

From the Bilingual/ESL Department



More information about Newcomer sub-populations

Who are Newcomer students??

Newcomers are recent immigrant students in their first 1 to 3 years in the United States. Students arrive to school in the United States with varying educational backgrounds and previous exposure to English.

Please review the information below for essential concepts related to providing instruction that supports Newcomer students' English language development.

Comprehensible Input

An important factor in language learning is Comprehensible Input, which is language input that can be understood by listeners despite not understanding all the words and structures.

Strategies for more comprehensible input include:

- Visuals, gestures, physical objects, modeling
- Clear enunciation & slower rate of speech
- Speech/text appropriate to proficiency level
- Strategic vocabulary instruction
- Use of native language supports
- Chunking reading texts or multi-step tasks

The blog post below shares concrete examples of making classroom language more comprehensible



Academic Language

Teachers should remember that Newcomers are learning English at all three tiers of vocabulary:

Tier 1 - Words of everyday speech

e.g. go, book, stop, open, happy, table, home

Tier 2 - High-frequency words found across content areas and topics

e.g. create, analyze, fortunate, valuable, pressure

Tier 3 - Lower-frequency, content-specific words

e.g. continent, omnivore, atom, isosceles, thesis

Across all content areas, teachers should scaffold instruction to help develop students' understanding of course-specific vocabulary as well as more common, everyday language.

FAQs

Q: How should I use Newcomer students' native language in instruction?

A: Be aware that translanguaging (using native language to access English) is a common part of the language learning process, so at times it may be easier for Newcomers to express themselves in their first language. However, teachers should provide scaffolds to help build students' confidence in writing or speaking in English. Additionally, be cautious about the use of Google Translate. It can be a very useful tool, but simply translating course materials is not a replacement for making content in English more comprehensible through scaffolds and supports.

Q: Can Newcomer students test in languages other than English?

A: STAAR assessments are only available in Spanish for grades 3-5, and the LPAC committee makes assessment decisions on a case-by-case basis. Newcomers in grades 6 and above will take STAAR assessments in English.

Online Resources



Rosetta Stone is a web-based language development program that is available to Newcomer students in grades 5-12, accessible through ClassLinks. Students can move through the program independently, but teachers should remember that it is a supplemental program and be cautious to limit how long students spend on the program in one sitting.



Summit K12 is a web-based TELPAS preparation program available to all EB students. The “ELPS Mastery” section can be particularly helpful for Newcomer students to learn basics of the English language.



Ellevation is a teacher-facing website with students profiles for all EB students. In the “Strategies” section, teachers can also find activities and other instructional ideas.

For support with Rosetta Stone, Summit K12, or Ellevation please contact your instructional support points of contact listed below.

Links to Other Helpful Resources



← [Newcomer Resources Google Drive Folder](#)

This folder includes several printable resources that teachers can use to help students with essential classroom language and vocabulary. Also included is a one-page summary of the Texas ELPS.



← [“8 Tips for Welcoming Newcomer Students” from Colorin Colorado](#)

These are approachable strategies that teachers and school staff can implement to help students feel at home in their new school. Videos about each strategy are also embedded in the blog post.



← [Making Content Comprehensible Blog Post from Valentina Gonzalez](#)

This blog post provides great examples of how teachers can modify their speech to help Newcomer students understand. She provides clear, easy-to-implement techniques for any classroom teacher.



← [Tips for Teaching Newcomers in Elementary.](#)

[Tips for Teaching Newcomers in Secondary.](#)



Two useful videos with examples of strategies that teachers use with their Newcomer students.



Instructional Support Contact Information:

Elementary Supervisor - Stephanie Reyes

Elementary Instructional Coaches - Diana Dominguez & Melissa Garcia

Dual Language Program Coordinator - Arcie Pizarro

Secondary Supervisor - Roxann Lujan

Junior High Instructional Coach - Sergio Sarabia

High School Instructional Coaches - Gail Glenn & Chris Hague



Click or scan the QR code to visit the EB Department directory.