IV-A. Study Circle on Preparing Adult English Language Learners for the Workforce

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Study Circle on Preparing Adult English Language Learners for the Workforce

Facilitator Guide

Introduction

The purpose of this study circle is to read and discuss research on preparing adult English language learners for the workforce and to evaluate its applications to adult education practice. Participants will read two CAELA articles about workforce instruction for adult English language learners, discuss their content and applications to adult ESL instruction, implement at least one new research- or theory-based strategy in their teaching, and reflect on the impact of that strategy on their thinking and practice.

Readings

- *Issues in Improving Immigrant Workers' English Language Skills*, by Miriam Burt, identifies issues in improving immigrant workers' language skills and provides suggestions for addressing these issues through workplace instruction. www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/digests/Workplaceissues.html
- *English That Works: Preparing Adult English Language Learners for Success in the Workforce and Community*, by Brigitte Marshall, describes how to link language instruction to workforce and civics skills. www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/digests/Englishwks.html

Session lengths

Session 1: 2 hours

Session 2: 1.5 hours

Session 1: Preparation

Send participants information about the study circle well in advance of the first session, so that they can plan their schedules and do the prereading. Participants in this study circle should read *Issues in Improving Immigrant Workers' English Language Skills* before the first session (see Participant Handouts). The accompanying assignment asks them to note the workplace issues that resonate with their experiences as either workplace instructors or as workers themselves. At the beginning of Session 1, they will share one phrase or sentence from the text that captures their experience particularly well, and describe why it did so.

1. Opening (5 minutes)

- Welcome the group and introduce yourself.
- Review the purpose of this study circle.
- Review logistical details such as the schedule, breaks, and the location of the bathrooms.
- Check that all participants have both readings.

2. Participant introductions (15 minutes)

Format: Whole group

Participants introduce themselves and, in one or two sentences, identify an issue (A, B, C, D, or E) from the article *Issues in Improving Immigrant Workers' English Language Skills*, explaining why the issue interests them. Remind participants that they have only 1 or 2 minutes each for this sharing. There is no discussion during this time; discussion will follow in smaller groups.

3. Article review (15 minutes)

Format: Small groups

During this time, small groups discuss their reactions to what was shared during the introductions and review their understanding of the issues in providing workplace instruction to immigrants. Divide the participants into groups of three and then give them the following instructions (which should also be posted on flipchart paper):

> During the next 15 minutes, you will have two related discussions. First, please talk about what struck you about the quotes that were read during the introductions. What stood out for you? Did you find that the quotes about your own experience as workplace instructors (or, if you have not yet taught a workplace class, your own experience in the workplace) included comments on all issues discussed in the article, or did they cluster around a few key points? Then, discuss any questions you have about the five issues described in the first half of the article. You can refer to the article as needed.

4. Article review in practice (20 minutes)

Format: Pair/triad activity

For this activity, the group skips to the section in the article entitled "Suggestions." Divide the group into pairs or triads, depending upon the size of the whole group. You need one group for each of the five suggestions. Explain to the participants that they will be reflecting on what workplace instructors can do regarding the suggestions in the article. Assign a different suggestion from pages 2 and 3 of the article to each group and ask the members to discuss the following questions in 5 minutes:

- Does this suggestion sound like a good idea to you? Why or why not?
- What support would workplace instructors need from their programs and/or the employers to do this?

In the next 10 minutes, ask each group to present a 1- to 2-minute synopsis of what they talked about, addressing each of the two questions in no more than one sentence per question. As the groups present their synopses, note on a flipchart the results of the discussion on each suggestion and list the support needed.

Suggestion	Evaluating Suggestion (Good Idea? Why? Why not?)	Support Needed
Provide short, focused classes		
Educate people		
Use native language		
Involve leaders		
Provide English on the job		

In the remaining 5 minutes, ask the participants to comment on all the suggestions. Write on the chart additional information about support needed as it arises.

5. Personal brainstorm: Skills needed in the U.S. workplace (10 minutes)

Format: Whole group, individual, and pair

Explain that we are now moving from the macro level (looking at the big picture) to the micro level—looking at what practitioners can do in their classes (general ESL classes or workplace classes) to help prepare their learners for success in the workplace.

Read the following statement aloud to the participants:

> It is impossible to prepare someone adequately for the workplace because each individual job requires specific structures and vocabulary. There are no commonalities among jobs.

In four corners of the room post four signs—one that says "Agree," a second that says "Disagree," a third that says "Mostly Agree," and a fourth that says "Mostly Disagree."

Ask the participants to stand up and move to the corner of the room that corresponds to how they feel about the statement you read.

Notice where most of the participants are standing. Ask participants to comment briefly on why they are standing in that corner. Then have them sit down.

Ask the participants to individually brainstorm the language and cultural skills needed for the U.S. workplace by writing on a piece of paper all the skills they think workers need to be successful. After 3 minutes, have them compare what they wrote with what the person sitting next to them wrote.

In the remaining 5 minutes, ask each pair to report to the whole group on the similarities between their two lists. Did they find commonalities? Did they agree on any skills needed by all workers? Which ones? Tell them to hold onto the lists they have generated, as they will be able to compare these lists with those created by experts. Skills needed for success at the workplace, and strategies to facilitate the development of these skills, will be discussed in the article they are about to read, *Preparing Adult English Language Learners for Success in the Workforce and Community*.

6. Looking at skills: What the research says (20 minutes)

Format: Whole group, individual, and small group

Hand out the article and ask the participants to read along silently as you read aloud the introduction, found in the third and fourth paragraphs in the first column:

> Increasingly in the United States, adult English as a second language (ESL) instructors teach language as a means to an end: to help prepare students for success in the workforce and their communities. In the process, they must balance the needs of different stakeholders: the learners, the employers, the community, and the funding agencies.
>
> This digest discusses efforts in adult ESL education to link language instruction to workforce and civic skills (skills needed for successful participation in the community). It looks at the social forces that underlie these efforts and describes how adult ESL educators can integrate workforce and civic life skills into their curricula and convey these skills to their students through learner-centered instructional strategies and classroom management techniques.

Then tell the participants that they will read the digest in a cooperative learning way, both to save time and to practice a technique they can use in their classes to help prepare learners for the American workplace.

Set up the cooperative reading activity:

- Ask participants to work in teams of four.
- Ask participants to take the Jigsaw Reading handout from the participants' packet. Note that there are four sets of questions.
- Ask each team to assign a set of questions to each person in their group: one person will be responsible for questions in Set I, another in Set II, and so on.
- Ask participants to read silently and answer assigned questions, then share their answers with their group.
- Circulate among the groups to get a sense of what issues to highlight with the whole group after the group discussions

Note to facilitator: Key points to be discussed follow each question. If the groups don't raise the key points, the facilitator should.

Jigsaw Reading Questions

English That Works: Preparing Adult English Language Learners for Success in the Workforce and Community

Directions: Answer the questions according to the facilitator's instructions.

Set I: Social Forces, Economic Shifts, Welfare Reform, Accountability Requirements, and Learner Needs

a. Why has the number of job applicants unable to perform the math and reading tasks of the jobs they are seeking risen so sharply in the past few years?

