

Exemplary Programs for Secondary Newcomer English Language Learners

Slides 1–4

PEGGIE: Welcome; this is Peggie Garcia from the National Charter School Resource Center. We welcome you to the second webinar of our series focused on English language learners in charter schools. The title of this second webinar is *Exemplary Programs for Secondary Newcomer English Language Learners*. The National Charter School Resource Center is funded by the U. S. Department of Education, and we are pleased to be able to work with the Department to host this series. We'll be hosting a series of 12 webinars in 2012 and this is the second of the twelve. All of the webinars will be archived on our website, so if you miss one you're welcome to go to our website and view the archive.

Let me give you a quick orientation to the webinar platform and then I will go ahead and introduce our presenter. We'll do a few quick polls to get a sense of who is in the audience, then we'll go ahead and turn it over to the presenter for her slide presentation, and then we'll wrap up with Q and A at the end. On the left-hand side of the webinar platform, you'll see a chat window. You're welcome to enter a chat in that space at any time during the webinar. Please go ahead and enter your questions via chat. We are going to keep everyone muted on the phone to preserve the audio quality of the recording, but please enter any questions you have at any time during the webinar. Dr. Short will pause at a couple of different times during the webinar to take questions, and then we'll save a good 15 or 20 minutes for questions at the end.

Underneath the chat window, there's something that says "NCSRC file share" and there are two files there. I sent a reminder to all of the people who were registered this morning with a pdf of the slide set. In case you did not receive that slide set, you can download the file that says "2/23 presentation slides." All you do is click on that and the "save to my computer" button will pop up, and you should be able to download it to your computer without a problem. You can also use the full-screen option in the upper right-hand corner of your screen and that will help you make the PowerPoint a little bit larger. The second



file in the file share window is the full report, *Helping Newcomer Students Succeed in Secondary Schools and Beyond*, which Dr. Short will talk more about today. If you're interested in accessing the full report, you're welcome to download it from the file share window at any time during the webinar.

The final piece that I'd like to point out is in the chat I put a web address: www.cal.org/calweb. I think you can see which one I mean. There's a database of newcomer programs that Dr. Short has developed, so you can click on that link and get right to the database if you'd like to sort by state or by type of program or a variety of different filter functions. There are a couple of reminders in the note section at the bottom. We will be archiving this webinar and it will be available within three business days, so it should be up by the end of the day Tuesday of next week, if not earlier. Again, please feel free to use the file down share or enter a chat at any time with any questions that you might have. I think that's it for the orientation to the platform.

We are really pleased to have with us today Dr. Deborah Short. She's a senior research associate affiliated with the Center for Applied Linguistics, a nonprofit organization for language, education, research, policy, and practice in Washington, D.C. She codeveloped the research-validated SIOP [Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol] model and has directed quasi-experimental and experimental studies on English language learners that were funded by the Carnegie Corporation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Education. She recently completed a three-year study of newcomer programs from middle and high school English language learners, culminating in the report *Helping Newcomer Students Succeed in Secondary Schools and Beyond*; that report is in the file share window and the database is also in the chat. As director of Academic Language Research and Training, a consulting group, Dr. Short works with districts in the U.S. and abroad on professional development and curriculum design for sheltered instruction and academic literacy. We welcome Dr. Short to the webinar. Thank you for joining us.

We're going to go ahead and do a couple of quick polls. The first one is familiarity with newcomer programs. Go ahead and enter, at any time, how familiar you are with newcomer programs: I've never heard of them, I know they exist but have limited knowledge about these

programs, or I am very familiar with newcomer programs. We'll let that go for a few more seconds. It looks like not too many of you are very familiar with newcomer programs, so that's great. We have a lot to learn from Dr. Short today. It looks like the majority are kind of in the middle, but we've got a good number of people who have never heard of newcomer programs. Thank you all for joining us today and expanding your knowledge about newcomer programs.

One more: Of those of you in the audience, do you serve ELLs in your schools or districts who have recently arrived in the U.S.? It looks like quite a few of you do have recently arrived ELLs, the majority definitely. Then, the last question: Do you have special training to serve newcomer adolescents? The options are: I have not received any special training, I have received some limited training or participated in related professional development, or you consider yourselves to have received quite a bit of training focused on serving newcomer adolescents.

At least this will be a first attempt to provide you with an introduction to newcomer programs and some of the training that teachers and charter school educators might need to serve newcomers in charter schools appropriately. Dr. Short, are you ready to go?

DR. SHORT: I'm absolutely ready to go.

PEGGIE: Great. I will transition it over to you. Welcome.

Slide 5

DR. SHORT: Thank you, Peggie, and thank the [AUDIO SKIP]. Good afternoon to everybody. I think it's afternoon for [AUDIO SKIP] having a wonderful day in DC. It feels like spring. I participated in and ran a three-year research [AUDIO SKIP] run you though a little bit of the [AUDIO SKIP] then get into some of the findings. [INAUDIBLE] might imagine, over the course of three years, you gather a lot of data. I've tried to cull it down to the things that might be most interesting to all of you, but as Peggie said, there will be opportunities for you to send questions to me and I can try to respond live, as it were, when we read them in the chat.

