

Students with Interrupted Formal Education:

A Toolbox for Educators

by

Mary A. Palmer

A capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Teaching.

Hamline University

Saint Paul, Minnesota

December, 2022

Capstone Project Facilitator: Betsy Parrish

Content Expert: Monika Summer

Project Summary

Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) enter classrooms in the United States with a plethora of life experience and knowledge- but have no basis of knowledge of the formalized, Western classroom. It is because of this that I have chosen to explore this question in my capstone: *What are best practices for schools to support students with interrupted schooling?* This capstone project is a professional learning workshop series intended for secondary content teachers responsible for presenting SIFE specific content knowledge as the students are also growing their English comprehension and production skills. Educators who work with SIFE need to have a set of strategies at the ready for when a SIFE enters their classroom. Having a broad knowledge of the needs of SIFE, the reasoning of why this extra support is necessary and also the types of accommodations that best work for them are crucial for content area teachers as they prepare lessons and assessments for their classes.

The professional development will be conducted in three 90-minute sessions. The primary method of presentation for the workshop will be Google Slides. In addition, participants will have access to a Google folder with additional notes, resources and a record of the topics that were specifically talked about during the sessions. Each session will be a week apart with 'homework' or follow up work to be done between sessions. At the end of every session there will be a form for feedback and additional thoughts, questions or needs. The first session will be an overview of who Multilingual Learners (ML) and Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) are and will ask educators to think about the students they currently work with. The follow up work for this first session is for educators to look at their current students (or past students) and bring info

about those students to the next week's session. The second session will dive into the strategies that teachers can use in the classroom. It will start with an overview of who SIFE are, then introduce Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT). This session will show examples of what CRT looks like in content, other than ELA, classrooms can look like. Finally, the third session will include strategies from the Mutually Adaptive Learning Paradigm (MALP), the importance of Family and Community Engagement, as well as looking at specific learner profiles to plan and brainstorm what accommodations and plans would be needed to best support those students in a content area classroom.

My hope is that this project can help content teachers prepare and plan for when a SIFE enters their classroom. When educators feel like they have 'tools in their toolbox' to support students with differing needs they are less stressed and more likely to implement the necessary changes that SIFE need to be successful in Western, American style classrooms. In addition I hope that this series can be beneficial to English Language Development teachers as they plan collaboratively with their colleagues and administrators.

Session 1: SLIFE Introduction
 90 minutes
[Google Slides Link for Session 1](#)

<i>Slides</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Approximate time</i>
Slide 1	Intro/Welcome: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Purpose of being here today? 	2 min
Slide 2	Who am I and who are you? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Getting to Know You- Greeting/Share 	10 min
Slide 3	Community Agreements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keep an Open Mind - Be Curious - Ask Questions - Others? 	2 min
Slide 4	Purpose of Today: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ML - SIFE - Needs/Wants - Overview - Homework - Questions/Feedback 	2 min
Slide 5	Multilingual Learners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Definition/Change - To understand SIFE, need to understand MLs - T/T: What are the assets? 	10 min
Slide 6	WIDA Levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Uses 	3 min
Slide 7	WIDA Levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Matching Activity 	12 min
Slide 8	WIDA Levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Answers - Surprises? Reactions? Questions? 	2-4 min
Slide 9	ML vs SIFE (ESOL Tip #1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Old term, but info still good - ESOL: - Andrea DeCapua: 	5 min

Slide 10	BREAK	5 min
Slide 11	SIFE: Definition	5 min
Slide 12	SIFE: Who and Where come? (ESOL #2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who are they in the classroom? - What are their needs? 	5 min
Slide 13	Wants/Needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategies? Tools? Assessments? - Help me build the next few sessions to tailor to what you want to take away 	12 min
Slide 14	Overview of Next 3 Sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - D2: CRT - D3: MALP - D4: Family and Community 	3 min
Slide 15	Homework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student profiles - Questions/Wonderings that might come up 	3 min
Slide 16	Feedback/Questions	

Session 2: SLIFE CRT
90 minutes
[Google Slides Link for Session 2](#)

<i>Slides</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Approximate time</i>
Slide 1	Intro/Welcome: - Take out the materials you collected	1 min
Slide 2	Welcome back! - Greeting/Share	10 min
Slide 3	Community Agreements: - Keep an Open Mind - Be Curious - Ask Questions - Others?	1 min
Slide 4	Purpose of Today: - SIFE - Possible Pitfalls - CRT - WIDA - American classrooms - What do we do? - Homework - Questions/Feedback	1 min
Slide 5	SIFE - What does SIFE stand for? - Definition	2 min
Slide 6	SIFE: (ESOL Tip #3) Cultural Differences - Skills SIFE need in our classrooms	10 min
Slide 7	SIFE Quote	1 min
Slide 8	Possible Pitfalls:	4 min
Slide 9	Assets - T/T: What other assets?	5 min
Slide 10	BREAK	5 min
Slide 11	CRT: - ESOL Tip #4 Video	5 min