Key Points: *Higher skills are required in most jobs these days, especially those that pay a living wage; new technologies have increased the math and language skills needed.*

b. What does SCANS refer to? What was its mission?

Key Points: *Secretary's (of Labor) Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS). The commission was made up of a group of business and education leaders whose mission was to determine what schools can do to better prepare learners for the workforce. To fulfill the mission, they identified the skills needed by today's workforce, such as managing resources, working with others, managing information, operating within organizational systems, and using different technologies. To perform these workforce competencies, workers need literacy and computational skills; higher order thinking skills such as decision making, problem solving, representing information, and learning to learn; and certain personal attributes, such as maturity, honesty, and sociability.*

c. Why are many welfare recipients unable to find jobs that support them and their families?

Key Points: *Welfare reform has pushed low-skilled workers into the workforce. The jobs they can get do not pay living wages and do not offer opportunities for advancement.*

Set II: Accountability Requirements and Learner Needs

a. What is the purpose of the National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS)?

Key Points: *The NRS collects data on learner outcomes for states to report to their funder—the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE)—to show that learners are making progress in adult education classes, including adult ESL.*

b. How are the six NRS ESL levels described?

Key Points: *The six ESL levels are described in terms of learners' competencies, or abilities, in three areas: speaking and listening, basic reading and writing, and functional and workforce skills.*

c. How are SCANS and Equipped for the Future (EFF) similar? How are they different?

Key Points: *They are similar in that they both list skills needed for the workforce and both include basic skills, interpersonal skills, technology skills, and resource and information management skills. They are different in that SCANS came from business leaders, while EFF was based on what learners said was needed.*

Set III: Developing Workforce and Civic Competencies, Classroom Simulations, and Cooperative Learning

a. What is the difference between content knowledge and process knowledge? Which kind of knowledge do the SCANS and EFF skills define?

Key Points: *Content knowledge is what people know. Process knowledge is what people do and how they do it. SCANS and EFF define process skills.*

b. What workplace-related skills might a classroom simulation develop?

Key Points: *Working in teams, analyzing and evaluating information from various sources, basic skills of language and math problem solving (and probably just about any other skills found on the SCANS and EFF lists).*

c. What are three types of cooperative learning activities to try in the classroom? What workplace-related skills might they develop?

Key Points: *Jigsaw activities develop the skills of teamwork and analyzing and evaluating information. Project assignments develop research skills (organizing and interpreting information, communicating findings, using technology to find information, and presenting information). Surveys develop the skills of working in teams, acquiring facts, and communicating information.*

Set IV: Conveying Workforce and Civic Skills Through Classroom Management Techniques

a. What are three common behavioral expectations in the U.S. workplace? Why might they be problematic to the adult English language learner?

Key Points: *Punctuality, accountability, initiative, individual responsibility, integrity, self-management. Some of them may be problematic because they may not coincide with attitudes, values, and behaviors in the learners' home countries.*

b. How might the teacher model these behaviors in the classroom?

Key Points: *The teacher arrives on time and with an instructional plan. The plan is shared with the learners. Learners are invited to reflect on the plan throughout the course of the lesson and to consider what has been accomplished throughout the lesson. The teacher sets up systems in the classroom where learners keep checklists of tasks, procedures, and classroom rules. The teacher posts expectations in the classroom.*

c. How can teamwork in the classroom simulate the workplace environment?

Key Points: *Students can form teams that manage classroom maintenance tasks. In open-entry classrooms, it can be the responsibility of student teams to orient new students.*

7. Discussion of workforce skills (10 minutes)

Format: Whole group

After the small-group activity is over, discuss any issues or questions with the whole group. Then ask the participants to take out the insert "EFF Standards and SCANS Competencies" from the Marshall article. Ask them to compare it to the lists they generated themselves before reading the article. Are all of their skills included? Which are not? Which lists do they prefer—theirs or the experts'? Are the lists mutually compatible? Have the participants changed any of their ideas about skills needed for all jobs in the workplace? Discuss briefly as a whole group.

8. Considering application (15 minutes)

Format: Individual and then pairs

Post the following on flipchart paper:

Classroom Activities to Build Workforce Skills
Classroom simulation
Cooperative assignment: jigsaw
Project assignments
Surveys
Classroom Management Techniques to Build Workforce Skills
Agenda
Student responsibilities
Teamwork

Ask participants to look over the posted strategies taken from the Marshall article and reflect on which activities or management techniques they would like to implement between study circle sessions. Ask them to share with a partner what they chose and why. What do they hope happens or changes? After they have talked through their ideas, have them fill out the Activity Planning Form. Encourage participants to consider peer observation in their plans if there are co-workers in the study circle. (See the Peer Observation Form and also the guide on Peer Coaching and Mentoring.)

9. Closing (5 minutes)

Format: Whole group

Review the intersession assignment and the page participants will use for their New Activity Notes. Remind participants of the next meeting.

10. Evaluation (5 minutes)

Format: Whole group

Do a quick evaluation to identify the main strengths and weaknesses of the session. Ask participants these questions:

- What was the most useful aspect of today's session?
- What might we change if we do this study circle again?

Session 2: Preparation

Post the flipchart list of activities and techniques from the last session. Also post (but covered with a flipchart page) the following quote for later discussion:

> It's not just the work that has to be learned in each situation. Each job presents a self-contained social world with it own personalities, hierarchy, customs, and standards. It was left to me to figure out such essentials as who was in charge, who was good to work with, who could take a joke… I usually enter new situations in some respected, even attention-getting role like "guest lecturer," or "workshop leader." It's a lot harder, I found, to sort out a human microcosm from the bottom, and of course, a lot more necessary to do so.
>
> —Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed* (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 2001), p. 194

Note: It is recommended, but not required, that you read or at least look through the Ehrenreich book before leading the study circle.

1. Opening (5 minutes)

Welcome the group back and check on how their activities went.

2. Debriefing the activities (25 minutes)

Format: Pairs or small groups clustered according to similar focus of the new activity tried during the interim. Ask participants to refer to their New Activity Notes as they debrief with the following (posted) questions:

- What did you try? What happened? What factors had an impact on your implementation?

- What did you conclude from implementing this new activity or strategy?
- What advice would you have for other practitioners about implementing this strategy?

Write the answers to this last question on a sticky note and put it up next to the strategy on the posted flipchart. This advice will be typed up and sent out to participants.

3. Reflecting on workplace issues as an entry-level worker (25 minutes total)

a. Introduction (5 minutes)

Format: Whole group discussion and/or mini-lecture

Explain that participants are now going to think a little more deeply about cultural issues in the U.S. workplace, especially as they relate to entry-level workers, which is what most of the immigrants and refugees are, at least initially.

Ask participants if they are familiar with the book *Nickel and Dimed,* by Barbara Ehrenreich. If no one has heard of the book, give a mini-lecture covering the following points:

- Ehrenreich is a highly educated journalist who decided in the late 1990s to see if she could survive as an entry-level worker.
- She "went undercover" and held a series of entry-level jobs in Maine, Florida, and Minnesota, working as a hotel maid, waitress, housekeeper, and stacker of clothes in a Wal-Mart.
- She found that the work was physically and mentally exhausting and that she could not survive on the salaries.
- She describes her experiences in the book *Nickel and Dimed*.

