SLIFE (STUDENTS WITH LIMITED OR INTERRUPTED FORMAL EDUCATION): MORE THAN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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- **INTENSIVE ENGLISH:**
  - students who have minimal English abilities.
  - students who are at grade level in L1.
  - 355 students (January 29th)
  - 43 different countries
  - 33 different languages

- **LAB PROGRAM:**
  - students who are 13 years of age or older.
  - less than 6 years of formal schooling.
  - 278 students (January 29th)
  - 24 different countries
  - 25 different languages
OBJECTIVES

- To support educators’ knowledge about English learners with limited or interrupted formal education (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011; DeCapua, Smathers, & Tang, 2009)

- To improve educators’ awareness of learners’ diverse cultures (Kohls, 2003)

- To support teachers with strategies to utilize learning centers to help English learners’ second language acquisition (Echevarria, Vogt, and Short, 2013)
What is a SLIFE?
(Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education)

- Lack basic academic skills and concepts.
- Lack content knowledge.
- Lack critical-thinking skills (such as observation, interpretation, analysis, inference, evaluation, explanation, and meta-cognition).
- May not be literate in their L1 language.
(In the LAB program 25% of students are illiterate in their L1)
Aunque Cristóbal Colón descubrió América en octubre del año 1492, él nunca llegó a lo que hoy en día es los Estados Unidos de América. Mientras tanto, Juan Ponce de León navegó hasta las costas de la Florida en abril del año 1513 en busca de la “fuente de la eterna juventud”.

Although Christopher Columbus discovered America in October 1492, he never made it to what today is the United States of America. Meanwhile, Juan Ponce de Leon sailed up to the coast of Florida in April 1513 in search of the "fountain of youth".
Saw Ba U Gyi’s Four Principles:
1. For us surrender is out of the question.
2. The recognition of Kawthoolei must be complete.
3. We shall retain our arms.
4. We shall decide our own political destiny.
What is a SLIFE?

• “SLIFE have interrupted education due to civil conflicts, war, patterns of migration, and/or work responsibilities, in many cases their education was limited to an impoverished rural school setting and/or refugee camp where they had little or no chance of sequential education.”

From Breaking New Ground: Teaching Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education in U.S. Secondary Schools by DeCapua & Marshall (2011)
Challenges of SLIFE

**Academic:**
- Learn English
- Become proficient in a prescribed body of knowledge and skills
- Prepare for high-stakes testing

**Social:**
- Age restrictions
- Motivation
- Need to financially help their families
While mainstream ELLs comprise one-quarter of high school dropouts across the United States, the SLIFE dropout rate is anecdotally even higher (DeCapua et al., 2010).
Even though SLIFE may lack academic knowledge, they have a diversity of “funds of knowledge”. These “funds of knowledge” could be such as knowledge of mundane but necessary activities like agricultural practices, artisan skills, or other “historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being” (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992).
Therefore, SLIFE should not be viewed as deficient, but rather as students who come with funds of knowledge that can and should be used as building blocks for the acquisition of new, academic knowledge (DeCapua, Smathers, & Tang, 2009).
• What do dogs and rabbits have in common?

• What is a tree?
What do dogs and rabbits have in common?

• Both of them are quick.
• Both have long ears.
• Both can kill you.
What do dogs and rabbits have in common?

Nothing
What is a tree?

• Big plants
• Fruit
• You know, outside.
• Monkey, monkey
• We use them to make chairs and tables.
• You get under them when the sun is hot.
What is a tree?

“That”!!

-pointing to trees outside the windows
Students who have limited experience with formal schooling may also:

- Work very slowly
- Have difficulty recognizing relationships and applying patterns
- Copy from other classmates or rely on other classmates for help
- Be inconsistent with their work: one day they can do a task; the next day they have forgotten
- Appear disorganized
- Acquire listening and speaking proficiency more quickly than reading and writing (Students from Refugee Backgrounds: A guide for teachers and schools, 2009).
Teachers should be aware of SLIFE’s PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)

• Those who have been victims of war, violence, torture, or crime may suffer from PTSD.

