SIFE in Our Classrooms:
Best Practices for their Success

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The NYS Statewide Language Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBE-RN) at Metro Center, NYU

Goals for this workshop

Participants will:

1- know the CR Part 154 process for screening, identification, and administration, as well as the purpose of the Multilingual Literacy Screener (MLS) for SIFE

2- know the NYSED's definition of SIFE, and understand what it means to be two grades below the entering grade level

3- understand what makes the needs of SIFEs unique, and why it is important to know your students

4- become familiar with pre-literacy, and foundational skills that are necessary to teach SIFEs in the classroom

5- become aware of the NYSED's Bridges to Success curriculum

6- model additional effective practices

What is the definition of SIFE?

- 1- Student is an ELL from another country

- 2- student is two or more years below grade level in home language literacy and math, upon initial enrollment in a NYS school

- 3- has <u>inconsistent / interrupted</u> formal education

- 4- may have attended school in NYS for less than 12 months

Ex. : A student from another country, entering 9th grade in New York State, is not expected to have home language literacy in the 9th grade level since he/she is just starting in that grade. Such a student is expected to have 8th grade literacy in the home language.

However, if the 9th grader has home language literacy at the **6th grade level or below**, (and has inconsistent or interrupted formal education from their country and is entering the 9th grade) this student would be identified as a SIFE (NYSED), because he/she would be two years or more below the expected 8th grade competency.

STUDENTS WITH INTERRUPTED/INCONSISTENT FORMAL EDUCATION (SIFE) SCREENING, IDENTIFICATION, AND PLACEMENT

Screening, Identification and Placement flow charts and SIFE Oral Interview Questionnaire are in your folders.

SIFE Identification as per CR Part 154, 2.3a

For a student to be identified as a SIFE, he/she first has to be identified as an English Language Learner.

Six steps to identifying a SIFE:

Administer HLQ	Conduct Individual Interview	Administer NYSITELL	Administer SIFE Oral Interview Questionnaire	Administer Multilingual Literacy SIFE Screener	Administer Writing Screening Tools

SIFE Screening and Identification Process

SIFEs are first identified as ELLs, therefore, schools should follow the protocol established in CR Part 154 for the identification and placement of ELLs and <u>then</u> follow the procedures for the identification of SIFE.

To determine potential SIFE status:

- **Qualified personnel** administers SIFE Oral Interview Questionnaire. The interview must be conducted in English and in the ELLs home language

If the results of the Oral Interview Questionnaire indicate that a student is a potential SIFE, the **MULTILINGUAL LITERACY SIFE SCREENER (MLS)**, the **WRITING SCREENER, and the Math screener** should be administered in the student's home Language to determine their literacy and math skills in their home language.

When a SIFE scores on the **Transitioning** proficiency level on the NYSESLAT, the student's status as a SIFE is removed.

However, the student is still an ELL until reaching the exit criteria from ELL status.

Purpose of the MLS

▶ To determine what resources students bring upon arrival to the US.

▶ To measure academic literacy and math skills in students' home languages <u>which are transferable to the new language.</u>

▶ To provide teachers with specific information about students' strengths and weaknesses.

▶ To inform teachers as to a SIFE's literacy level in their home language, and to provide a starting point for literacy instruction.

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Overview of the Multilingual Literacy SIFE Screener

What is the MLS? The MLS is a multilingual reading comprehension module with additional literacy sections available, used to inform teachers and administrators of the home language literacy skills their students bring with them when they begin schooling in New York State.

Who administers the MLS? - Trained, qualified personnel administer the MLS

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Characteristics of the MLS

- It is computer adaptive: the student keeps taking as long as she/he is able to answer questions in his/her home language. This can mean a 5-minute or 45-minute assessment
- The MLS tests Reading Comprehension, Vocabulary, Early Literacy, Writing and Math in the home language
- Research-based and created by university team at the CUNY Graduate Center
- Culturally competent assessment of multilingual students' home language and content competencies
- The reports are a valuable introductory tool to plan instruction for students above 3rd grade, and also to distinguish levels among a mixed group of SIFEs at, or below 3rd grade

- The MLS is an **adaptive online assessment** that reflects current literature-based curricula and didactic principles from students' home countries for Grades 3–9

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Languages of the MLS

Reading Comprehension		Vocabulary	Early Literacy
Arabic	Burmese	Chinese	Spanish
Bengla	French	English	English
Chinese	Fulani	Spanish	(2 languages)
English	Nepali	Urdu	
Haitian Creole		(4 languages)	**Math**
Maay Maay	Russian		Arabic
S'gaw Karen	Somali		Bengla
Spanish	Swahili		Chinese (simplified Mandarin)
Urdu	(16 languages)		Haitian Creole
			Spanish
			(5 languages)

MLS Administration

- Use FIREFOX or Chrome only

- Link: **mls.slalab.org**

- Master password: **mlsnysed**
- Click on: Apply for an account, and submit. Approval should come within three days.

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Why is it important to know your SIFEs?