Let me start with what the research questions were. We wanted to ... I should also just clarify, we were focused on programs that served middle school and high school students. In principle, that was grade 6 and higher. Our questions had to do with which programs led to academic success for these students, and I'll tell you more about how the students were defined and what evidence of success the programs collected and were able to share. The next question had to do with the different pathways that moved students into the newcomer program and then out of it into other programs in their schools, plus transitions between school levels. How did a middle school newcomer move into a high school and what happened at the end of high school for newcomer students or former newcomer students?

Slide 6

Two other questions dealt with more of the social capital areas with regard to whether or not social service agencies and other partnerships linked up with the newcomer program, and whether or not there were some barriers that restricted student access to these social services and also to the postsecondary options that they might have. You might imagine that there are quite a number of barriers, particularly for postsecondary, and I'll talk about those in a little bit.

Slide 7

In terms of our project tasks, our first activity was to conduct a national survey of newcomer programs and, by this, it was a voluntary survey. We asked programs that we knew about to fill out our survey form, and collected that data. Not everyone that we knew about was able to participate, and we imagine there were some that we couldn't find who didn't participate either. I don't have the full universe of newcomer programs in our database, but we did create profiles of all of the programs that did participate and posted those profiles in the database, and you can see the web address there for you. As Peggie mentioned, it is searchable by a number of different filter categories. If you're interested in programs within a school, for a middle school student in Iowa, you could find them.

I would also let you know that newcomer programs are not always stable. That's not to say that they're not stable, but in terms of their

funding streams and whether or not they exist ... At various times during the three years, we had close to 70 programs in our database. When we did the final update last year, we were down to 63. Some new programs had joined, some programs had closed, and that is that transient nature we have seen both [AUDIO SKIP] in tasks that we were charged with, with conducting case studies on promising programs.

We had several criteria for these programs; in particular, they had to be ones that had existed for at least five years and ones that were collecting some data that would show that their programs were successful for the students. With regard to the case study, we went and visited with the programs, we examined documents, we sat in classes, we interviewed teachers and students, and all the nine yards in that regard. What resulted from both the analysis of the database information and the case studies is the report that you see the little cover image of, that's *Helping Newcomer Students Succeed in Secondary Schools and Beyond*. As Peggie said, it is available online for download.

Slide 8

A couple of things to set the stage here. First of all, newcomer students are found in every state in the U.S. You may be in what we call traditional “port of entry” states, such as New York or California or Texas, or you may be in some of the new “destination” states, which seem to go across the center of the country—from Georgia and the Carolinas, through Tennessee, through Nebraska and Wyoming, and up into Oregon and Washington. Those states are seeing rapid increases in the number of newcomer students, although their numbers still don't equal the numbers that you would find in New York, California, New Jersey, Illinois, and Texas.

Slide 9

What we also found is that the programs identify and label the students slightly differently in terms of their definitions. All of the newcomer ELLs in the programs do lack English proficiency. They're all at the lowest level or below [AUDIO SKIP] had some educational gaps, but not all. Here on this slide, what you can see is that sometimes the

newcomers are literate newcomers, and I'll talk about this in a minute. Some of them are SIFE students [students with interrupted formal education]; that's a term that was coined in New York and has been spreading around the country. Those are students with interrupted formal education. Sometimes, the newcomer students are late-entry immigrant students who might arrive after the first quarter of the school year.

Slide 10

If you look at this next slide, I tried to help break this down a little bit. The literate newcomer students, there are two types: One might be particularly on grade level—they've been to school in their own country, they haven't missed any grades, they come over and they are placed in the middle or high school having the educational background knowledge and literacy in their first language. You can see we have the pluses there—in their first language, they're literate; they have grade-level content area knowledge. For those students, their English literacy development tends to be faster than average.

The second group of literate students is those with partial schooling. They typically have first-language literacy, but they've missed some years or they have gaps in their educational background, so their grade-level content knowledge is not equal to their peers in the class. Their English literacy development will proceed at a pretty average pace, however, because they do have literacy in that first language.

The SIFE students—those are the ones with the interrupted educational backgrounds—most of them do not have proficient literacy in their first language. They may have some skills—they certainly have oral skills in their first language—but they may not read and write at grade level or they may not read and write at all. Their content area knowledge is below that of their peers because they have missed quite a bit of schooling. As a result, their English literacy development will be slower than expected or than hoped for because they do not have that literacy in the first language to build from.

If you look underneath the table, you will see that I noted "late entrants can fit any of these categories." Some of the programs that are set up to collect, one might say, students who arrive after, say the first quarter

or the first semester, they could be literate, they could be SIFE, they could be at grade level in their schooling or below grade level, and they would fit into the program as it's been designed.

Slide 11

Within these programs, the way they are designed is specifically for these students, expecting that they have no or very limited English proficiency and, as I mentioned, many of them had students with limited formal education. One of the key things about most newcomer programs is that they are enrolled in the program for a limited period of time. You'll see on the slide later that most of the programs are for one year or one year plus a summer. Most of the programs are also already within a school, but there are other site models that I will talk about. The programs within a school mean the students are there in the school—that might be their neighborhood school or it might be a school that they are bused to—and they spend most of the day with other newcomer students, but part of the time they may be in electives or lunch with the rest of the student body.