• Not everyone in a war environment will experience stress in the same way, nor will they react the same way to the same experiences.

• Cultural influences also impact the way in which people respond to traumatic events (Presidential Task Force on PTSD in Children and Adolescents, APA, 2008).
“Culture strongly influences the attitudes, values, and behaviors that students and teachers bring to the instructional process” (Gay, 2002).

When culture is ignored, barriers to effective services may emerge” (Mason, 1995).
# Kohls’ Chart of Values in the United States and Other Cultures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values in the United States</th>
<th>Values in Other Cultures</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responsibility</strong></td>
<td>Fate, destiny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change is natural and positive</td>
<td>Stability, tradition continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time and its control</strong></td>
<td>Human interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality, fairness</td>
<td>Hierarchy, rank, status</td>
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Kohls’ Chart of Values in the United States and Other Cultures.

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<td><strong>Competition</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cooperation</strong></td>
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<td>Future orientation</td>
<td>Past orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individualism, independence</strong></td>
<td><strong>Family/Group’s success, dependence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-help, initiative</td>
<td>Birthright, inheritance</td>
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Culture Shock

- May be unfamiliar with North American bathroom facilities and school bathroom routines.
- May need assistance to understand appropriate clothing for the weather conditions.
- May not have enough food or understand meal and snack choices.
- May not understand non-verbal cues.
- May be unfamiliar with safety practices related to buses, traffic, strangers, etc.
Tips for Teachers:

✧ Become familiar with refugee background
✧ Become aware of the cultural background and differences
✧ Consider different cultural norms associated with gender
✧ Contact settlement workers for support
✧ Avoid making assumptions about people and resist stereotyping.
✧ Acknowledge and support the student’s effort to communicate (Students from Refugee Backgrounds: A guide for teachers and schools, 2009).
Tips for Teachers:

- Speak slowly and clearly
- Keep your vocabulary/sentences direct and simple.
- Avoid the use of metaphors, jargon/popular sayings
- Allow time for response.
- Use visuals (diagrams, photographs, etc.) whenever possible.
- Use examples to illustrate your point.
- Pay attention to non-verbal, verbal and visual cues
- Check for comprehension frequently (Stewart, 2011).

And most important: **BE PATIENT!**
Audio Lingual Test

Topics for the oral section

- School
- Classroom Objects
- Food / Utensils
- Number Words
- Shapes
- Clothing
- Animals
- Parts of the Body

- Time
- Measurements
- Money
- Letters
- Asking Permission
- Respond to Commands
- Family
Audio Lingual Test
Topics for the writing section

Topics:
• Address
• Telephone number
• Name of the school
• Student number
• Name of student’s language
• Days
• Months
• Seasons
• Date
• Paragraph about themselves
Assessment Strategy
Red Cup
Strengths of the Red Cup Strategy

• An active formative assessment during the learning process
• Immediate feedback from a teacher and peers
• An early stage to identify problems in students’ learning and make necessary interventions
• A meaningful, motivating, and exciting activity

“Assessment can be a powerful learning tool that promotes and supports learning and has the potential to motivate students” (Freiberg & Driscoll, 2005).
Students’ Benefits of the Red Cup Activity

• Motivation (a desire to become an Assistant Teacher) is the driving force to do their best work;
• Obtaining leader positions;
• Mastering presentation skills;
• Improving communication skills (the ability to negotiate and compromise)
• Scaffolding (opportunity to get L1 explanation)

“Let your students learn from each other for sparking active learning in your classroom” (Silberman, 2005).
Vocabulary

- Match pictures and vocabulary words
- Puzzles

The giving tree

Across
1. To move things to another place.
2. The trees will give you this when there is a lot of sun.
3. The things that fall from a tree during the fall season.
4. The main part of a tree.
5. The place where there are many trees.
6. The person that wears a crown.
7. In the forest there are many

Down
1. The trees have many
2. The game of finding others.
3. You see this in a lake or river.
4. When you cut a tree, the part that is left.
5. The king wears a ______.
6. To put together many things
Vocabulary

- Complete sentences using vocabulary words.
- Write sentences using vocabulary words.
- Cloze activity by completing a paragraph. The paragraph is written using the students names, and usually is on a funny topic.

