international schools should be carried out in the least segregated manner possible, consistent with the program's educational goals.[35]

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[35] U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), & U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division. (2015, January 7). *Dear colleague letter: English learner students and limited English proficient parents.* https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-el-201501.pdf

The two programs described below illustrate components of high-quality core academic programs in specially designated schools for newcomer students. The descriptions include a secondary newcomer center in Arlington Heights, Illinois, and an international high school in Oakland, California.

District 214 International Newcomer Academy in Arlington Heights, Illinois

The International Newcomer Academy (Academy) meets the learning and acculturation needs of recently arrived high school students who are new to the English language. Students are at the beginning levels of English fluency and may be students with interrupted formal education (SIFE). The academic core program focuses on intensive English language and content instruction. Students enroll in a full academic program, consisting of a double block of English and math, social studies, physical education and health, and reading instruction, where Spanish-speaking students have a Spanish reading class and non-Spanish-speaking students have an English reading class. Enrollment is on a voluntary basis, and the length of time students attend the program depends on their individual needs. The focus of the academic core program is on ensuring that students are able to transition successfully to the full academic program at their high schools. The Academy believes the experiences and diversity that students and their families bring with them are assets to the community. Educators and staff meet with families in their homes to connect them to community resources and adult-education evening classes. Newcomer students participate in after-school programs that connect what they are learning at the Academy with their culture, prior knowledge, and previous experiences. They also participate in their home school extracurricular sports and clubs.

Oakland International High School

Oakland International High School (OIHS) is a small, public, four-year high school. OIHS's teachers are trained in the Internationals Approach, which allows students to develop their English skills through content classes while addressing state standards in the content areas. At OIHS, students receive English language instruction in all classes. Teachers receive professional development and coaching to support language development in their classes. Students are grouped heterogeneously by language, skill, English development, and grade level. A team of five teachers shares 100 students who are divided into four cohorts who move together from class to class. Students and teachers remain on the team for two years. Teachers work together to create curriculum and interventions (academic and behavioral) that will support the students on their team. All international high schools have a required internship program for students, but the project is linked to their academics. During or after the internship, students compile a written project or research paper. Most students enter the school in 9th grade and remain through graduation.

Learn more about these programs by visiting the schools' websites at https://www.d214.org/Page/1933 and https://www.oaklandinternational.org/

Key Elements of High-Quality Educational Programs for Newcomers

As described earlier in this chapter and evidenced in these examples of outstanding dedicated newcomer programs, optimal academic programs for newcomer students share a number of elements and reflect the following key features of effective instruction:

- Clear mission of excellence in the education of newcomers that values the positive contributions that newcomers bring to the school and community

- Rich learning opportunities for newcomers that are rigorous and include grade-level content and literacy learning in both English and newcomers' home languages whenever possible

- Agreed-upon educational pathways for students that promote coherence across grade levels or school settings

- School staff directly support students' education and social, emotional, and mental health needs, agency, and autonomy

- Regular check-ins with students and efforts to connect families with needed services

- Program with an asset orientation that values newcomers' home languages, cultures, families, and experiences

- Educators and staff who focus on continuous improvement of the core academic program with the goal of integrating rigorous academic and language learning to nurture and ripen newcomer students' potential

Check out these RESOURCES

- Read about the impacts of the pandemic on different student populations in Education in a Pandemic: The Disparate Impacts of COVID-19 on America's Students, published by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights.

- Refer to the Council of the Great City Schools brief, Supporting English Learners in the COVID-19 Crisis for information, resources, and ideas.

Recommendations on Mitigating the Consequences of COVID-19 on Multilingual Learners and Newcomer Students

To address the negative impacts that COVID-19 has had upon newcomers and their families, schools and districts may consider implementing the following recommendations regarding instruction, assessment, and family/community support.