Most of the programs will use sheltered instruction or bilingual education to help the students with the curriculum to get the grade-level content that they need. Also, they sometimes will use bilingual measures to help assess their native language literacy and their background of schooling in their native language. Finally, this last bullet is that the programs have been designed for students who are not ready for what's typically an ESL 1 class. Again, this varies across the country, but often what will happen is that students will be in a newcomer program and when they exit that, they go into ESL 1. There are some programs where they exit as newcomer and they actually go into ESL 2. We'll talk a little bit about that as time goes on.

Slide 12

The goals of the program, particularly the first goal for all of them, are to help the students acquire beginning English skills. They learn:

- Social language (“Hello,” “How are you?”)
- Survival language (“I need to see a nurse.”)

- Basic classroom language (understanding when the teacher says, “Please open your textbook”; “Please take out a pen and paper.”)

They also start providing, and this is that second bullet, some instruction in core content areas. It might be through a bilingual methodology or ESL or sheltered instruction methodology, but they realize they don’t want to just rely on teaching ESL or English as a new language to the students; they also have to start helping them with the academic rigor that is expected in our middle and high schools.

The third bullet is talking about the need to help the students get used to U.S. schooling. I will broaden that to also say that most of the programs help the parents become used to the way school works in the U.S. and the expectations for parental involvement as well as expectations for the student’s participation.

Finally quite a number of programs recognize that the research on native language literacy is pretty strong in showing that if students do have those skills, their acquisition of English can be sped up. Quite a number of programs have ways to help develop the native language literacy among the students; even if they’re not using bilingual education, they may be encouraging students to have a Spanish book club, for example, after school where they’ll read books and talk about that in Spanish to work on developing those skills.

Slide 13

Let me share with you on this slide some of the common features across all of the programs. You may have guessed from some of my comments to date that there’s quite a bit of variability, but here on this slide we talk about some of the things that are shared. The first one is that the program or the courses are distinct from a regular ESL program. They often lead into that, but they are not ESL 1. The instructional strategies focus on literacy development and here is something that’s important to keep in mind, particularly for the SIFE students. Many of these students will learn how to read and read to learn at the middle or high school grades when they arrive in the U.S., so the teachers of these students may not be used to teaching basic literacy skills, but that is a critical need for students so that they can

begin to really participate and be successful in school. The instructional strategies have to be there for teaching basic literacy and content area literacy.

The other thing connects to what I said earlier: Many of the programs feel the need to start teaching some core content classes, and they may not cover all of the subjects depending if they're a half-day or a full-day program, but they'll cover ones in particular where they know there are gaps in the educational background of the students. Within those content classes, they are also very much aware that they have to integrate language development, and that's where sheltered instruction comes in. You're teaching the content in ways that make it comprehensible to the students, with supports, visuals, graphics, videos, gestures, and the like, but also paying attention to what the academic language needs are for every particular content area being taught.

As I mentioned before, they do work on orienting the students to U.S. schools and to the U.S. culture and the community, and some of them do that through extracurricular field trips. Sometimes, they actually have a course or what we might call a T.A., a type of advisory period, where they work specifically with the newcomer students for maybe half hour every morning to help them become used to what is expected in U.S. schools.

They also look for materials that are appropriate. We're thinking about adolescents, and I always remember what one of the founders of a program in Illinois said to me; he said, "I've got high school students; they don't know English, but they're going to be turned off if I give them books with doggies and fish and birdies." To me, that's absolutely appropriate. We have to find them materials that are developmentally appropriate for the students, but are designed for their low literacy.

Other things we find in these programs are teachers who are very experienced in working with newcomer students. For many of the programs in our database, the coordinator or the principal was able to say that they get to hand pick the teachers who work with the newcomers because it is a special breed, in some ways, and you do want ones who have had experience and training. There's also quite a bit of paraprofessional support in these schools, and this is one way

they bring in native language role models for the students. In some of the programs, such as the one in Columbus, Ohio, where 50 percent of their students are Somalian, they're able to bring in adults who can work as paraprofessionals who speak Somali and can communicate with the students and provide some of the structures and supports that they need in the school.

Finally here, all of the programs find ways to make connections to the families to help them feel more comfortable with the school—not so overwhelmed, for example—and also connect them to different social services. Those might be health related, job related, food, apartments—those kinds of things to help the families feel comfortable because they realize if the families feel comfortable the students will be better prepared to be learning in the school.

Peggie, I don't know if we had any questions here. I could pause for a question or two, or I can move and talk a little bit about the findings from the 63 programs in the database.

PEGGIE: Why don't we do one question and maybe we can come back to this one a little bit more later. Kristen is asking what options are available for students who arrive in school districts within the U.S. that do not have newcomer programs. Then, a related question might be for some of the charter schools on the line who have only a small number of students: What kinds of supports might they be able to provide if they can't do a full-fledged newcomer program? Maybe you could respond a little bit to Kristen's question and then we can come back with some recommendations later in the webinar.

