

ELs in Education

Training for All Teachers Program @ SCSU

Fall 2017, #20

U.S. Department of Education *Newcomer Tool Kit - Part III*

We conclude our last newsletter of continued coverage of the U.S. Department of Education's *Newcomer Tool Kit*. This issue reviews **Chapter 5: Establishing Partnerships with Families**, which is the final chapter in this publication.

Effective newcomer parent engagement programs understand that many newcomer families may have not collaborated with schools in their home countries. To help acculturate parents into the process of home/school engagement in America, schools can implement five practices:

1. Encourage and create collaboration between school staff, parents and community members.
2. Develop the capacity of staff and newcomer parents to re-envision their roles in supporting students' success.
3. Recognize newcomers' assets and focus on how they can strengthen the school.
4. Actively communicate with parents, provide language supports such as interpreters and translated materials.
5. Make newcomer family engagement an essential part of your school's continuous improvement efforts.

U.S. Department of Education, Newcomer Tool Kit, June 2016

Strategies for Developing Family Partnerships

Ensure newcomer families are **represented** in decision-making roles;

Use suggestion boxes, surveys or polling with the appropriate **language supports** to encourage newcomer parents to voice their concerns and ideas about school;

Create parent welcome kits to help parents feel welcome, informed and integrated into the school (have ELs create kits in various languages);

Organize **family literacy events** and actively recruit parents to attend;

Conduct learning opportunities for parents on child development, supporting learning, and planning for college and careers.

The Important Role of Parent Centers

Parent centers are valuable tools for engaging and supporting newcomer families. A well-designed center can:

Offer a **welcoming place** within the school. Centers offer a **safe space** for parents to ask questions and meet other parents;

Become a gathering space for learning, sharing resources, **accessing technology and connecting with school** and community resources;

Help parents **identify learning opportunities at home** and take advantage of museums, libraries, parks and other resources.

**Editor's recommendation: Mothers United: An Immigrant Struggle for Socially Just Education, by Andrea Dyrness*



Pending funding notification, August 2017

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CALLING ALL HIGH SCHOOL, BILINGUAL GRADS!

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Contact **Marisa Ferraro**, FerraroM4@southernct.edu

Priority districts include: Bridgeport, New Haven, New London, Stamford



Visit our EL Curriculum Library

With a click of a button, teachers can access over 300+ instructional units, K-12. These units have been modified to make the course content accessible to ELs. All units have been created by teachers enrolled in SCSU's MS TESOL & Bilingual Education Program.

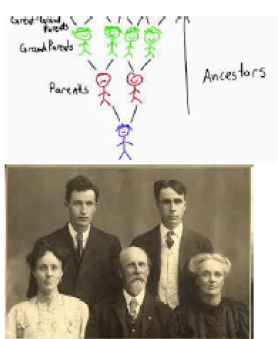
www.southernct.edu/tat

Best Practices From the Classroom...

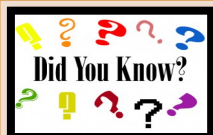
In a 3rd grade unit titled Family History, Nicolette Marcal's goal was for her students to trace their family history back to their great-grandparents. In lesson 2, students describe a family tree and create their own family tree while learning the concepts of ancestors and family generations. To help her ELs acquire the language to discuss genealogy, her students participate in a vocabulary development activity to discover the meaning of the word "ancestor."

By using a 6-square graphic organizer, the students discover ways to use the word in a sentence, write a personally meaningful definition, draw a picture, and give examples of the word. This activity allows students to use the new vocabulary in-depth and in the context of the class discussion.

An important feature to include into this activity is to have students describe what the word **is not** (perhaps even more memorable than transcribing a dictionary definition), e.g. an ancestor is **not** my sister.

<p>#1- Vocabulary Word</p> <p>Ancestor</p>	<p>#4- Picture</p> 
<p>#2-Dictionary (In My Own Words)</p> <p>An ancestor is someone who came before you.</p>	<p>#5- Word Used in a Sentence</p> <p>One of my ancestors fought in World War 2!</p>
<p>#3- Definition</p> <p>A person who was in someone's family in past times.</p>	<p>#6- Examples</p> <p>Parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents are ancestors</p>

For the full unit, please visit our EL Curriculum library: www.southernct.edu/tat, and search "Family History"



Core Stressors for Newcomers: In our last issue, we shared 2 major stressors for newcomers and their families (trauma & acculturation), according to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network. In this final newsletter, we share two more stressors.

3. Resettlement - The process newcomers and their families go through once they have relocated and start to make a new life for themselves in the new location.

Possible causes: Financial stress, loss of community support, lack of access to resources, transportation difficulties, and obstacles finding adequate housing and employment.

Possible help: Work with local non-profit organizations whose mission is to help refugees navigate their resettlement process. Connect families to other social services agencies and civic groups, which may offer temporary assistance and financial relief.

4. Isolation - Children and families experience isolation as new immigrants in a new country.

Possible causes: Discrimination, experiences of harassment from peers, adults or law enforcement, loss of social status, experiences of mistrust with host population and feelings of not "fitting in" with others or new society at large.

Possible help: Have an open discussion about feelings of isolation with a counselor or trusted friend of the family. The integration of refugee and immigrant families into the American society is a two-way process, which not only involves the newcomer families, but also necessitates accommodation and flexibility on the part of the receiving society.

We offer educators in Connecticut professional development workshops:

1. **Basic workshop** (10 hours) for mainstream teachers, special education teachers, pupil service personnel, and administrators who have had less than 10 hours of training. The goal of this training is to provide educators with the tools to make their mainstream lessons accessible and engaging to ELs of varying language proficiency.

2. **Advanced workshop** for educators who have received minimally 8-10 hours. Topics include: literacy and academic language development, linguistic and content assessment, language difference vs. disability and peer coaching.

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