If some participants know of the book, lead a brief discussion that covers these points.

Next, uncover the flipchart with the quote and explain to the participants that this quote is from the last chapter in her book, where she evaluates her experiences. Read it aloud:

> It's not just the work that has to be learned in each situation. Each job presents a self-contained social world with it own personalities, hierarchy, customs, and standards. It was left to me to figure out such essentials as who was in charge, who was good to work with, who could take a joke… I usually enter new situations in some respected, even attention-getting role like "guest lecturer," or "workshop leader." It's a lot harder, I found, to sort out a human microcosm from the bottom, and of course, a lot more necessary to do so.
>
> —Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed*
> (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 2001) p. 194

b. Reflection (10 minutes)

Format: Small-group activity

Ask the participants to consider their own experiences working in both entry-level jobs and in higher-level, more professional positions. In groups of three, they discuss the quotation using the following questions as guides:

- Do you agree that each job presents a "self-contained, social world with its own personalities, hierarchy, customs, and standards?" Can you give an example from a job you have had?

  Possible Answers: *Examples would vary depending on the job. For example, in some workplaces you aren't allowed to prepare popcorn in the microwave at the water cooler, but you are allowed to do so in the microwaves in the kitchens; in some offices the administrative secretary has more power than those she does clerical tasks for, and so on.*

- Ehrenreich says "It was left for me to figure out such essentials as who was in charge, who was good to work with, who could take a joke…" What special challenges might this bring to second language learners?

  Possible Answers: *Second language learners might not pick up the verbal or visual cues because of a lack of familiarity with U.S. customs at the workplace. For example, although everyone is generally on a first-name basis, some people have more titular and actual power than others.*

- Ehrenreich finishes by saying, "It's a lot harder, I found, to sort out a human microcosm from the bottom, and of course, a lot more necessary to do so." What does she mean by this? Do you agree? How does this relate to immigrants at the workplace?

  Possible Answers: *It is harder for entry-level workers to figure out the hierarchy, customs, and standards of a job than it is for those at higher levels who may be privy to inside information. It is key that those at "the bottom" do understand the workplace social structure, however, as they may be more likely to lose their jobs if they do not. It is especially hard for immigrants to sort out these issues because they have less familiarity and facility with the customs and language of the U.S. workplace.*

Note: If the possible answers are not raised in the small-group discussions or in the whole-group discussion that follows, you may want to bring them up.

c. Discussion (10 minutes)

Format: Whole group

Ask each group to report briefly to the whole group three interesting points made or issues raised during the small-group discussions—one for each of the three questions. Also discuss the implications the above quotations might have for classroom instruction.

4. Final reflection: Inkshed exercise (15 minutes)

Format: Individual and small groups

An inkshed is an opportunity for people to exchange ideas on a topic, through writing, in a short time. Responding to a prompt, participants write an initial reaction or idea on a piece of paper and place it in a central location in the room. They should not write their name on the paper. From the central location, they then take another person's paper, quickly read it, write a short response to it on the same piece of paper, and return it to the center table. They then take another paper, read the original reaction and subsequent responses on it, and add to them, and so on. Encourage participants to read and respond to as many papers as they can. After 5 to 10 minutes, all papers must be returned. Participants then find their own original response paper and look over the other participants' comments.

For this study circle, give participants 3 to 5 minutes to write a response to the following statement:

Through this study circle I have learned/changed my ideas about…

After 3 minutes, they put their papers (without names) on the center table, and for the next 7 minutes comment on other participants' papers. Participants should respond to at least two or three additional papers.

After participants have commented on other people's responses, they look over their own papers. Then invite them to share some of their thoughts about their own feelings or about the comments they received on their inksheds.

5. Planning next steps (10 minutes)

Format: Whole group

Ask whether anyone in the group would like to pursue follow-up ideas from their interim session activities. Talk about what these might be (e.g., making lesson plans available to colleagues or posting activity results to a state or regional professional development Web site). Invite participants to consider how they might continue to support each other as a group. Does the group want to meet again or stay in touch in other ways? If the group wants to continue to meet, make sure that there is a clear purpose and focus for the meetings.

6. Closing (5 minutes)

Draw participants' attention to other resources available on the topic of workforce preparation for immigrant learners. (See the attached reading list.) Thank the group for their work.

7. Evaluation (5 minutes)

Format: Individual and whole group, time permitting

Ask the participants to fill out the Evaluation Form, which asks for feedback about the entire study circle. If there is time, provide an opportunity for volunteers to comment on their experiences in the study circle.

Resources for Additional Reading

Capps, R., Fix, M. E., Passel, J. S., Ost, J., & Perez-Lopez, D. (2005, June.) *A profile of the low-wage immigrant workforce*. Available from www.urban.org/Template.cfm?Section=ByAuthor&NavMenuID=63&template=/TaggedContent/ViewPublication.cfm&PublicationID=9349

Chiswick, B. R., & Miller, P. W. (2002). Immigrant earnings: Language skills, linguistic concentrations, and the business cycle. *Journal of Popular Economics*, *15,* 31–57.

Greenberg, E., Macias, R. F., Rhodes, D., & Chan, T. (2001). *English literacy and language minorities in the United States* (NCES 2001-464).Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Available from http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2001464. Summary available from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/quarterly/vol_3/3_4/q5-2asp

Grognet, A. G. (1996). *Planning, implementing, and evaluating workplace ESL programs*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics. Available from www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/digests/PLANNINGQA.html

Liebowitz, M., & Taylor, J. C. (2004). *Breaking through: Helping low-skilled adults enter and succeed in college and careers*. Boston: Jobs for the Future. Available from www.jff.org/jff/PDFDocuments/BreakingThrough.pdf

Marshall, B. (2002). *Preparing for success: A guide for teaching adult English language learners*. Washington, DC, & McHenry, IL: Center for Applied Linguistics & Delta Systems.

Wrigley, H. S., Richer, E., Martinson, K., Kubo, H., & Strawn, J. (2003). *The language of opportunity: Expanding employment prospects for adults with limited English skills*. Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy. Available from www.clasp.org/publications/LEP_brief.pdf

Issues in Improving Immigrant Workers' English Language Skills

Miriam Burt
Center for Applied Linguistics
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According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau (2003), at the beginning of the 21st century, 12% of the U.S. labor force were foreign born. Of the foreign-born workers in the United States, 22% held jobs in the service industry, 18.3% worked in factories and as laborers, and 12.6% worked in construction, mechanics, and repairs. Statistics further showed that immigrants were under represented in managerial and high-level sales positions and that their salaries remained lower than those of native-born workers: 54% of the foreign-born population working full time held low-income jobs compared to only 38% of native-born working full time.