DR. SHORT: Absolutely. I think when I get to the section on the case studies and tell you what's working in the different sites, you'll be able to see certain pieces that you could pull and use even if you don't have enough students to create a full program. Certainly some critical things are important to keep in mind in that kind of situation. If you do have the students who don't have literacy in English, and they are a very small number, you probably want to create some type of intervention for the students. If you can't fit it into the school day, you may do it as extra time after school where someone is really working on literacy development with these students. If they're not able to participate in any of the classes due to their educational backgrounds and their lack

of literacy in English, it might be better actually to find something during the school day; otherwise, that's a waste of time for them unless you have teachers who are well trained to work with those particular students or you have a paraprofessional who could work one on one or one with a small group of these particular students. I think we will address this a little bit more as we go through the next piece.

Slide 14

Let's talk a little bit about the database. As I mentioned, our numbers varied over the course of the three years when we did the surveys and did our updates, but the findings I'll share with you are based on the programs that are currently in the database, and that are available online.

Slide 15

The first thing was to find out who these students were; within the programs, there were students from 90 different countries, actually more than 90 different countries and they represented 55 different native languages. As you can imagine, that's quite a mix, and even if a program wanted to offer bilingual education, in some senses, there were quite a number of languages where they couldn't find materials or teachers who could speak the languages of the students.

The student size was also quite variable. We had one program where they had nine students and we had another program, which is a high school in New York City, where there were 930 students in that one building, so you can see where there's a big variability in numbers that are being served. Some of the programs serve mostly refugee students; in other words, these are designated by the State Department; they've come over. In fact, there are a few programs that only serve refugee students, such as one of our case study sites in Omaha. Others serve mostly immigrant students, and then quite a number have a mix.

What I thought was interesting too is this next bullet, that 96 percent of the programs have some students with interrupted formal education. That means that's an issue that all of the programs are confronting: how to help the students who don't have literacy in their first language.

As you also might imagine, many of these students come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, so more than 90 percent qualify for the free and reduced-price lunch status in their schools.

Slide 16

Take a look at some of this demographic information about the programs. There were 24 states that participated; 63 programs across those 24 states. About one-half of them were in urban settings, one-third were in suburban, and about one-sixth were in rural settings. The rural number was actually higher than it was 10 years ago, as was the suburban number, so we know there's been more dispersal of these newcomer families.

You might not be surprised to know that most of the programs in our database were from California, New York, and Texas, but North Carolina also has quite a number of programs. Then there are the new states, compared with our former research:

- Arkansas
- Kentucky
- North Dakota
- Rhode Island
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Wyoming

That again is that swath across the middle of the United States that are receiving more newcomer and immigrant families and are being labeled by demographers as new destination states.

Slide 17

Then, we have the different kinds of programs. What we were able to ascertain is four different types of school levels that were being served. As you can see, almost 30 percent of the programs were designated as middle school sites; this means they serve grades 6, 7, and 8, 7 and 8, or some combination of those grades. Then, we have the high school sites, and almost half of them consider themselves high school sites. Many of the high school sites considered their students only ninth-graders because they weren't coming in with credits, and in the

current mode of educational reform and accountability, you have to have enough credits to be labeled a 10–grader, as you might imagine. We had quite a number, almost one-fifth of the programs, which were combined middle and high school, so they might serve students in grades 6 through 12 or they might serve 6 through 9—again following that same notion of ninth-graders being the highest grade that the newcomer high school students could enter.

We had a few programs, just four of the 63, that had multiple sites; some were middle schools and some were high schools, so that was more of a districtwide programmatic design with different kinds of implementation. Our site models were also interesting—and there are three, and this is consistent with when we did our research the prior time—and that was more than half of the programs are what we call a program within the school. As I mentioned, that often is the neighborhood school or a neighborhood school for some students, and others are bused to it. They're in the school with other students and they may have a half-day or even a full-day program where the newcomer students travel together to the different courses, but they'll interact with the students in some of the electives, such as gym, lunch time, or afterschool activities.

The next model is a separate site, which means these students are not in a school or a program within a school. Township 214, a high school district in Illinois, are part of a building that is an alternative high school, but they have their own site within the building, and the six high schools can send their newcomer students to this particular newcomer program. They stay at that program for one year and then they return to their neighborhood high schools. A separate site is not a full school—it may just be a grade, it may cover several grades— but it is not a program within a school. The label, I think, is pretty clear; it's a separate site.

Then there's the whole school, and these are middle schools that students might enter in grade 6 and they get to stay through grade 8 and then exit, or they might be high school where the students enter at grade 9 and they stay through grade 12, hopefully, and graduate. As you can see, those are the smallest groups that we have in the program.

Slide 18

In terms of the length of the enrollment, you can see that very few programs have the students for less than one year. In fact, one of these three programs is only a summer program for four weeks in the summer that prepares the students before they enter high school. That's actually a model that some of the charter schools might consider: to do an entry summer program for newcomer students to help prepare them with the basic social and academic language and understand how course schedules work, for example, in U.S. schools.