What makes SIFE's needs unique?

What assets and Funds of Knowledge do your SIFEs bring to the classroom?

How do you use this knowledge in your classroom?

What makes SIFE's needs unique?

- As their education has been interrupted, inconsistent, and in certain cases, unavailable, SIFEs may have complex social and psychological needs due to possible traumatic migration experiences, war, lack of access to education, socio-economic or cultural circumstances, frustrations with their academic delays in relation to their peers, a lack of familiarity with school culture, and feelings of isolation in school. (NYSED)

- Stress: As a result of any of these situations or any combination of factors, the student may suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, may be under severe distress, or may be completely overwhelmed by the need to assimilate to a new school environment in a new language.

What makes SIFE's needs unique? (Continued)

Literacy and academic gaps: Students may not be able to read or write in their native language. They may also lack an understanding of basic concepts, content knowledge and critical thinking skills that their peers may have mastered.

If your SIFEs fall under these categories, what would you do to help them meet those needs?

What makes SIFE's needs unique? (Continued)

- SIFEs require instruction in the **basic skills and concepts** necessary for academic success. Educators have to constantly think about what their students need, so they can include them in their planning.

- SIFEs are at high risk of dropping out of high school due to the precarious nature of their situation.

  (Colorin Colorado online 12/2016)

Please answer the following questions regarding your SIFE instructional practices:

| Item	Never	Sometimes	Almost always
1. I encourage SIFEs to use their home language to process and develop ideas.			
2. I give clear instructions as to when SIFEs must only use English to express themselves and demonstrate mastery.			
3. I teach routines and model how to use resources to promote the academic independence of SIFEs.			
4. I model and promote a respectful classroom environment that allows ELLs to participate and take risks in the classroom.			
5. I provide SWIRL activities for my ELLs in my daily instruction. (Speaking, writing, interacting, reading, listening).			
6. I use Total Physical Response (TPR) and other ELL strategies to promote English language development.			
7. I plan instruction thoughtfully to identify unfamiliar content and language features that are needed for SIFEs to access the language and concept goals of my lesson.			
8. I allocate time during my classes to work in small groups with my SIFEs and provide time for them to work collaboratively with their peers.			
9. I assign independent practice after I have provided the necessary scaffolds.			
10. I provide daily practice with language and word study in English and in the home language of my SIFE.			
Personal thoughts...			

Turn and Talk

Discuss with your partner (s) some pre-literacy skills and concepts you think are necessary that your students need to develop.

Pre-literacy Skills and Concepts

- Academic habits: listening, paying attention, how to hold a pencil/pen, how to identify pictures, note taking, how to study, how to participate in class discussions, etc.

- Create a print-rich environment by posting the alphabet, vocabulary words, posters, charts, students' work etc. (could be in English and in the home language; consider age-appropriate displays)

- Must have a library in the room with books in the home language and in English.

- The teacher must help students develop a culture of reading & writing, and help them understand the usefulness of reading and writing in life.

How do we read a text written in English?

1. In general, we approach a text with a purpose in mind

2. We bring some prior knowledge of the topic.
   The more familiar the topic, and event, the easier
   it is for the reader to understand the text.
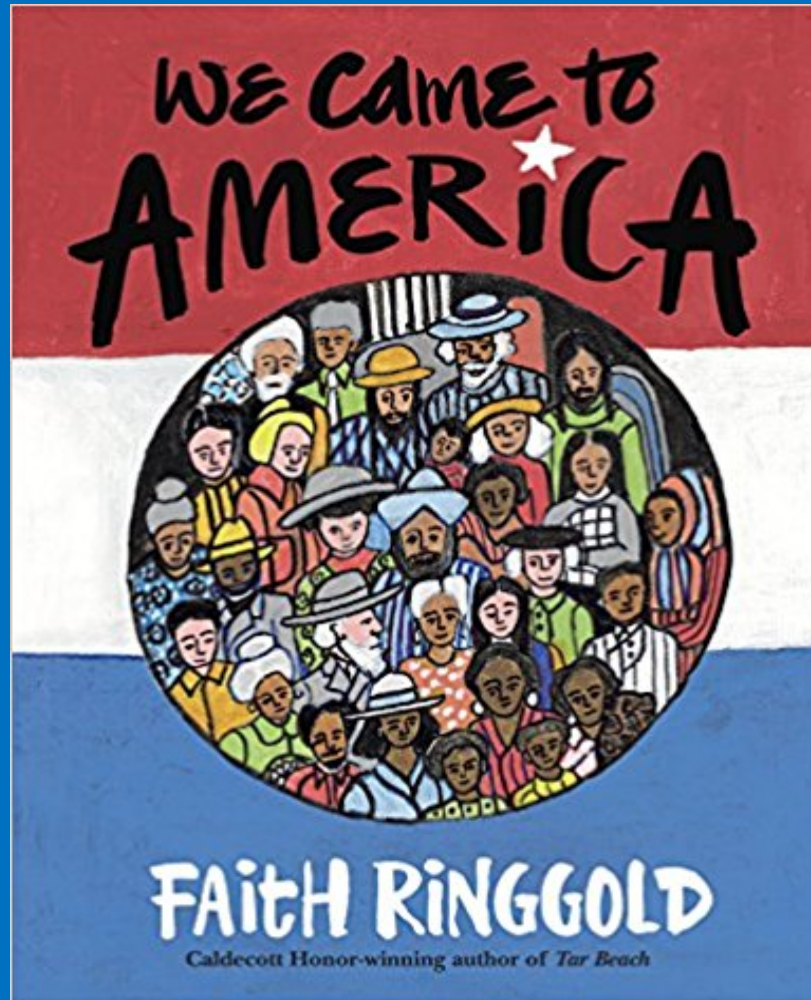
3.We activate prior knowledge of the topic of the text by imagining what we know and don't know about the topic. We predict what the text will be about, and we generate questions that the text might answer.