1. Instruction:

- Increase learning time once MLs and newcomers return to in-person instruction
- Increase meaningful interaction opportunities
- Provide ongoing professional development focused on supporting MLs and newcomers to content area educators, as well as to school staff and administrators

2. Assessment

- Resume assessment of new students to identify if they need language assistance programs
  - Conduct interviews in person or over the phone
  - Administer home language survey
- Use diagnostic summative and formative assessments to gauge learning and language proficiency loss for MLs and newcomer students
  - Provide educators with immediate data
  - Provide constructive feedback to students and their families
- Monitor former MLs carefully
- Conduct ongoing student and family needs assessments

Sources:
Baker, S., Lesaux, N., Jayanthi, M., Dimino, J., Proctor, C. P., Morris, J., Gersten, R., Haymond, K., Kieffer, M. J., Linan-Thompson, S., & Newman-Gonchar, R. (2014). *Teaching academic content and literacy to English learners in elementary and middle school* (NCEE 2014-4012). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE). https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/practiceguide/english_learners_pg_040114.pdf
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020, August 26). *Preparing K-12 school administrators for a safe return to school in fall 2020.* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/91383
Garcia-Arena, P., & D'Souza, S. (2020, October). *Research brief: Spotlight on English learners.* American Institutes for Research.
Meckler, L., & Natanson, H. (2020, December 6). *'A lost generation': Surge of research reveals students sliding backward, most vulnerable worst affected. The Washington Post.*
National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). (n.d.). *NAEP long-term trend assessment results: Reading and mathematics.* U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/highlights/ltt/2022/
Office of English Language Acquisition. (2020). *English learners: Absenteeism, retention, and suspension* [Fact sheet]. U.S. Department of Education. https://ncela.ed.gov/resources/fact-sheet-english-learner-absenteeism-suspension-and-retention-september-2021
Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development. (2021). *ED COVID-19 handbook, Volume 2: Roadmap to reopening safely and meeting all students' needs.* U.S. Department of Education. https://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/reopening-2.pdf

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Note: This document does not address the legal obligations of states and school districts toward MLs and their families under *Title I and Title III* of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)*. For more information on *ESEA,* go to https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/COMPS-748/pdf/COMPS-748.pdf

Subject-Specific Teaching Strategies for Newcomers

Schools must provide MLs and newcomers with access to the core curriculum in order to ensure they are able to meaningfully participate in educational programs.[36] The resources in the chart below provide strategies by subject area for helping newcomers access academic content. They can be shared with classroom teachers and other support staff and used for professional development and coaching purposes when supporting educators who serve newcomers.

Early Childhood Education
[Integrating Language into Early Childhood Education Practice Brief](#). This teaching brief draws upon recommendations from the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine report *Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English: Promising Futures.* The brief highlights some promising instructional practices that are relevant and important for teachers of young children ages 3–7 who are identified as dual language learners or English learners. [Integrating Language into Early Childhood Education Podcast](#). The podcast, featuring Celeste McLaughlin, NAM Team Lead and Grants Management Coordinator at OELA and Dr. Pamela Spycher, Senior Research Associate at WestEd, explores the four key practices presented in the brief: Embracing an assets orientation, promoting multilingual development, providing frequent interaction with complex texts, and teaching foundational literacy skills.

Teaching Science
Strategies for Teaching Science. This webpage from The Sourcebook for Teaching Science website lists numerous resources and information for teaching science to MLs. **National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) Strategies for Teaching Science.** This webpage on the NSTA website offers guiding principles and resources for teaching science to MLs. [Integrating Language While Teaching STEM (Science)](#). The NCELA Teaching Practice Brief highlights promising practices related to science and engineering instruction for educators and other staff who support English learners (ELs) and their families. This brief draws upon recommendations from the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine's 2018 report titled *English Learners in STEM Subjects: Transforming Classrooms, Schools, and Lives.* **Helping English Learners Understand Science.** This webpage from the United Federation of Teachers website contains numerous resources for science teachers on working with MLs.

Teaching Math
[Integrating Language While Teaching Mathematics.](#) The NCELA Teaching Practice Brief provides educators with current research findings and evidence-based, high-quality, instructional mathematics practices from the Institute of Education Sciences' Practice Guide for teaching English learners (ELs) academic content[37] and highlights instructional practices used to teach ELs according to the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine. In addition, the brief provides teacher educators with the latest research on how to better prepare the next generation of teachers.