A little over a third of the programs are for one school year. The next group is a variable group in the sense that it's one year and more than one year. There are options that ... I guess the way to say it is the programs are flexible in how long the students might need to stay with them. An example might be the International Newcomer Academy in Fort Worth. If they receive the literate newcomer students, they would stay with them for about one school year; they are a separate site, so then the students would go off to their assigned high school. But if they receive the SIFE newcomers, those students might stay with them for a year and a half or even two years before they move on to their separate high schools.

There's some flexibility here and, within this group also, are programs that last for one school year plus summer, and the summer might be before the year, after the year, or both. They might get two summers and a year in that particular design. Almost one-third of the programs, 30 percent, are more than one year. Again, some of this is connected to the fact that if they're a whole school they might be there for three or four years, but also for some of those students who are SIFE and have significant educational gaps, they need more time to be ready to enter the regular school.

You can see here the length of the daily program also varies—full day for almost three-quarters of the programs. A few of them are more than a half day, which means maybe four periods or five periods out of seven. Some of them are half day, a few are less than half day, and in our database, only one program is an afterschool program. What's interesting about that one is it's also not part of the school district. It is

a local community group that provides the afterschool program for the newcomer students.

Slide 19

Let's talk a little bit about instruction. As you can see at the top here, 88 percent of the programs designate themselves as ESL programs and 12 percent are bilingual programs. There are a few that designate themselves one or the other but actually offer both, and one that comes to mind is the Academy for New Americans in New York City; it's a middle school separate-site program. They offer a bilingual track for Spanish-speaking students, but an ESL track for students who speak other languages. They have a very unique and complicated scheduling process of their courses, but it's been very successful for 15 years.

You can see that all of them offer some type of ESL or sheltered English language arts or English language development course. If you add up the content instruction piece, about 96–97 percent of the programs offer some content, so it's content in at least one area—math, science, social studies, language arts. About a quarter offer specifically a native language literacy or native language arts course. You can see that more than two-thirds offer cross-cultural orientation and half offer reading interventions and study skills as well. Some of the high schools, particularly the whole schools, try to provide some career orientation or vocational ed for the students.

Slide 20

PEGGIE: We have one question about meeting graduation requirements, but I think we'll save that until after the case studies. One question from Beatrice: She's asking about transition from newcomer programs into traditional schools or traditional districts. I don't know if you want to respond to that now or if you want to wait a bit.

DR. SHORT: I can talk a little bit about it. I think that will come up too as I talk a little bit on the case studies. The most common design is students come in and they are in a newcomer program for one year, they exit the newcomer program when they've learned some basics—the language of math, how to write a science lab or conduct a science experiment,

some basic ESL vocabulary, for example—and then they would enter an ESL 1 class. What typically is done with the ESL 1 students is they might have two or three hours a day, periods a day, focused on English as a second language, and then they might have a math class, a science class, a gym class. As they move up to ESL 2, they might have fewer periods of ESL and more periods of content areas, for example.

What we see with other kinds of transitions though might be: What do you do if you have newcomer students who are at the eighth-grade level and then they're going to move to a high school? That's where some of the programs that we examined in the case study do a great job of making connections with the high school staff who are going to receive the students and try to ... they do everything from shadowing, in the sense that they'll send the students over to the high school for a day or two to follow a former newcomer student or another ESL student who perhaps speaks the native language of the student to get used to what a high school program is like. You might see where high schools will come and do some presentations, and they'll invite some students from the high school to the newcomer program and talk about what it's going to be like when they're making that transition. There are a variety of things, and I think you'll see some more as we go through the next couple of slides.

We looked at 10 different programs and these are the ones that were part of our case study. As I mentioned, they had to be in operation for five years; they had to be collecting some data that showed some evidence of success for the students. We also wanted to have a variety in the types of site models, the types of grade levels being served, and the locations around the country; then, of course, they had to agree to participate. We had one program that agreed to participate and then it was closed over the summer before we got to go and visit. As I mentioned, they can be a little transient sometimes.

Slide 21

With regard to high school, we had four that were high schools; the first two, the High School of World Cultures and the International High School at Lafayette, are whole-school models. The students could enter at ninth grade and stay through 12th. The second one, the Port

of Entry, was a model of a program within a school. The students are pretty much ninth-grade students and then, after they've been in the program for one or two years, they go into the regular high school program that's available. Then, we had the Newcomer Center, which was a separate-site program in Arlington Heights, Illinois; that's the one I mentioned before where there are six high schools in that district and all of them can send newcomer students to this separate site for one year to build up their background knowledge, their educational backgrounds, and their English skills before they return to their high schools as 10th-graders.

The middle school sites: There was Salina, which is in Dearborn, Michigan. That's a program within a school. What's really unique about that one is its 97 percent Arabic-speaking students and very active within the Arabic community there. The Academy for New Americans, I mentioned before, is the one where they have a Spanish track and an ESL track for students, and that's a separate-site one-year program.