Literacy and fluency in English seem to be related to economic self-sufficiency. Immigrants who are literate only in a language other than English are more likely to have noncontinuous employment and to earn less than those literate in English (Greenberg, Macias, Rhodes, & Chan, 2001). An analysis of the 2000 U.S. Census data on immigrant earnings revealed a positive relation between earnings and English language ability (Chiswick & Miller, 2002). For this and many other reasons, immigrants want to learn English. Forty-two percent of the participants in federally funded adult education programs are studying English (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Yet barriers such as time, transportation, and childcare may keep many from attending classes (Van Duzer, Moss, Burt, Peyton, & Ross-Feldman, 2003).

Offering English as a second language (ESL) classes on the job is a way to provide instruction to those who have problems accessing programs outside of work. Learning in the context of work can improve work skills while improving language skills (see, e.g., ABC Canada, 1999; Burt, 1997; Hayflich, 1995; Mikulecky, 1992). Yet it appears that few employers provide this instruction (National Institute for Literacy, n.d.). Reasons that employers do not offer training include scheduling issues, cost, perceived lack of benefit to the company, and a sense that it is not their responsibility (Burt, 1997; Kavanaugh, 1999; Pierce, 2001).

This brief identifies five issues to be addressed in improving the English language skills of immigrant workers and provides suggestions for addressing these issues through workplace instruction.

Issue A: The Length of Time It Takes to Learn English

Both employers and employees often have unrealistic ideas of the amount of time it takes to learn English (Burt, 1997; Kavanaugh, 1999; Mikulecky, 1997; Pierce, 2001). Research is limited regarding adults learning English (Van Duzer, et al., 2003), but studies with children reveal that it takes from 2-5 years to become socially adept in a second language and from 5-8 years to become academically on par with native speakers (Cummins, 1991; Thomas & Collier, 1997). Clearly, a workplace ESL class of 40-60 hours is unlikely to result in great gains in language acquisition. When workers continue to speak to one another in their native language during

breaks and on the work floor, employers may become disillusioned. Then, when the workplace classes are over or when economic support for the classes is no longer available, employers often discontinue the classes (ABC Canada, 1999; Burt, 1997; Kavanaugh; Pierce).

Issue B: Language Use in the Workplace and Elsewhere

Sometimes there is a naivete about the use of language in general. Even if it were possible for workers to learn enough English in 50 hours to express themselves clearly and to understand everything that is said, it is unlikely that many workers would use the new language when speaking to other native speakers of their language. In order to choose to speak a language, there must be a need to speak that language (Burt, 2002; Hayflich, 1995). In the workplace, code switching (shifting from one language to another language in the course of a conversation) can occur with bilingual workers. For example, in a conversation held in Spanish, workers may give names of workplace machines and procedures in English. In a conversation in English, abstract concepts and personal opinions may be better expressed in Spanish. Code-switching and choosing to speak one language with one person and another language with another person to facilitate ease and comprehensibility of communication, can indicate bilingual proficiency rather than linguistic deficiency (Milroy & Muysken, 1995).

Recent research looks at how instructional contexts also affect motivation. A learner's motivation may vary from day to day and even from task to task (Dornyei, 2002b; Dornyei & Kormos, 2000). Using varied and challenging instructional activities helps learners stay focused and engaged in instructional content (Dornyei & Csizer, 1998). Research examining how to improve learner motivation suggests that social factors (e.g., group dynamics, learning environment, and a partner's motivation) affect a learner's attitude, effort, classroom behavior, and achievement (Dornyei, 2002b). Therefore, teachers should create an environment that is conducive to learning by encouraging group cohesion in the classroom. Pair and group work activities can provide learners with opportunities to share information and build a sense of community (Florez & Burt, 2001).

Issue C: Language and Identity

The decision to use or to not use the target language and the accompanying (in this case, mainstream U.S.) workplace behaviors may also be affected by a desire to maintain one's identity. Some immigrant workers may feel empowered when they use English and try out new workplace behaviors on the job (see, e.g., ABC Canada, 1999; Li, 2000). Others, however, may make a conscious decision to not use the new language as a way of asserting their own social identity (Moore, 1999; Pierce, 2001). In her ethnographic study of a cable manufacturing company in California, Katz (2000) reported that even though workers were instructed to speak up on the job and they understood that this was a behavior that could lead to promotions, many chose to hold on to their behaviors of not standing out in the crowd.

Research on the relationship between motivation and second language acquisition is ongoing. Current research looks at instructional practices that teachers use to generate and maintain learner motivation and strategies through which learners themselves take control of factors that

have an impact on their motivation and learning, such as lack of self-confidence, change of goals, or distractions (Dornyei, 2003; Noels, Clement, & Pelletier, 2003).

The decision to not use the new language and behaviors may also be affected by the attitude displayed by employers and co-workers when immigrant workers try out what they have learned. At one work site, learners trying to speak English at team meetings reported being laughed at by native English-speaking co-workers for demonstrating nonnative-like pronunciation (Moore, 1999).

Issue D: Relationship Between Training and Worker Performance

Not all workplace misunderstandings are due to poor English skills. Problems can arise from diverse causes such as poor organization of work flow; poor supervision; and poorly written workplace materials, e.g., signs, manuals, and memos (Westerfield & Burt, 1996). Worker productivity deficits may also be due to the way the workplace itself is structured. For example, use of technology, labor-management relations, and compensation offered may affect worker performance. Basic skills or English language training will not ameliorate these issues (Sarmiento & Schurman, 1992).

Empirical research with second language learners supports the contention that engaging in language interactions facilitates second language development. Findings from a study to determine how conversational interaction affects the acquisition of question formation indicate that interaction can increase the pace of acquisition (Mackey, 1999). Research on interaction includes studies of *task-based language learning and teaching and focus on form*.

Even in situations where worker improvement is noticed, it may not be due solely to workplace training. An analysis of a database developed by the American Society of Training and Development (ASTD) to explore the connection between employer investment in training and company performance concluded that, although firms that invested in training seemed to be more productive than those that did not, it was difficult to tie higher performance levels directly to the training offered (Bassi, Harrison, Ludwig, & McMurrer, 2001). In any case, those involved in workplace training report that when there is little or no opportunity provided for the workers to use the new learning, it will not be retained (Kavanaugh, 1999; Pierce, 2001; Sarmiento & Schurman, 1992).

Issue E: Measuring Outcomes

Measuring training and instructional outcomes can be problematic (Affholter, 1995). In classes for immigrant workers, there can be a lack of clarity about the outcomes being sought, i.e., an uncertainty about whether the instructional goals are improved productivity or workers speaking English on the job (Kavanaugh, 1999). Often goals are not clearly stated at the outset of the course, monitored throughout the course, and then evaluated at the end (Affholter). In short, program providers may not know what to measure, how to measure, or when to measure outcomes of the training.

Suggestions

Offer short, highly focused classes with clearly stated, measurable, and attainable objectives

Providing short, targeted classes with limited goals can be effective in the workplace (Burt, 1997; Kavanaugh, 1999). A 6-week course on accent reduction in Pima County, Arizona, for example, has been popular both with employers and with immigrant workers who have at least an intermediate level of English. Similarly, with pre-literate Latino housekeepers, a 3-week course with the three goals of greeting residents, supervisors, and co-workers; expressing lack of comprehension; and asking for clarification has been successful at a nursing home in Falls Church, Virginia (Burt, 2002).

