SIFE Oral Interview Questionnaire

Instructions and Guidance

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Regents of The University

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Purpose

The *SIFE Oral Interview Questionnaire* is a tool designed to help identify those students who are potentially students with Interrupted/Inconsistent[1] Formal Education (SIFE) and provide them with appropriate services and interventions. Appropriate personnel must ensure that the identification processes of these students include the following steps in this order:

1. Administer the Home Language Questionnaire (HLQ)

2. Conduct an interview in English and in the home language with the student and the parent/guardian

3. Review student work samples, school records, and prior assessments

4. Secure results of the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL)

5. Administer the SIFE Oral Interview Questionnaire

6. Administer the (SIFE Instrument)

Guiding Principles for SIFE Identification

1. Identify SIFE in a timely manner. (The process of identification and placement of ELLs including SIFE students must be completed within ten (10) school days after the student's initial enrollment or reentry in the school district).

2. Collect and disaggregate data, including:

    - Age upon arrival

    - Mobility

    - Years of schooling at time of entry

    - Type and scope of content learned in native country and in the USA

3. Carefully document the Identification process
   NOTE: Each school district shall maintain all documents related to the initial identification and any subsequent review process, including the Home Language Questionnaire, English language proficiency identification assessment results, and any other records generated as part of the identification process and review process as defined in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section. Such information shall be maintained as part of the student's cumulative record.

4. Placement—Bilingual Education/English as a New Language

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[1]Inconsistent education refers to students experiencing intermittent disruptions in their education adding up to two years or more.

Procedures for Administering the Questionnaire: Qualified Personnel

The interview should take about 20 minutes and should be administered by qualified personnel and be conducted in the student's primary or home language. A translator or interpreter must be provided, if necessary.

Who are "qualified personnel"?

A Bilingual Education or English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teacher who:

- is certified in New York State under CR Part 80,

- is fluent in the home language of the student and parent or person in parental relation, or

- uses a qualified interpreter/translator of the language or mode of communication the student or parent or person in parental relation best understands, or

A teacher who:

- is certified in New York State under CR Part 80

- has been trained in cultural competency, language development, and the needs of English Language Learners, and

- is proficient in the home language of the student or parent or person in parental relation, or

- uses a qualified interpreter/translator of the language or mode of communication the student or parent or person in parental relation best understands.

Procedures for Administering the SIFE Questionnaire: Protocols

1. The interview must be conducted in a quiet, distraction-free environment. Ensure a welcoming environment, as students are unfamiliar with being in school and the array of expectations of a school environment*. A parent or guardian should be present if possible, but it is not required.   Students should answer all questions without assistance from a parent or guardian, but parents can provide clarification as necessary.

2. Questions should be read aloud to the student and may be repeated. Do not provide possible answers. Recommended follow-up questions may be asked as necessary.

3. Print answers clearly and do not abbreviate.

4. Follow instructions given in brackets on the form itself and refer to guidance given below.

5. Benchmark 5 questions require that the interviewer has available a world map or a globe and an analog clock.

Instructions for Personal and Language Information

The purpose of this section is to confirm and supplement information supplied on other documents and to provide basic information needed for placement and programming. In addition, the interviewer can determine the student's ability to respond to prompts asking for basic information. For verification, it is important to match the responses to school records and other documents that are available.

If the student indicates that he or she is multilingual, follow-up questions should determine which language is the student's primary or home language. If necessary, determine if the primary language is a regional dialect. If the student is unable to answer a given question, a parent or guardian, if present, may assist.

Instructions for Warm-up Questions

The purpose of this section is to prepare the student for the interview format and to determine his or her ability to respond to conversational prompts. Answers provided may reveal outside interests and abilities and/or may spotlight social, emotional, or economic challenges and signal the need for possible support services.

Alternative or follow-up questions:

> *Do you play sports? If so, tell me something about the sports you play.*
>
> *Do you work when not in school? If so, describe your work.*
>
> *What do you like about living in New York/your community?*

Instructions for Benchmark 1: Family and Home Background

This section will provide further information on the student's social, cultural, and economic circumstances and will help establish the degree to which the student has competing familial and work obligations and/or help establish the degree to which family and extended family members support and/or are involved with the student's education.