Slide 22

We had combined middle and high school. There was the Columbus Global Academy, which covers grades 6 through 12. It had been a separate site, but last year was given permission to start giving its own high school diplomas, so it's now considered a whole-school site. The International Newcomer Academy in Fort Worth covers grades 6 through 9, so students might come in then, after a year or two at this separate site, exit to the middle school or they would exit to a high school. The Dayton Learning Center program is a very small program near Harrisonburg, Virginia; if you're familiar with James Madison University, it's in that neck of the woods. That's a half-day program where the students ... it's a separate site and they'll take the middle school students in the morning and the high school students in the afternoon, so they make use of their resources that way. Our Teen Literacy Center in Omaha has middle school sites that are programs within the schools, the two middle schools, and one high school site, which is a separate site, so it's an interesting combination in that district.

Slide 23

Let me tell you a little bit about what is working, and as we go through these you may see some things that you're able to do in some of your charter schools. I think the first one is you have to recognize these students do come with some assets and that's what you want to build from, particularly those that have literacy in their first language. You can really make use of that as you transfer them into developing English language skills. If they have multiple languages, even if they're using them orally, they developed some meta-linguistic awareness about how languages work, and that's another thing that your language teachers can build from. They start to develop their oral English skills pretty early on, so you want to build from that as you're developing reading and writing skills. Some of them already know their Roman alphabet and there are cognates that you can build from.

They all have prior experiences, some of them have experiences we wish they never participated in, but nonetheless can provide background knowledge for certain lessons. They all come with aspects of their cultures that can be very interesting for sharing, and some of them have prior schooling that you would want to know about, so that you can build from that.

Slide 25

As I mentioned earlier, developing literacy skills is really important. The teachers have to be trained to work on this. How do you develop literacy across the content areas and who's responsible? In the best programs that we've seen, all the staff take responsibility for working with the students on this, even down to the teachers of electives; the music teachers will work on pronunciation in English, for example.

You also realize they have to develop, if they don't have it, basic skills for reading and writing—how to write a sentence; sometimes, it can be really hard for a ninth-grader who hasn't been to school before.

Developing vocabulary in a thematic way can be very effective:

- Linking words and concepts
- Using fiction and nonfiction text
- Working on language frames.

That may not be something that you're familiar with, but it's the sense of ... you ask yourself: How do I want the students to answer a question? What would I like them to say if they were articulating their response? The easiest example might be to say you want the students to give an opinion, and they might learn early on to say, "I think that..." or "I believe that..." But you want it to get a little more sophisticated than that, so you can provide language frames for them. They can learn to say, "In my opinion ..." or if they're talking about an argument or a debate that's going on, they could say, "Well, this group argued..." and "That group claimed..." We can help them— give sentence frames, sentence starters, language frames—so they can express their opinions or justify their answers, explain information, or describe or define all those kinds of things that we call language functions.

The other thing too is that we have to help build background. Many of these students who haven't been in U.S. schools don't have the knowledge that is often expected in our curriculum, in our textbooks, at the middle and high school level, so we have to find different ways— again through video clips, through experiential outings—to help the kids develop the background, and that would also imply learning about the vocabulary.

Slide 25

On this slide, you can see the different things that involve basic literacy:

- Vocabulary
- Phonemic awareness
- Practicing with the oral language
- Being exposed to and taught about grammar (English grammar)
- How to comprehend [INAUDIBLE]
- Low literacy level
- Working on writing practice

This probably isn't anything that you haven't thought about, but you may need to make it more systematic if you're working with just a few newcomer students in your sites.

Slide 26

I know there was also a question that came out about state standards for English language arts, and this is going to be problematic I think in the 44 states that have adopted the Common Core—that particularly in grades 6 through 12—there’s no provision for developing basic literacy skills. Our students have to have some type of intervention to learn how to read, to learn what is a verb or a noun, to learn how to put together a sentence and a paragraph—that means it’s going to go beyond what an English 9 class might be presenting. These kids need the “on ramp”; they need some help getting to the Common Core State Standards, and that has to be something that both the charter schools and the regular schools are going to have to grapple with.

Slide 27

What else is working? This notion of combining ESL and content and how to develop language within the content areas, or how to also develop some content knowledge in the ESL classes. Lots of teacher professional development is needed, having content-based classes for learning language as well as sheltered content classes. What we see in some of the high schools is that there are prealgebra courses being offered and sometimes even arithmetic courses for the students who can’t even add fractions yet because they haven’t been to school. We also see some adjuncts where the ESL teacher might pair up with the English language arts teacher; one period might be ESL supporting what’s going to happen in the English language arts period, which might be the next period. There have been some interesting ways of scheduling classes and selecting the teachers who are going to work with these students that have been very successful in some of the programs.

Slide 28

Then we also have the problem, and I think some of you might have alluded to this in the chat already: What happens when you get a ninth-grader who has interrupted education, isn’t literate in his/her first language, and struggles with developing English literacy as well? How are they going to graduate in four years? That’s tough. The programs that are being successful, some of them just find ways for a lot of extra

time where they'll have summer school, they'll have vacation institutes, they'll do afterschool work because the students really need extra time to catch up.