When classes are focused and objectives are clearly stated and realistic as to what can be accomplished in a short time, it is easier to assess and monitor outcomes. Workers are more likely to complete a 6-week course than one that lasts 4 months. Furthermore, if the classes are carefully scheduled so as not to be held during rush times, there is less likelihood that the worker will be pulled from the class to go back to work (Kavanaugh, 1999).

Educate everyone about the process of learning a second language

Few people in this country appreciate the difficulty of learning and using a second language. More than 82% of the people in the United States speak only English (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). Employers, native-English-speaking workers, and immigrant workers all need to appreciate the challenges of learning to speak English on the job. Educators report the value of using "shock language" classes (a short lesson taught entirely in a language unknown to anyone in the room except the instructor) with employers to give them a brief introduction to what foreign-born workers face in an English-speaking environment (Schrage, 1997). Giving native-speaking workers a shock-language experience could likewise increase their understanding of the complexity of learning a new language and help them become more supportive of the immigrant workers' attempts to try out new language and behaviors on the job. This, in turn, would motivate the immigrant workers to use what they have learned on the job.

Use the native language

Limited use of the native language in workplace instruction, particularly in work sites where much of the workforce speaks the same native language, can help avoid miscommunication and can deepen learner comprehension of difficult concepts (Katz, 2000; Moore, 1999; Taggart & Martinez, 2003). Because bilingual instruction does not imply translation of all course content but rather a judicious choice of which language to use for which purposes, bilingual teachers need explicit criteria concerning when to use the native language and when to use English (Taggart & Martinez). The workers' native language should be used to teach difficult content that they need to know in order to do a task. Then the English vocabulary and structures they need to read, listen to, write, and talk about the tasks should be taught (Taggart & Martinez).

Huerta-Mac'as (2003) offers another model for using two languages: A topic is introduced in the native language; key English vocabulary items are taught; hands-on activities (such as those involving workplace machines) are carried out in English and assessed in English; technology activities follow, with discussion in the native language; and the final discussion and question and answer activity is carried out in whichever language each individual student prefers. When the class has speakers of several different languages, Huerta-Mac'as suggests dividing the class into same-language small groups for discussion of the workplace issues in their native language. Each group then, in English, frames questions about the workplace issues for the teacher.

Get the leaders involved

It is professional wisdom in workplace instruction that, before beginning the classes, the instructor needs to get all the support of all employer stakeholders including chief officers, human resource personnel, and direct supervisors of the workers (Alamprese & Kay, 1993; Burt, 1997). However, worker leaders need to be involved as well-if not directly in the classes, as least as advocates to encourage others to attend (Pierce, 2001). They also need to be involved in planning the classes, setting the goals, and advising the educational service provider. The message that needs to be sent to the immigrant workers is that value is placed on learning English both by the employers and by fellow employees (ABC Canada, 1999).

Provide opportunities to use English on the job

Pierce (2001) describes a workplace where the company established and publicized a process for achieving promotions or higher pay. One of the skills workers had to demonstrate was a certain level of English literacy and oral proficiency. There are other ways, however, to encourage the use of English on the job that do not involve formal assessment of skills: Instructors can invite supervisors to visit classes; they can also encourage supervisors to have conversations in English with the learners about what they are learning and about their job tasks. Employers can promote discussion among native and nonnative English speakers on the job through English language discussion tables at breaks (Burt, 2002) and mentoring or tutoring by the native speakers (Pierce). This tutoring should not be seen as a substitute for language instruction given by a trained instructor but rather as ancillary support. Because merely speaking a language does not give one the skills to teach someone else to speak the language, native speakers who are tutoring co-workers in English should be given training. This training can often be provided for a modest fee through local literacy agencies or other English language service providers (Stuart, 1994).

Conclusion

English language ability is related to higher wages and more stable employment, yet little training is currently offered to immigrants at the workplace. Issues in providing this instruction include unrealistic expectations both of what can be learned in a short workplace class and how quickly language and cultural behaviors can and should be changed; difficulties in defining and assessing outcomes; and a lack of value placed on the instruction. Research is needed on the use of the native language in workplace instruction; on the efficacy of short-term classes; and on creative ways of providing, monitoring, and assessing English language instruction on the job.

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English That Works: Preparing Adult English Language Learners for Success in the Workforce and Community

Brigitte Marshall
Oakland (California) Adult Education
July 2002

> *"Today in the class you said something important for me because I do it yesterday in my work. You'll said is a good idea take notes when somebody explain something to you. And that's what I did yesterday when my boss explained to me how to use the cash register. I telled her when I don't understand I'm confused to explain me again and I repeat to her what I understand to know if it's right or wrong. I asked her if sometimes can I see my notes to check if I'm doing it right. Her answer was yes because the notes can help you a lot in you work."*
>
> —Logbook excerpt by a vocational ESL student, San Diego Community College (D. Price-Machado, personal communication, April 15, 2000)

The author of this logbook entry has not learned all the grammar rules of English, but she has mastered skills that are more likely to result in success in the workforce than will a demonstration of perfect grammar. She has learned how to take notes, how to ask for clarification, and how to restate instructions.

Increasingly in the United States, adult English as a second language (ESL) instructors teach language as a means to an end: to help prepare students for success in the workforce and their communities. In the process, they must balance the needs of different stakeholders: the learners, the employers, the community, and the funding agencies.

This digest discusses efforts in adult ESL education to link language instruction to workforce and civic skills (skills needed for successful participation in the community). It looks at the social forces that underlie these efforts and describes how adult ESL educators can integrate workforce and civic life skills into their curricula and convey these skills to their students through learner-centered instructional strategies and classroom management techniques.

Social Forces

Behind current efforts to link language instruction to workforce and civic skills are several social forces: economic shifts, welfare reform, new accountability requirements, and a greater sensitivity among adult ESL educators to learner needs.

Economic Shifts

The United States is shifting from an economy based on industry and manufacturing to one based on services and information (Stuart, 1988). High-paying unskilled jobs are increasingly difficult to find. In today's post-industrial economy, unskilled workers "may get work, but their earnings will not keep them out of poverty and their employment future remains precarious" (D'Amico, 1997, p. 5).

A recent survey found that more than 33% of job applicants nationwide lacked the math and reading skills to do the jobs they were seeking, up from 19% in 1996 (American Management Association, 2001). The sharp increase was attributed to the higher skill levels required in today's workforce, where new technologies have raised the bar for job applicants in terms of literacy and math.

The survey confirmed a trend found by the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS), a group of business and education leaders convened in 1990 by the U.S. Department of Labor to determine what schools can do to better prepare students for the workforce (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1991). Describing successful workers as "creative and responsible problem solvers" (p. v), the commission identified the specific skills needed in today's workforce: Successful workers are able to manage resources, work with others, manage information, operate within organizational systems, and use different technologies. To perform these workforce competencies, workers need literacy and computational skills; higher order thinking skills such as decision making, problem solving, representing information, and learning to learn; and certain personal attributes, such as maturity, honesty, and sociability.