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[36] U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), & U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division. (2015, January 7). *Dear colleague letter: English learner students and limited English proficient parents.* https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-el-201501.pdf

[37] Baker, S., Lesaux, N., Jayanthi, M., Dimino, J., Proctor, C. P., Morris, J., Gersten, R., Haymond, K., Kieffer, M. J., Linan-Thompson, S., & Newman-Gonchar, R. (2014). *Teaching academic content and literacy to English learners in elementary and middle school* (NCEE 2014-4012). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from the NCEE website: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications_reviews.aspx

Teaching English Language Arts
[Effective Literacy Instruction for Multilingual Learners: What it is and What it Looks Like](). This webinar from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition in collaboration with the National Committee on Effective Literacy and the National Association of English Learner Program Administrators (NAELPA), shares research and resources on literacy development for multilingual learners.
Research on Teaching Reading. From the WETA website, check out *What Does the Research Tell us About Teaching Reading to English Language Learners*.
Effective Literacy and English Language Instruction for English Learners in the Elementary Grades. From the Institute of Education Sciences website: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/6

Remote Learning Resources
Supporting Adolescent English Learners in Distance Learning. What Can Schools and District Leaders Do? From the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition website: https://ncela.ed.gov/facilitating-online-learning
School Reopening Resources. From the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition website: https://ncela.ed.gov/school-reopening-resources

Sample Core Principles for Educating Newcomers

The Internationals Network for Public Schools is a group of public high schools that work with newcomer students. The Internationals Network's mission is to provide quality education for recently arrived immigrants by growing and sustaining a national network of International High Schools and to share best practices as well as influence educational policy for MLs. The Internationals schools base their pedagogical approach on the following five "core principles."

Principle	Explanation
Heterogeneity and Collaboration	Heterogeneous schools and classrooms are collaborative structures that build on the strengths of each member of the school community to optimize learning.
Experiential Learning	Twenty-first-century schools that expand beyond the four walls of the building motivate adolescents and enhance their capacity to successfully participate in modern society.
Language and Content Integration	Purposeful, language-rich, interdisciplinary, and experiential programs allow strong language skills to develop most effectively in context and emerge most naturally.
Localized Autonomy and Responsibility	Linking autonomy and responsibility at every level within a learning community allows all members to contribute to their fullest potential.
One Learning Model for All	Every member of our school community experiences the same learning model, maximizing an environment of mutual academic support. Thus all members of our school community work in diverse, collaborative groups on hands-on projects; put another way, the model for adult learning and student learning mirror each other.

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PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ACTIVITY

"Teach Me" – Instructional Practices That Support Newcomers' Participation and Academic Success *(Discussion Cards)*

Purpose

K-12 school administrators and teachers can use the discussion cards provided with this activity in a staff meeting or professional learning community to seed a discussion about instructional practices that support newcomers' participation and academic success.[38]

Materials

■ Discussion cards

Time Required for Activity

■ 1 hour

Preparation for Facilitator

■ A few days in advance, ask participants to read the Guidelines for Teaching Multilingual Learners and Newcomers, Evidence-Based Practices, and Misconceptions, Current Understanding, and Suggested Practices sections of Chapter 4 of this toolkit.

■ Make copies of the discussion cards included on the next page (one set for each group of four participants). Please consider adapting the cards or creating additional ones tailored to the educational context at your school/district.
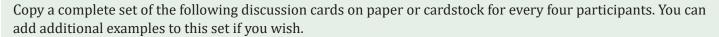
Instructions for Facilitator

1. Establish table groups with four participants at each table. In the center of each table, place a set of discussion cards, face down. (Each table gets the same set of cards.)

2. Provide an overview of the activity. Participants will use what they learned from their reading of the assigned sections of Chapter 4 about high-quality instruction for newcomer MLs to sort the cards into two categories: (1) presence of a feature of high-quality instruction with newcomers or (2) presence of a misconception about the education of newcomers. (It is helpful to write or post these two categories where all can see them.) Participants are to work collaboratively in their groups to decide whether a particular practice belongs in one category or the other.

3. Provide the following instructions: To begin the activity, one person in the group draws a discussion card from the deck and reads it aloud to the group. That person decides what category it belongs to and provides a rationale for that choice. The other group members can agree or disagree and say why. The group must reach consensus about the choice before the card is placed face up on the table (in either category 1 or category 2). The next person draws another card, and the process continues. When all cards have been sorted, the group discusses recommendations about the changes in practice needed for the cards that do not align with high-quality instruction for MLs.

4. Have each group report out and facilitate a whole-group discussion. Focus on recommended changes in practice and ask for ideas on what teachers and administrators can do to support such practices in your school.