They also find ways, and that's what this slide is about, to help the kids get credit. Sometimes, the newcomer courses that are sheltered in a content area—if they are meeting the content area standards, but the instruction is different— they might advocate for getting a core credit for that particular course. They also look at the transcripts of students that do bring them to see where they can give them credits. When students exit the program but they're still in the high school, they also look for other ways, such as credit recovery options or taking tests, that might yield ... If they pass a test that might be required in the state of Virginia, for example, the students could take the Spanish test even if they haven't taken the Spanish courses and get credit for Spanish.

Slide 29

Another big thing that I mentioned is this connection to partners and social services. More than half of the programs find ways to link the students and their families to social service agencies. They have a lot of partnerships.

- It might be the graduate dental school at a local university that comes in with a van twice a year and offers teeth cleaning and basic dental care for the students.
- It might be a group that comes in and runs some counseling sessions for students who are experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder because they come from war-torn situations.
- It might be other groups that will come in and provide afterschool supports in New York City.
- There are some wonderful arts groups that come in and do drama, for example, with the students, or music and such.

Looking for these partnerships is a great way for the newcomer programs to expand their offerings for the students, but also to help acculturate the kids to U.S. life.

Slide 30

Let me wrap up with some of the challenges that we are seeing, and that is meeting AYP [Adequate Yearly Progress], which may not be an issue for some of the charter schools. But if you are a separate site where you only have the students for one year and you only have beginners or below the beginning level, as you can imagine, they're not going to reach benchmarks of achievement, so that can be tough. We do test these students before they have developed proficiency in English, so they're not going to score proficient and our policymakers need to realize that.

Another thing is how to keep the high-schoolers in school because if they feel like they're not making progress fast enough, that's where it's important to show them the pathway. Say: "If you're here for five years, these are the courses you're going to take and here's how you're going to get the credits. You'll be a newcomer for one year, but then we will be building on that over the next three or four years."

That's connected to this next one: the problem with graduating in four years. We do see a number of newcomer students who do have mental health challenges, such as the post-traumatic stress disorder I mentioned, but also quite a number of the programs told us that family reunification can be an issue. One parent or even both parents may have been in the U.S. for a while and the students stayed at home, perhaps with grandparents. Then, they're sent for and they come to the U.S. and they're teens, so they act like teens and there's the sense of rebellion, for example, but they also have parents that they're not that familiar with. Getting the family to work together as a cohesive group can sometimes be a challenge.

Another issue is providing special education and identifying the students who need special education versus the ones who are just delayed because they haven't been to school or they don't have literacy skills in their first language.

Finally, for the researcher like me, how to evaluate the long-term effects of the program can be a challenge, particularly if the students are only there for one year and they're not tagged in the district

accountability system, so you really can't find them three years out to see how they're doing.

Slide 31

Here are a couple of implications that I thought of for the charter schools. You would probably want to use a program within a school design where you might have one class a day, particularly for the newcomers, or a couple of classes. You would want to work on professional development activities for your teachers and really think about which teachers will receive the newcomers, both while they're newcomers and maybe the next year. Who are the best teachers to be teaching these students? Who can work on literacy development and content exploration?

Finding the appropriate curriculum materials can be a challenge for any program, not just the charter schools. The fourth one is also the idea of having a pre-ninth grade program, particularly for the SIFE students, where ... and I just got this great phrase from Allen Dodge of Georgia last week. He said it's like the red shirt freshman, if you know, in college sports—if the students are freshman, but they don't play that first year. When they start their next year, they're actually 10th-graders, but they're red shirt freshman. That's kind of a nice idea for some of our students who are unlikely to graduate in four years if they have significant gaps in their educational background.

You also might want to think about finding out enough about the students' background—their educational background, their literacy background—through diagnostic testing, so you know how far to go, where to start, and what are the best strategies to work with them in the classroom. Then, monitor them, of course, as they move through the newcomer program and out.

We also see that having some really flexible scheduling helps these programs and teaming teachers, so have a group that works together for these particular students, so they can plan, they can do thematic work, they can share academic vocabulary across the subject areas. The final piece would be to plan those pathways, so that year by year the students know how they're going to move through the middle school or move through the high school and be successful.

Slides 32–34

I'm not going to go over these, but you'll have the slides. These are some of the key resources that a number of the different programs listed that they use when they're working with these students. If you're looking for some curriculum and materials, this might be a place to go. Then, there's a brief bibliography. We have more details at the CAL website (www.cal.org) as well and just some more information for you. Peggie, do you want to take it from here?

Slide 35

PEGGIE: Sure. We have a number of questions. I think you answered Laura's question about secondary newcomers who have difficulty meeting graduation requirements. Another question that came in is from Lisa McWilliams. She said you mentioned that most high school newcomers are placed as ninth-graders, but some newcomers who are arriving have pretty strong content knowledge in certain subjects— in math, for example—who don't have such a strong language content. Would you recommend placing those students in ninth grade or how would you deal with students who have a real mixed set of skills like that?

DR. SHORT: Mostly, what we have seen is that when students do come in with transcripts that show they have taken the courses, the programs at the high school level count up the credits. Based on what an average ninth-grader should have, if that student has that or close to it, they might be put into a 10th-grade class. But if it turns out that maybe they're really strong in math, but they aren't strong in the other subject areas, that's where some of the flexible scheduling comes in. You might have a program of courses for your students who are newcomers, but instead of going to an ESL math class where they're learning the language of math and how to do word problems and basic prealgebra, that student for that period goes out of the cohort of newcomer students and works in the algebra math class or the geometry math class, or whatever might be appropriate in that regard.