Welfare Reform

Recent welfare reform legislation has pressured welfare recipients to find work and leave public assistance. Yet many welfare recipients lack the skills needed for jobs that lead to self-sufficiency (Carnevale & Desrochers, 1999). The jobs they get offer little opportunity for training and advancement. As a result, learners turn to adult education programs to provide the training that they need to advance.

Accountability Requirements

In 1998 the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) established accountability requirements for states receiving federal funds for adult education. The National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS), designed to collect information on adult education learner outcomes, became the vehicle for states reporting performance data (National Reporting System for Adult Education, 2001). NRS identifies five core outcome measures that meet the AEFLA requirements for core performance indicators: educational gain, employment, employment retention, placement in postsecondary education or training, and receipt of a secondary school diploma or GED. For educational gain, NRS identifies six ESL levels from beginning to high advanced. Each level is described in terms of competencies across three skill areas: speaking and listening, basic reading and writing, and functional and workforce skills.

Using the NRS descriptors as guidelines, adult ESL programs assess learners at intake. After a predetermined amount of instruction, programs assess learners again, using the level descriptors to determine progress. States have the option to use either a competency-based standardized test, such as the Basic English Skills Test (BEST; Center for Applied Linguistics, 1984); the CASAS Life Skills Tests (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System, 1996); or performance assessments, as long as the procedure is the same for all programs.

Learner Needs

In recent years adult ESL education has developed the tools to assess learner needs and interests. Today, curriculum developers take into account the expectations not only of employers, funding agencies, and the community but those of learners and workers as well (Burt, 1997).

In 1994 the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) launched the Equipped for the Future (EFF) initiative in response to the National Education Goals Panel challenge for a literate nation by 2000 (National Education Goals Panel, 1993). EFF asked from the perspective of adult learners, "What is it that adults need to know and be able to do in the 21st century?" SCANS had asked from the perspective of employers, "What does work require of schools?" The answers were similar, indicating enough overlap between the two for programs to develop curricula that reflect the needs of both the worker and the workforce. From the responses to the EFF question, NIFL identified 16 core skills organized in four major areas: communication, decision-making, interpersonal, and lifelong learning (National Institute for Literacy, 2000). A comparison of the EFF Standards and the Scans Competencies is provided at the end of this brief.

Developing Workforce and Civic Competencies

The SCANS competencies and the EFF standards combine basic communication, interpersonal, and thinking skills (such as problem solving, making inferences, and predicting outcomes) that form a part of any good adult education curriculum. Often a competency is embedded in the existing curriculum of an adult ESL program. It simply needs to be emphasized and its relevance to the workforce or the community made explicit.

The adult ESL classroom is a natural place to develop workforce and civic skills. This happens when instructors view learners the way that today's workforce increasingly views successful workers as active, creative, and self-directed problem solvers who can work effectively on their own and with others.

The following ESL methods and techniques can be used to develop workforce and civic skills.

Classroom Simulations

The SCANS and EFF workforce and civic skills do not define content knowledge (what people know) but rather process knowledge (what people do and how they do it). The most direct way for instructors to help learners develop these skills is to create a learning environment that simulates the situations in which these skills are used in the outside world. For example, if talking

and reading about foods is a topic of interest to learners, the instructor can teach the necessary language (e.g., food-related vocabulary, comparative and superlative statements, and language functions for expressing preferences) within the real-life context of making a budget and comparing prices of food items at different supermarkets in order to plan a reception.

In the process, learners practice a variety of workforce and civic skills. When they determine what their budget will cover, learners are making decisions and allocating resources. When they compare food prices at different stores, they are acquiring and organizing information and using math to calculate. When they select and reserve a location for the reception and develop a timetable for setup and cleanup, learners are developing an organized approach, evaluating alternatives, and anticipating problems. Throughout the process, they are working as part of a team.

Cooperative Learning

In cooperative learning, small groups of learners work together to accomplish a task, with each member playing a role needed to complete the task. As learners interact, they seek and offer input, advocate and influence, negotiate, and teach one another-all valuable civic and workforce skills and all part of SCANS and EFF frameworks.

Jigsaw activities provide practice for cooperative learning skills by requiring students to learn new information and teach it to others.

Jigsaw Activity

1. Learners form "home" teams of four members each.
2. In their home teams, learners number off one through four. Learners with the same number form "expert" teams.
3. Each expert team studies a specified segment of information.
4. Home teams come together again. Learners teach each other the segment of information they have learned in their expert teams or contribute their knowledge to complete a team project.

Project assignments allow students to learn independently and with others as they research, organize and interpret information, and communicate their findings. Students can use technology (e.g., the Internet and videos) to research and present their projects, thereby developing information management and technology competencies.

Information gathering and reporting activities, such as surveys, also promote independent learning and effective interaction skills in the classroom. For example, a simple survey idea is "Who are you and where are you from?"

Survey Activity

1. Learners interview their classmates to learn names, the spelling of names, countries of origin, and the spelling of the country names.
2. Learners record the information in a table: last name, first name, and country of origin.
3. Learners tally the figures, listing the countries represented and the number of learners from each country.
4. Learners create a graph, such as a bar graph or pie chart, to present the information in the tally.

Conveying Workforce and Civic Skills Through Classroom Management Techniques

Standards of expected behavior exist within every society, both in the workforce and in everyday interactions with individuals in the community. Through classroom management techniques, instructors can create an environment for English language learners that prepares them for the behaviors that will help them achieve success in the workforce and the community.

Establishing Behavioral Expectations

In the United States, employees are expected to be on time, to be accountable for their actions, and to show initiative. Individual responsibility, integrity, and self-management are also fundamental to success.

These expected behaviors reflect the culture of the United States and may or may not coincide with attitudes, values, and behaviors that learners bring with them from their countries of origin. Discussing cultural differences helps learners understand and develop the patterns of behavior and interaction skills expected of them in their new communities. Another benefit of understanding cultural differences is that in this country's increasingly diverse society, people need to work well with individuals from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Price-Machado, 1996).

The basic requirement for effective classroom management is for instructors to model the expected behavior. The instructor arrives on time and comes prepared with an organized instructional plan that is communicated to learners. An effective way to do this is to start each class session with an agenda that can be referred to at various times throughout the session. This draws students' attention to organization and class structure, invites them to reflect on what has been achieved within an allocated time period, and keeps them aware that they are functioning within a system.

Building Skills Through Classroom Rules and Routines

Classroom routines provide a context in which organizational skills, self-management, appropriate attitude, and personal responsibility can be modeled and practiced. Rules and routines enable learners to be systematic as they learn and operate effectively within social, professional, and technological systems. Procedures and rules can be documented and displayed in the classroom, and learners can be asked to accept responsibility for informing new students about the procedures and rules.

Instructors can create systems in the classroom that set expectations for personal organization, preparedness, and responsibility, and also provide opportunities for learners to document that they are meeting those expectations. For example, learners can maintain weekly checklists to keep track of what they need to bring to class and tasks they need to complete in class. Those with school-age children can compare their own charts and checklists with the ones their children bring home from school. In this way, parents can help their children learn as they themselves are learning.