4. Processing the print involves decoding the words on the page. (This is a mental or verbal way to access meaning). However, decoding word by word is insufficient as some students are able to call out words in a sentence without understanding the meaning. **Without meaning, reading does not take place.**

The Language Experience Approach (LEA)

This approach is very effective with SIFEs.

Ex. The topic or experience of immigration is something that all SIFEs have experienced. T asks:

Where do you come from?

Why did you leave your country?

How did you come to the United States?

Research has proven how **experiences** are important to language development. This will support oral language, which then supports reading and writing development. Thus, it is important to take students on field trips; to have them see, listen to, taste, touch, and do things.

Foundational Skills SIFEs need to be taught:

- Foundational Skills of literacy: how print works, the alphabet, the phonetic system of English, and other basic conventions of the English writing system.

- Students must have opportunities to learn <u>foundational literacy skills</u> through <u>thematic units </u>of study, and <u>direct instruction</u>.

- Foundational skills include: the alphabet, letter sounds, one-to-one correspondence, decoding, phonics, grammar, syntax, reading comprehension, the four modalities (<u>listening, speaking, reading and writing</u>), etc.

(www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RF/K/)

- In English, words are read from left to right, top to bottom, and page by page

- Spoken words and sounds are represented in written language by specific letters and sounds

- Associate long and short sounds with common spellings.
- Read high-frequency words by sight. Read leveled text with purpose and understanding

(www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RF/K/)

NYSED Bridges to Academic Success Curriculum

admin@bridges-sifeproject.com
www.bridges-sifeproject.com

American Reading Company

Additional Effective Practices for Teaching SIFEs

- Contextualize their schema (background knowledge, prior knowledge). Help them make that connection, allow them to talk about their experience. For example: if you're teaching about the drought in California, find out if any of them have ever experienced a drought. Also use pictures, video clips, charts, graphic organizers.

- Must use scaffolding through: pictures (that are as real as possible to remove ambiguity), realia, video clips, connecting to prior knowledge, body movement, sentence frames, sentence starters

Turn and Talk

Home language support is very important.

Why do you think this is so?

If Home Language Instruction is not possible, the teacher can use other staff for translation when necessary. They could also have more advanced students who speak the same home language as the new students to translate for them. (However, this should not be all day long).

In addition to this, the next best thing is to teach content areas through ENL methodologies in a way that makes content accessible, and that allows students to use their home language as needed.

SIFEs must have hands-on, real life experiences through the discovery approach. They must see, touch, and do. They must go on field trips to a variety of places.

Exit Ticket: Closure

- What do you now know about SIFEs and how to teach them that you did not know before this workshop?

- What are three takeaways you will start incorporating with your SIFEs as soon as possible?

- Thank you for your work on behalf of SIFE and your participation in our workshop.

- Please complete our evaluation form.

Resources

- Center for Applied Linguistics: http://www.cal.org
- Colorín colorado - http://www.colorincolorado.org/teaching-english-language-learners
- Common Core State Standards - http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/
- **Differentiating Instruction and Assessment for English Language Learners:** **A Guide for K-12 Teachers, Shelley Fiarbairn and Stephaney Jones-Vo**
- Moll, L. et al, Funds of Knowledge, 2005 - http://cmmr.usc.edu/FullText/Luis_Moll_Hidden_Family_Resources.pdf
- NYCDOE SIFE Educator Resources - http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/ELL/EducatorResources/SIFE.htm
- NYSED Bridges Program, Lisa auslander, Project Director –http://www.nysed.gov/bilingual-ed/schools/students-interruptedinconsistent-formal-education-sifeNYSED SIFE
- NYSED Engage NY - https://www.engageny.org/
- NYSED Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages - http://www.nysed.gov/program-offices/office-bilingual-education-and-world-languages-obewl
- NYC RBERN at Fordham University

  https://www.fordham.edu/info/21065/nysnyc_regional_bilingual_education_resource_network
- NYSED Statewide Language RBERN - http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/metrocenter/center/technical_assistance/program/language_rbern/