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[38] These discussion cards are informed by the literature cited in Chapter 4 of this toolkit as well as the OELA *Evidence-Based Instructional Practices* Podcast. Please visit https://ncela.ed.gov/resources/oela-resources/briefs to learn more about the instructional practices that informed the development of these discussion cards.

Discussion Cards for "Teach Me" Reflection and Discussion Activity

Copy a complete set of the following discussion cards on paper or cardstock for every four participants. You can add additional examples to this set if you wish.

A teacher gives her newcomers a test on English grammar once a week to gauge their progress in learning English.

A 6th-grade teacher uses a 2nd-grade text with her newcomers. She claims that the language is at the students' level and that if she gave them grade-level materials, they would not understand the texts.

A literacy coach walks into a teacher's classroom. The class has a mix of MLs who are newcomers, children of immigrants, and native speakers of English. All the students are engaged and animated, working on grade-level materials in activities that have them analyze texts and support the conclusions they draw from their reading. As the coach approaches a group, he notices that one student speaks in Spanish to another student while the rest of the group is working. He asks the other two students in the group what the Spanish-speaking students are doing. They say one student is a newcomer who had trouble understanding the assignment, and the other student is explaining what they are doing in the group. Before the coach leaves, he makes a note that students need to use English when they work in groups together.

In a lesson about human rights for high school newcomers, the teacher uses a jigsaw project that addresses the needs of four different types of students through four different texts. The tasks and requirements for each group reading a different text are the same. To complete the activity, students will all share collective findings with new partners and then apply expertise and newly gained knowledge to produce a poster that explains the characteristics of good human rights speeches.

The teacher provides students with appropriate scientific language to assist students in discussing their observations of a science simulation.

Overall, the teacher in a class speaks approximately 30 percent of the time, and the students talk to each other through carefully constructed activities 70 percent of the time.

Most of the questions asked of newcomers about concepts or texts are factual and ask students to recall information.

A parent volunteers in an 80:20 ratio, 2nd-grade dual language program with MLs and Spanish learners. The parent, who is Spanish/English bilingual, notices that the academic learning in Spanish is at a lower level than she expected. Her child is learning Spanish, and she is concerned that he will be behind his peers in other 2nd-grade classes.

Resources

The resources below have been selected based on the following criteria:

- Resource produced by a federally funded study or center
- Resource produced by an open access and peer-reviewed journal
- Resource produced by a nonpartisan and nonprofit organization

Boyle, A., August, D., Tabaku, L., Cole, S., & Simpson-Baird, A. (2015, December). *Dual language education programs: Current state policies and practices.* U.S Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED601041

This report presents an "analysis of relevant research and extant data related to dual language education policies and practices."

Burr, E., Haas, E., & Ferriere, K. (2015). *Identifying and supporting English learner students with learning disabilities: Key issues in the literature and state practice* (REL 2015-086). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory West. http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/west/pdf/REL_2015086.pdf

This report presents a comprehensive study of identification and support practices across states. The report also addresses testing for MLs with disabilities and the types of accommodation practices that have proven to be successful.

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2017). *Dual language learners and English learners with disabilities.* https://www.nap.edu/resource/24677/toolkit/pdf/6-DLs&ELs-with-Disabilities.pdf

This report brief outlines specific disabilities, their characteristics, identification and assessment, and recommended instructions and outcomes for students with these disabilities. The report also discusses common myths associated with dual language learning and children with disabilities.

Office of English Language Acquisition. (2019, May). *Supporting English learners through technology: What districts and teachers say about digital learning resources for English learners.* U.S. Department of Education. https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/title-iii/180414.pdf

This study reports on data from a nationally representative survey of districts that enrolled ML students, a teacher survey that included both mainstream teachers and ML specialists, and case studies of six districts to provide more in-depth information about district and teacher practices. Findings address how districts and teachers identified digital learning resources (DLRs), how teachers used DLRs, supports for and barriers to DLR use, and suggestions for improving the usefulness of DLRs in the instruction of ML students.

Uro, G., Lai, D., Alsace, T., Corcoran, A. (2020, August). *Supporting English learners in the COVID-19 crisis.* Council of the Great City Schools.

This guide was intended to help districts as they prepared to reopen schools in the 2020–2021 school year. The guide identifies ML-specific needs and challenges and addresses the issues facing families of MLs in greater detail. The guide includes some of the lessons that districts have learned while working to support their ML and immigrant communities during school closures.