Generating Learner Involvement

The foremost goal of classroom management techniques should be student responsibility. Involving learners in the establishment of class rules and procedures helps develop student responsibility as well as the student support that is critical to the success of classroom management techniques. Simple strategies can give learners control over how a classroom functions and can encourage them to make decisions collaboratively, solve problems, think creatively, and exercise responsibility. Suggestion boxes provide opportunities for student input on issues from interpersonal conflicts in the classroom to furniture layout. Instructors and learners together can develop a list of classroom jobs and a job-assignment rotation.

Using Teamwork to Simulate the Work Environment

Another way to simulate the work environment is to create teams to perform classroom maintenance tasks, such as erasing the board, turning off the computers, and training new students. Teams provide a real-life context for learners to practice workforce and civic competencies. Each team role has duties and responsibilities attached to it, with clear performance criteria established in advance. Job descriptions can be posted in the classroom or printed on cards and distributed to team members as jobs are assigned. In open-entry classes, where there are frequent arrivals and departures, learners can experience a typical workforce situation where team members train new employees or fill in for absentees.

Criteria for grouping learners into teams will vary depending on the makeup of the class and the priorities of the teacher. Instructors may group learners on the basis of mixed language backgrounds, ability levels, or gender, or learners may form their own groups. No matter how the groups are formed, interpersonal challenges will exist within them, just as they exist in a workforce team. Managing these conflicts helps build interpersonal skills.

Conclusion

Instructional activities and classroom management techniques provide opportunities for learners to develop workforce and civic competencies and to apply what they are learning to the reality of their everyday lives. A successful program produces outcomes that are responsive to the goals of all stakeholders, and in doing so, prepares students for success in the workforce and in the wider community.

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EFF Standards and SCANS Competencies

EFF Standards	SCANS Competencies
Communication Skills	
Reading—Determine purpose, select strategies, monitor comprehension, analyze and integrate information **Writing**—Determine purpose, organize and present information, use language correctly and appropriately, revise **Speaking**—Determine purpose, organize information, use language correctly and appropriately, monitor effectiveness **Listening**—Attend, use appropriate strategies, monitor comprehension, integrate new information with prior knowledge **Observing**—Attend, use appropriate strategies, monitor comprehension, analyze and integrate information	**Basic Skills**—Read, write, do math, listen, speak, interpret, organize information and ideas **Thinking Skills**—Think creatively, make decisions, solve problems, visualize, know how to learn and reason **Personal Qualities**—Responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, integrity, honesty
Decision-Making Skills	
Math—Understand and work with symbolic information, apply math to solve problems, select data, use symbols to communicate **Problems and Decisions**—Anticipate problems, understand causes, identify and evaluate solutions, establish criteria for solution selection **Planning**—Set and prioritize goals, develop organized approach, carry out and monitor plan, evaluate effectiveness	**Resource Management**—Identify, organize, plan, and allocate time, money, materials, staff
Interpersonal Skills	
Cooperate—Interact courteously and respectfully, seek and give input, adjust actions to others' needs and group goals **Advocate and Influence**—Define goals, gather supporting information, make a case, revise **Conflict Resolution**—Identify areas of agreement/disagreement, generate win/win options, engage parties in negotiation, evaluate and revise approach **Guide Others**—Assess others' needs and own ability, use appropriate strategies, build on others' strengths	**Interpersonal Skills**—Work on teams, teach others, serve customers, lead, negotiate, work in culturally diverse settings **Information Management**—Acquire and evaluate facts, organize and maintain data, interpret and communicate information, use computers

EFF Standards	SCANS Competencies
Lifelong Learning Skills	
Responsibility—Establish goals, identify own strengths/ weaknesses, employ range of strategies, monitor progress, test in real life **Reflect and Evaluate**—Assess extent and relevance of current knowledge, make inferences, predictions, judgments **Research**—Pose questions, use multiple lines of inquiry, organize/analyze findings **Technology**—Use electronic tools to acquire, process, and manage information and practice skills	**Systems**—Understand social, organizational, and technological systems, monitor and correct performance, improve/design systems **Technology**—Select appropriate technology, apply technology to tasks, maintain and troubleshoot equipment

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IV-A. Study Circle on Preparing Adult English Language Learners for the Workforce

Participant Handouts

Readings

- *Issues in Improving Immigrant Workers' English Language Skills*, by Miriam Burt www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/digests/Workplaceissues.html
- *English That Works: Preparing Adult English Language Learners for Success in the Workforce and Community*, by Brigitte Marshall www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/digests/Englishwks.html

Description

In this study circle, we will read and discuss research on preparing adult English language learners for the workforce and evaluate its applications to adult education practice. Participants will read two articles that discuss preparing adult English language learners for the workforce:

- *Issues in Improving Immigrant Workers' English Language Skills*, by Miriam Burt, identifies issues in improving immigrant workers' language skills and suggests ways to address these issues through workplace instruction.
- *English That Works: Preparing Adult English Language Learners for Success in the Workforce and Community*, by Brigitte Marshall, describes how to link language instruction to workforce skills.

The study group begins by reading and discussing research on issues related to workplace education for adult English language learners. The group then examines strategies to help provide English language learners in an English as a second language (ESL) class with the language and the cultural skills needed for success in the U.S. workplace. Participants are expected to reflect on their implementation of at least one strategy in between sessions.

Where:

When:

Study Circle Preparation

Before the first meeting of the study circle, please prepare by reading *Issues in Improving Immigrant Workers' English Language Skills.*

As you read the brief, please note ideas that stand out or questions that it raises for you. Highlight or write notes about the theories that resonate with your experience. During the first session of the study group, you will be asked to identify an issue (A, B, C, D, or E) from the brief and explain why it is interesting to you (in 1 or 2 minutes).

Jigsaw Reading Questions

English That Works: Preparing Adult English Language Learners for Success in the Workforce and Community

Directions: Answer the questions according to the facilitator's instructions.

Set I: Social Forces, Economic Shifts, Welfare Reform, Accountability Requirements, and Learner Needs

a. Why has the number of job applicants unable to perform the math and reading tasks of the jobs they are seeking risen so sharply in the past few years?

b. What does SCANS refer to? What was its mission?

c. Why are many welfare recipients unable to find jobs that support them and their families?

Set II: Accountability Requirements and Learner Needs

a. What is the purpose of the National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS)?

b. How are the six NRS ESL levels described?

c. How are SCANS and Equipped for the Future (EFF) similar? How are they different?

Set III: Developing Workforce and Civic Competencies, Classroom Simulations, and Cooperative Learning

a. What is the difference between content knowledge and process knowledge? Which kind of knowledge do the SCANS and EFF skills define?

b. What workplace-related skills might a classroom simulation develop?

c. What are three types of cooperative learning activities to try in the classroom? What workplace-related skills might these activities develop?

Set IV: Conveying Workforce and Civic Skills Through Classroom Management Techniques

a. What are three behavioral expectations that are quite common in the U.S. workplace? Why might they be problematic to the adult English language learner?

b. How might the teacher model these behaviors in the classroom?

c. How can teamwork in the classroom simulate the workplace environment?

New Activity Planning Form

1. Which research finding, theoretical principle, or strategy are you planning to implement in your classroom in a specific activity?