Any unfamiliar terms, such as "secondary school" or "graduate school" may be defined/explained, or other terms may be substituted as necessary.

Keep in mind the following factors that influence SIFE students' life goals, aspirations and expectations of schooling: A SIFE student enters a new and different culture, who's explicit and implicit social/behavioral rules, cultural priorities and value systems are unfamiliar. They may experience levels of anxiety due to lack of access to dependable support systems, such as extended family, friends and/or separation from familiar and predictable routines. They may also lack the full range of socio-academic and cultural competencies expected in U.S. schools. At the secondary level, the competing demands of familial and work obligations and the compressed period of time to attain educational benchmarks increase the risk of dropping out. Nevertheless, SIFEs have had varied life experiences which if appropriately harnessed can anchor a productive school career.

Instructions for Benchmark 2: Education History

This section will provide detailed information on the student's education history and help determine if there have been any interruptions or inconsistencies of their education. Since grade levels in the United States do not always correspond with those in other countries, query students based on age. As indicated in the instructions, begin by asking, "When you were [age] . . ." starting with the first age range. Then proceed to ask all questions in that row. Please note that a blank column is included on the left to manually match the grade level to the age range based on the student's response. This can be used if there is no transcript or documentation available, but it should also be checked for correspondence with available records.

For the question "*How much time did you spend in school?*" indicate if the student attended for a full academic year, for a partial year, months or hours. For the question, "*Did you study outside of school that year?*" possible answers include *evening school/continuing education, home schooling*, or *sessions with a private tutor*.

The "additional information" box should be used to record any information that is not captured on the table.

Following the "additional information" box are three open-ended questions that ask the student to elaborate on his or her school experience in the home country. Provide as much detail as possible and ask appropriate follow-up questions as necessary. Additional or follow-up questions might include:

> *What was the first thing that you did when you arrived at school in the morning?*
>
> *What did you like about your classroom?*
>
> *What subjects did you enjoy studying? Explain why.*
>
> *Which subjects did you not enjoy studying? Explain why.*
>
> *Did you do well in any particular subjects? Explain.*
>
> *Did you feel that you were learning? Explain why or why not.*
>
> *Can you tell me something about your favorite teacher?*
>
> *Did you have a group of friends? Tell me about them.*

Record both the prompts and answers in the spaces following question three.

Instructions for Benchmark 3: Language and Literacy Practices

The purpose of this section is to provide details regarding the student's language use outside of a school setting, their current engagement and experience with reading and writing activities, and their engagement and experience with computer technology and other media.

Define or explain any terms with which the student is unfamiliar. Follow instructions given on the form and check one or all boxes that apply as indicated.

Instructions for Benchmark 4: Other Questions

This section addresses the student's career and [study] goals. The first question, "*What career do you want in the future?*" can be asked of all students, and the phrasing can be modified. For example, you can instead ask:

>*What type of work would you like to do in the future?*

>*What kind of job would you like to have when you finish your education?*

>*What role do you see for yourself when you finish your education?*

For younger students, you can ask the question, *"What do you want to be when you grow up?*

Instructions for Benchmark 5: Performance Questions

The purpose of this section is to evaluate the student's ability to perform basic tasks in response to given prompts.

For the first item, the interviewer must have available a world map or globe in the room where the interview is to be conducted.

Prompt the student as follows:

>*Now I am going to have you do a couple of tasks. First, I want you to point to the spot on this [globe/ map] where your home country is located and tell me the name.*

>*Next, I want you to find on the [globe/map] the city that is the capital of your home country. Point to that, and tell me the name.*

In the comment box, record the following information:

- The student's ability to understand the prompt

- The student's ability to perform the task

- The wording of the rephrased prompt, as applicable

For the second item, the interviewer must have available an analog clock in the room where the interview is to be conducted. This can be a wall clock or a wristwatch.

Prompt the student as follows: *Now, I want you to look at this [watch/clock] and tell me the current time.*

In the comment box, record the following information:

- The student's ability to understand the prompt

- The student's ability to perform the task

- The wording of the rephrased prompt, as applicable