

Findings from the 2008-09 Newcomer Program Database

Who are Newcomer Students?

Definitions vary by program but these are the three used by programs in the database.

1. Literate Newcomers: students with on-grade-level educational backgrounds who have literacy skills and academic schooling in their own language
2. SIFE Newcomers: students with disrupted or weak educational backgrounds and below-grade-level literacy in their own native language
3. Late-entrant Immigrant Newcomers: students who enter after first quarter or first semester

Why Establish a Newcomer Program?

To provide intensive language development and academic/cultural orientation, for a limited time, before placing the newcomers in the regular language support and academic programs.

What Are the Goals of Newcomer Programs?

These are the common goals for programs although not all programs have all 4 goals.

1. Help students acquire beginning English skills
2. Provide some instruction in core content areas
3. Guide the students' acculturation to the school system in the U.S.
4. Develop or strengthen native language literacy

How Are the Programs Designed?

Most programs incorporate principles from the ESL, sheltered content instruction, and bilingual education research for curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Most newcomer classes include strategies for improving adolescent literacy and for integrating language and content instruction. They also help students acclimate to their local environments and connect students and families to outside services.

What Do We Know About Current Programs?

A survey of secondary school newcomer programs was conducted for the 2008-2009 school year by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. See the published online database of program profiles (www.cal.org/CALWebDB/Newcomer).

Location

- 64 programs are located in 24 states.
- 53% of programs are in urban metropolitan areas, 33% suburban, and 14% rural.
- 59% of programs are programs within a school.
- 14% are whole schools (students enter and stay for all of middle or high school).
- 21% are at a separate site (although for some students it is a separate site, and for others it is a program within a school).

Students

- 44% of programs serve high school students, 30% of programs serve middle school students, 14% of programs serve middle and high school students together, and 13% have separate middle and high school sites.

- Over 90 countries of origin and 75 native languages are represented.
- Student size in programs ranges from 9 students in one high school to 930 in another.
- Some programs serve mostly refugees; others, immigrants; and others, a mix.

Program Design

- 47% of the programs enroll students for 1 year; 16% for 1 year plus summer; 20% enroll for more than 1 year; 5% enroll for 1 semester; 2% for a summer (1 program); 17% have varied enrollment.
- Many programs are flexible and allow students with limited formal schooling to remain longer than the average stay.
- 72% of the programs are full-day; 20% are half-day; 3% are less than half-day; 2% are after-school only (1 program).
- 19% offer after-school programs in addition to full or half day.
- One program is available year-round (the after-school only site).

Instructional Practices

- 88% of programs are ESL programs, 13% are bilingual programs, and 0% are native language literacy programs. A few programs offer ESL or bilingual course options.
- 95% of programs offer ESL, 5% offer sheltered English language arts, 2% no language instruction
- 94% provide some content through English, 31% offer some content through L1.
- 31% of programs offer native language literacy/arts courses in one of students' L1.
- 52% offer reading interventions.
- 61% provide students with cross-cultural information or orientation to the U.S.
- 53% instruct students on study skills.
- 14% of the programs offer career awareness or vocational education courses. Some offer career counseling.

Social Services and Partnerships

- Over 50% of the programs link students and families to social service agencies for health care, housing, employment.
- A number of programs have partnerships with other institutions for after-school programs/tutoring, apprenticeships, family literacy, technology, and more.

Literacy Resources Used by Newcomer Programs

Hampton-Brown's Basics, High Point, and Inside the USA (Natl Geographic School Publ.)	Grammar in Context (Heinle) Fundamentals ((Natl Geographic School Publ.) Everyday English (Scott Foresman)
Rosetta Stone	Oxford Picture Dictionary (Oxford)
Keys to Learning (Longman)	Theme Book Kits (Natl Geographic School Publ.)
Champion of Ideas – Red (Ballard & Tighe)	Step Up to Writing (Sopris)
RIGOR, Bridges, Navigations (Benchmark)	

What Do Programs Report Is Working Well?

- Flexible scheduling
- Careful staffing plus targeted professional development

- Connections with families and social services
- Diagnostics and tracking, including better ELP tests
- Transition practices (shadowing, auditing, teacher input, committees, benchmark scores)
- Options and advocacy for high school credits (e.g., LUCHA)
- Literacy development materials for adolescents, reading interventions
- Technology options (e.g., Rosetta Stone)
- Pre-Algebra in high school
- Doubling up courses (e.g., ESL study skills with ESL 1)
- More time for instruction and support (e.g., after school, summer, Saturdays)

What Challenges Exist for Programs?

- Meeting AYP in separate newcomer centers
- Keeping high school newcomers in school
- Graduating students in 4 years as per NCLB regulations
- NCLB testing requirements
- Instructional materials and curricula for newcomer content classes

Join the research. Tell us about your middle or high school newcomer program. Take the survey at (<http://www.cal.org/CALWebDB/Newcomer/NewcomerStart.aspx>).

Follow the research results at www.cal.org/newcomer .