We do have some that come in ... a student from Russia, on grade level, a literate newcomer student ready for 11th-grade work, but really needs to accelerate the English skills. If that's the case, they already have the credits that they need. I would put them in 11th grade, but then I would look at what I was providing for their English language

development and make sure that it's built into the school day—maybe there's extra time after school or Saturday school to help accelerate that.

PEGGIE: Great. You talked a great deal about the use of time and that's something charter schools tend to have a lot of flexibility with, so I think that's certainly an autonomy that charter school educators can take advantage of to serve newcomers as well. Maybe you could describe the key features of one of your case study sites.

Slide 38

DR. SHORT: I have one on the slide coming up and this one is a middle school; it's called Salina Intermediate School in Dearborn, Michigan. This is the site that I mentioned where all of the students, for the most part, are Arabic-speaking. In this particular newcomer site, there is a program within the school. It is serving grades 6 through 8 and the students tend to remain there for about one and a half years. Over time, they have adjusted when they would exit the students, and they now have pretty firm exit criteria that are based on test scores on the state ESL test as well as the state reading test and math test, and on teacher recommendations. On average, for most of these students, it takes about one and a half years until they reach those exit criteria. What's interesting here is because it's a program within a school, they can exit in January and they're still in the same school; they just move into some of the other classes. It's more seamless in terms of transition than it might be if they had to leave and go to a different site.

What is interesting at Salina is that it's an ESL program, but the teachers use a lot of Arabic. They're all native Arabic speakers and they use quite a bit in the content classes, particularly at the beginning of the school year. I was fascinated sitting in the classes because I felt like I learned Arabic while they were learning English in the science and social studies classes that I sat in on. Because many of the students come from an oral language tradition, the use of Arabic to explain things and then a follow-up explanation in English—with some reading in English, some writing in English, some activities in English—really helped these students. It was just what these particular students needed for learning the English and then moving on. As I noted, the proportion of Arabic to English diminishes over the course of one

school year, so that there's much more English in the second half of the year.

These teachers also were using sheltered instruction and, in particular, used the SIOP model. But another thing that was interesting were the technology classes. These students all had a technology class and it was integrated with literacy development and English as a second language. So, they would learn to do research online and create PowerPoints and give oral presentations, all which helped them learn the technology skills but also supported their English development.

Slide 39

A couple of other things that were really interesting in terms of the parent involvement was trying to bring these parents into the school; this was another situation where the fathers had often been in the United States for a while, and then the mothers and the children came later. But given the culture, often the males and females needed to be separated at the adult level. They had adult ESL classes, but they had one for the fathers and they had another for the mothers. The fathers might come in after school; the mothers might come in before school, or vice versa.

Another really interesting thing is that they did “learning walks” for the parents. Some of you know that principals are doing things called “learning strides” or “learning walks”; there are different names for it. They basically walk around the school and pop in for five to 10 minutes in different classrooms to see what's happening—what kind of instruction is taking place, how the students are responding, how the teacher is doing. It's not a formal evaluation, but it's a way that a principal gets a sense of how well instruction is taking place in school. The principal at Salina decided that it would be important for these parents who are completely unfamiliar with U.S. schooling to go on learning walks with him, so he would take small groups around and they would get to stop in for 10 minutes in different classrooms. They may not have understood the English being used, but they got a sense of what an American classroom is like:

- The notion of cooperative learning groups
- The use of technology in the classroom
- The use of textbooks or science experiments

Another thing at Salina is that they had a newcomer class for grades 4 and 5; it was a combined class where fourth- and fifth-graders were together. This wasn't part of our research, per se, but it was a similar instructional pattern that we saw in the sixth- to eighth-grade program. They also had quite a bit of community involvement. They had a community group that made use of a large all-purpose room that they had at the school, and ran an afterschool program for the students that involved sports as well as afterschool tutoring and homework help.

Slides 40–44

PEGGIE: Great. Thank you. That was a very interesting example. Unfortunately, we have run out of time, but I really encourage everyone on the webinar to check out your report and really read about some of these fascinating examples of newcomer programs that are having great success. Dr. Short, I'd like to thank you for this very thoughtful and insightful presentation and I'd like to thank everyone else for joining us. As I said earlier, this is a webinar series. This is the second of 12 webinars, so please join future webinars on a variety of different topics. Our next one in the middle of March will be about a dual-language program charter school in southern California. The webinar will be archived at the website that you see on your screen and it should be available by late Monday or early Tuesday at the latest.

I'm going to send you to an evaluation in a moment and if you can send us feedback—what we did well, what we could improve on next time, any topics you might suggest for future webinars, and any feedback that you have to help us improve—we'd really appreciate it. Thanks to everyone for joining us, and thanks to Dr. Short. Have a good rest of your afternoon.

DR. SHORT: I appreciate the opportunity. Thank you everyone.