Slide 12	CRT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Definition - 5 main parts 	5 min
Slide 13	Cultural Competency/Supportive Learning Communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 main bullets - King, et al quote - T/T: What have you learned? How do you build supportive communities? 	4 min
Slide 14	Culturally Relevant Curriculum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuum, not a prize to obtain by something to keep striving for 	4 min
Slide 15	CRT: Cultural Congruity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incorporates the other tenets of CRT. Reiterates how representation and the ability to access materials is important 	4 min
Slide 16	CRT: Effective Instruction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Main takeaway- we are not reteaching or dumbing down the content - Vocabulary and context are KEY - Any and all resources should be translated into the language of the student. 	4 min
Slide 17	BREAK	5 min
Slide 18	CRT: Example, Math <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 0:00 - 1:42 - What did you notice? What are other culturally relevant topics in math? 	4 min
Slide 19	CRT: Example, Social Studies/History <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What did you notice? 	5 min
Slide 20	Homework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One thing to try between now and when we meet again - 	10-15 min
Slide 21	Questions/ Feedback	2 min
Slide 22	Final Quote	Until end

Session 3: SLIFE MALP/Family Engagement
 90 minutes
[Google Slides Link for Session 3](#)

<i>Slides</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Approximate time</i>
Slide 1	Intro/Welcome: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Win of the week 	1 min
Slide 2	Welcome back! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greeting/Share: - Photo Roll 	5 min
Slide 3	Community Agreements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keep an Open Mind - Be Curious - Ask Questions - Others? 	1 min
Slide 4	Purpose of Today: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MALP - Family/Community Engagement - Student Profiles - Questions/Feedback 	1 min
Slide 5	SIFE: Refresh <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Definition 	1 min
Slide 6	Who are these students? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Volunteer to read right side - Volunteer to read left side - T/T to someone next to you- who is the SIFE student and who is the native speaking student 	10 min
Slide 7	MALP Definition	1 min
Slide 8	MALP Graphic	2 min
Slide 9	Accepting Conditions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 	3 min
Slide 10	Combining Processes	3 min
Slide 11	Target New Activities	3 min

Slide 12	BREAK!	5 min
Slide 13	Family/Community Engagement - Myth vs Truth	1 min
Slide 14	Family/Community Engagement - Benefits	2 min
Slide 15	Family/Community Engagement - Strategies	3 min
Slide 16	Student Profiles: - Link to website OR print out profiles for groups to work on together	4 min
Slide 17	Student Profiles: - Use what you've learned to create a game plan for the student you have just learned about	8-10 min
Slide 18	One last note	1 min
Slide 19	Questions/ Feedback	2 min

References

- Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M.E., Gardner, M. (2017) *Effective teacher professional development*. Learning Policy Institute.
https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Effective_Teacher_Professional_Development_REPORT.pdf
- DeCapua, A. & Marshall, H. (2011). Reaching ELLs at risk: Instruction for students with limited or interrupted formal education. *Preventing School Failure*. 55. 35-41.
10.1080/10459880903291680.
- DeCapua, A., & Marshall, H. W. (2015). Reframing the conversation about students with limited or interrupted formal education: from achievement gap to cultural dissonance. *NASSP Bulletin*, 99(4), 356–370. DOI 10.1177/0192636515620662
- Gaitan C.D.. (2012). Culture, literacy, and power in family community school relationships. *Theory into Practice*, 51(4), 305–311. DOI:
10.1080/00405841.2012.726060
- Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching : theory, research, and practice /*. Teachers College Press.
- Gay, G. "Preparing for culturally responsive teaching." *Journal of teacher education* 53, no. 2 (2002): 106-116
- Haneda, M. (2006) *Becoming Literate in a Second Language: Connecting Home, Community, and School Literacy Practices*, *Theory Into Practice*, 45:4, 337-345, DOI: 10.1207/s15430421tip4504_7
- Knowles, M. (1984). *Andragogy in action: Applying modern principles of adult learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Knowles, M. S. (1992). Applying principles of adult learning in conference presentations.

Adult Learning, 4(1), 11–14. DOI: 10.1177/104515959200400105

Kugler, E.G. & Price, O. A. (2009). Go beyond the classroom to help immigrant and

refugee students succeed. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 91(3), 48–52. DOI:

10.1177/003172170909100310

Lahiri-Hoherchak, M. (2022). *An inquiry into the identity of students with limited or*

interrupted formal education: SLIFE (Publication No. 29067404) [Doctoral

dissertation, University of Massachusetts Lowell]. ProQuest Dissertations &

Theses Global.

Moll, L., C. Amanti, et al. (1992) Funds of knowledge for teaching: using a Qualitative

approach to connect homes to classrooms. *Theory into Practice* 31(2): 132-141.

DOI: 10.1080/00405849209543534

Morolda, D. (2022, Aug. 8-10) *Developmental design in the middle school* [Professional

development series] Shakopee East Middle School, MN

Minnesota Department of Education. (n.d.) SLIFE. English Learner Education.

<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/el/slif/>

Villavicencio, M., C. P., Liu, J.-L., & Cherng, H.-Y. S. (2021). “What’s Going to

Happen to Us?” Cultivating Partnerships with Immigrant Families in an Adverse

Political Climate. *Harvard Educational Review*, 91(3), 293–318. DOI:

10.17763/1943-5045-91.3.293