Supporting Newcomer English Language Learners in Secondary Schools

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Introductions

- How do you define “newcomer” in your school/district
- What experience do you have with newcomers?
Session Objectives

- To identify the practices and policies that facilitate and hinder newcomers’:
  - Initial transition to U.S. high schools
  - High school graduation
  - College preparation and transitions

The U.S. Immigrant Population Is Growing and Is Largely Latino

Actual and Projected Immigration: 1960–1965 through 2045–2050

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Range</th>
<th>Legal Immigration</th>
<th>Unauthorized Immigration</th>
<th>Projected Immigration (Total)</th>
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<td>1970–1975</td>
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<td>1980–1985</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
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<td>1990–1995</td>
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<td>2040–2045</td>
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<td>2050</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
74,000 Unaccompanied Minors Entered the U.S. in FY 2014

Immigrant Youth are More Likely to be Older and Recent Arrivals

32% of foreign-born English learners in grades 6-12 have been in the U.S. for 3 years or less.
Newcomers Encounter Many Challenges in U.S. High Schools

- Structural issues
  - Immigration policy
  - Language policy
  - Poverty
  - Segregation
- Educational challenges:
  - Valid and reliable assessments
  - Teachers prepared to teach immigrants
  - College preparatory courses
  - Counseling

Attention to Newcomers at the Secondary Level Is Critical

- High school staff members need to know more about how to meet the needs of these students
- More research is needed on immigrants and English Learners in the secondary grades
- Efforts to increase college readiness and college completion should focus on immigrant students
Sharing Your Experiences

What do you see as the biggest challenges for newcomers in your school/district?

Tracing the Pathways of Newcomers

- Participants in a pilot demonstration project
  - Bilingual college preparatory math and science courses
  - Counseling interventions
  - Parent training courses
- Implemented in 2008-2012 in four Southern California high schools
- 451 total students served
- This study sampled from the 169 students in the 2011 and 2012 graduation year cohorts — it is not a representative sample of all newcomers
What’s a SOL Classroom?

- Project SOL YouTube Video

Postsecondary Survey Respondents

- Students
  - Majority of their K-8 schooling took place outside of the U.S.
  - Schooling experiences varied
  - Average age at migration was 13
  - 66% graduated high school
  - Time in U.S. ~ 6 years as of fall 2013

- Households
  - < 1 in 4 parents had graduated high school
  - 96.6% reported household income below $35,000
Initial Transition: Disconnected Educational Systems

“Porque hacen que tomes álgebra 1 otra vez y en realidad allá, desde que estás como en 5to o 6to te dan álgebra 1 ya. Como álgebra 1 yo pienso que deberían como de hacerla valida aquí también y ya pasar directamente a geometría.

—Alma

Initial Transition: Disconnected Educational Systems

- Lack of alignment and communication between U.S. and Mexican educational systems
- Transfer documents underutilized
  - 41% had a transfer document, 36% received credit
- Impact
  - Course repetition
  - Low morale
Initial Transition: Minimal Orientation

- Students noted important differences in school structure, rigor, retake policies, and respect for teachers
- Reliance on peers and bilingual teachers and counselors for critical information

Recommendation: Smooth Students’ Initial Transitions to the U.S.

RECOGNIZE AND VALIDATE NON-U.S. EDUCATION
- Consistent use of Transfer Document
- Transfer credit for prior schooling as appropriate
- Primary language assessments
- U.S.-Mexico curriculum alignment

ORIENTATION TO U.S. EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM
- For students and parents, in their home language
- Deliver key information multiple times and in multiple formats
Navigating High School: Tracking Into Electives and Extended Courses

“En México...tomas las clases que necesitas graduarte. No te dan cosas que no necesitas, o sea, lo que tomas es lo que vas a necesitar para graduarte. Y aquí hay materias que las tomas y no las vas a usar.”

– Hugo

- Over-placement into electives that did not fulfill graduation requirements
- Extended math and science sequences
Navigating High School: Reclassification as a Gatekeeper

- Most students were reclassified as Fluent English Proficient at some point in their senior year
  - In LAUSD, reclassification was a prerequisite for entry to mainstream English courses
  - At border region high schools, some students were permitted to take mainstream English courses prior to meeting reclassification criteria

Navigating High School: English Credits Required to Graduate

- Variations in how much ESL/ELD courses counted toward graduation requirements
  - CA universities/colleges permit one year of ELD to count toward the required four years of English
  - Many districts are moving toward a default “college preparatory” curriculum
  - Border districts counted up to three years of ESL/ELD toward English graduation requirement
Navigating High School: English Credits Required to Graduate

Alfonso: Fueron muchas clases ESL, como el básico, ESL 1, ESL 2, ESL 3, el 4 y así, hasta el 10, 11 y 12.

Entrevistadora: Las clases de inglés fuera de ESL ¿y cómo lo hiciste? ¿Tomaste 10, 11 y 12 todo en el último año?

Alfonso: Sí, todo . . . Sí, el último año estaba tomando puras clases de inglés porque eran las que faltaban, entonces casi todos mis periodos eran prácticamente de inglés.

Navigating High School: Access to Bilingual Courses

- All schools provided some bilingual math and science courses through intervention
- Border region high schools also offered bilingual, college preparatory social science, lab science, and math courses
Recommendation:
Support High School Graduation

ACCESS TO COURSES AND CONTENT

• Expand college preparatory bilingual course offerings
• Provide ELA credit for ELD/ESL courses
• Prioritize teacher training in literacy across subjects
• Provide multiple entry points to mainstream classes

Recommendation:
Support High School Graduation

FOSTER A SENSE OF BELONGING

• Provide targeted supports for newcomers
• Develop peer support networks
• Implement heterogeneous classrooms and groupings

ENGAGE AND INFORM PARENTS

• Communicate regularly in the parents’ home language
• Offer parent empowerment classes
• Listen for solutions
College Preparation and Transitions

- 8% completed requirements for entry into four-year college
- 83% of HS grads went to college
  - 80% of college goers went to community college
  - 80% required remediation, 28% required ESL in college
- Placement testing issues
  - Unprepared for exams
  - Barriers to challenging results

Recommendation: Prepare for College

ACADEMIC SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES
- Develop study skills across curriculum
- Encourage help seeking
- Establish concrete educational goals
  - Linked to career aspirations

COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE
- Provide information early
- Educate about U.S. higher education options
- Hands-on assistance with applications
Sharing Your Experiences

- What have you done in your own school/district to support newcomers?
- What other programs/practices have you heard of?

Core Issues for Leaders

- How does your school/district . . .
  - Recognize and validate non-U.S. educational experiences?
  - Orient newcomers and their parents to the U.S. educational system?
  - Provide access to rigorous content as students are acquiring English?
  - Foster a sense of belonging for newcomers and their families?
How Education Northwest Can Support Schools and Districts

- English learner program review
- Evaluation of literacy initiatives
- SIOP equity academy
- Professional development to improve mathematics instruction for English learners

For more information

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