Last Friday, Paw So and Bikram _____ about who shut the door. Bikram said it was Dawa, but Paw So said she _____ it was Sanjaya who _____ the door. ______ down the hallway came Bismark because he was late. Reena also came late because she was helping Mr. Newell by _____ some papers. Mr. Newell wasn't sure how big to cut the papers, but at the end he chose the _____ pieces. ______ the building, I saw Hae Nae. She told me that Si Law was watching an eagle _____ above the school. I told Si Law that if she can get the eagle, she can _____ it. At the back of the room, I just saw that Dim No was ______ a drawing that Fowsia did for her about a flower.

argued  shut  slicing  tracing  rushing
thin  exiting  wished  gliding  keep

It is important for the students to use the words in different ways, so they will completely understand their meanings. In addition, the teachers should give the students as many opportunities to use and master the new vocabulary as possible (Breiseth, 2011).
Collaborative Reading Project

- 3 stations (5-6 students)
- Students’ roles:
  - a vocabulary expert
  - a literature expert
  - a speaker
  - a writer
  - an interviewer
Strengths of the Collaborative Reading Project

• Students’ ability groupings
• Active students’ involvement
• Develop students’ reading, speaking, listening, and writing skills
• Work cooperatively, independently, and competitively
• Student ownership of their learning
• Master presentation skills for academic and social success
Writing activities

• Pictures for the students to write about.

What is happening in the picture?
5 sentences or more....

Write a paragraph (5 sentences) about this picture.
Writing activities

- Writing prompts
  - What do you do when you get home?
  - Describe your home in your country.
  - Describe your family.
  - Describe your school in your country.
  - What activities do you do with your family?
  - What type of music you like? Artists?
  - If you had 1 million dollars, what would you do?
  - If you could learn something, what would it be and why?
  - What do you usually do on the weekends?
  - Do you like America? Why?
I am at School

• The story *I Love School* is used for this activity

• **Station 1**
  • **My Personal Information** (Students read paragraph 1).
  • **Speaking Assignment:** Make an oral presentation about your personal information. (Liliana’s personal information serves as a model for students).

  • *Hi! My name is Liliana. I am sixteen years old. I come from Peru. I live in the United States. I am a student. I go to Washington School. Where is Washington school? It is on School Street.*
Our Stations
I am at School

• **Station 2 - About School**
  Reading Assignment: Practice reading aloud in a group. Reading fluency will be checked with a timer.

• **Station 3 - My Schedule**
  Writing Assignment: Write a paragraph about your schedule.

• **Station 4 - Computer Skills:** (The team that finishes all three stations first, types their paragraph, My Schedule).
Strengths of the Station Activity

- Cover 3 topics
- Master all domains
- Keep active students’ involvement
- Take ownership of their learning
- Work cooperatively, independently, and competitively
- Develop computer/typing skills
LET’S CHECK OUR OBJECTIVES

- To support educators’ knowledge about English learners with limited or interrupted formal education (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011; DeCapua, Smathers, & Tang, 2009)

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- To support teachers with strategies to utilize learning centers to help English learners’ second language acquisition (Echevarria, Vogt, and Short, 2013)
“I have come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in my classroom. It’s my personal approach that creates the climate. It’s my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child’s life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether crises will be escalated or deescalated and a child is humanized or dehumanized” (Haim Ginott, 1965).
THANKS FOR ATTENDING OUR PRESENTATION.

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