2. Why did you choose this new activity or strategy? What impact or outcomes are you hoping to see?

3. What contextual factors (e.g., class size; student levels, content focus [e.g., general, workplace]) will you have to take into account as you plan this activity or strategy?

4. How will you implement this activity or strategy? What will you do?

5. What signs will show that the activity or strategy is having an impact on your students?

Peer Observation Form

1. What are you looking for?

2. What do you observe?

Discussion of observations with teacher

New Activity Notes

1. Describe the activity or strategy you implemented. What happened?

2. What struck you as interesting about what happened? How did it compare to what you expected?

3. What impact did you see the activity or strategy have on the learners or on the program?

4. Did the activity or strategy give you the information you were looking for? How else might you try to get additional information?

5. What did you learn about the research, theory, or strategy you were testing?

6. What did you get out of the experience of applying theory and research to your practice?

Evaluation Form

1. How useful did you find the study circle material? Please explain.

2. How useful did you find the study circle meetings? Please explain.

3. How useful did you find the new activity or strategy (including the documentation)? Please explain.

4. What tools or ideas are you taking away that you will continue to use in your practice?

5. In what ways are you going to continue to apply research in your practice?

6. If this study circle is offered again, what advice would you give the facilitator?

7. On what other topics would you like to have a study circle?

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Issues in Improving Immigrant Workers' English Language Skills

Miriam Burt
Center for Applied Linguistics
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According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau (2003), at the beginning of the 21st century, 12% of the U.S. labor force were foreign born. Of the foreign-born workers in the United States, 22% held jobs in the service industry, 18.3% worked in factories and as laborers, and 12.6% worked in construction, mechanics, and repairs. Statistics further showed that immigrants were under represented in managerial and high-level sales positions and that their salaries remained lower than those of native-born workers: 54% of the foreign-born population working full time held low-income jobs compared to only 38% of native-born working full time.

Literacy and fluency in English seem to be related to economic self-sufficiency. Immigrants who are literate only in a language other than English are more likely to have noncontinuous employment and to earn less than those literate in English (Greenberg, Macias, Rhodes, & Chan, 2001). An analysis of the 2000 U.S. Census data on immigrant earnings revealed a positive relation between earnings and English language ability (Chiswick & Miller, 2002). For this and many other reasons, immigrants want to learn English. Forty-two percent of the participants in federally funded adult education programs are studying English (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Yet barriers such as time, transportation, and childcare may keep many from attending classes (Van Duzer, Moss, Burt, Peyton, & Ross-Feldman, 2003).

Offering English as a second language (ESL) classes on the job is a way to provide instruction to those who have problems accessing programs outside of work. Learning in the context of work can improve work skills while improving language skills (see, e.g., ABC Canada, 1999; Burt, 1997; Hayflich, 1995; Mikulecky, 1992). Yet it appears that few employers provide this instruction (National Institute for Literacy, n.d.). Reasons that employers do not offer training include scheduling issues, cost, perceived lack of benefit to the company, and a sense that it is not their responsibility (Burt, 1997; Kavanaugh, 1999; Pierce, 2001).

This brief identifies five issues to be addressed in improving the English language skills of immigrant workers and provides suggestions for addressing these issues through workplace instruction.

Issue A: The Length of Time It Takes to Learn English

Both employers and employees often have unrealistic ideas of the amount of time it takes to learn English (Burt, 1997; Kavanaugh, 1999; Mikulecky, 1997; Pierce, 2001). Research is limited regarding adults learning English (Van Duzer, et al., 2003), but studies with children reveal that it takes from 2-5 years to become socially adept in a second language and from 5-8 years to become academically on par with native speakers (Cummins, 1991; Thomas & Collier, 1997). Clearly, a workplace ESL class of 40-60 hours is unlikely to result in great gains in language acquisition. When workers continue to speak to one another in their native language during

breaks and on the work floor, employers may become disillusioned. Then, when the workplace classes are over or when economic support for the classes is no longer available, employers often discontinue the classes (ABC Canada, 1999; Burt, 1997; Kavanaugh; Pierce).

Issue B: Language Use in the Workplace and Elsewhere

Sometimes there is a naivete about the use of language in general. Even if it were possible for workers to learn enough English in 50 hours to express themselves clearly and to understand everything that is said, it is unlikely that many workers would use the new language when speaking to other native speakers of their language. In order to choose to speak a language, there must be a need to speak that language (Burt, 2002; Hayflich, 1995). In the workplace, code switching (shifting from one language to another language in the course of a conversation) can occur with bilingual workers. For example, in a conversation held in Spanish, workers may give names of workplace machines and procedures in English. In a conversation in English, abstract concepts and personal opinions may be better expressed in Spanish. Code-switching and choosing to speak one language with one person and another language with another person to facilitate ease and comprehensibility of communication, can indicate bilingual proficiency rather than linguistic deficiency (Milroy & Muysken, 1995).

Recent research looks at how instructional contexts also affect motivation. A learner's motivation may vary from day to day and even from task to task (Dornyei, 2002b; Dornyei & Kormos, 2000). Using varied and challenging instructional activities helps learners stay focused and engaged in instructional content (Dornyei & Csizer, 1998). Research examining how to improve learner motivation suggests that social factors (e.g., group dynamics, learning environment, and a partner's motivation) affect a learner's attitude, effort, classroom behavior, and achievement (Dornyei, 2002b). Therefore, teachers should create an environment that is conducive to learning by encouraging group cohesion in the classroom. Pair and group work activities can provide learners with opportunities to share information and build a sense of community (Florez & Burt, 2001).

Issue C: Language and Identity

The decision to use or to not use the target language and the accompanying (in this case, mainstream U.S.) workplace behaviors may also be affected by a desire to maintain one's identity. Some immigrant workers may feel empowered when they use English and try out new workplace behaviors on the job (see, e.g., ABC Canada, 1999; Li, 2000). Others, however, may make a conscious decision to not use the new language as a way of asserting their own social identity (Moore, 1999; Pierce, 2001). In her ethnographic study of a cable manufacturing company in California, Katz (2000) reported that even though workers were instructed to speak up on the job and they understood that this was a behavior that could lead to promotions, many chose to hold on to their behaviors of not standing out in the crowd.

Research on the relationship between motivation and second language acquisition is ongoing. Current research looks at instructional practices that teachers use to generate and maintain learner motivation and strategies through which learners themselves take control of factors that

have an impact on their motivation and learning, such as lack of self-confidence, change of goals, or distractions (Dornyei, 2003; Noels, Clement, & Pelletier, 2003).

The decision to not use the new language and behaviors may also be affected by the attitude displayed by employers and co-workers when immigrant workers try out what they have learned. At one work site, learners trying to speak English at team meetings reported being laughed at by native English-speaking co-workers for demonstrating nonnative-like pronunciation (Moore, 1999).

Issue D: Relationship Between Training and Worker Performance

Not all workplace misunderstandings are due to poor English skills. Problems can arise from diverse causes such as poor organization of work flow; poor supervision; and poorly written workplace materials, e.g., signs, manuals, and memos (Westerfield & Burt, 1996). Worker productivity deficits may also be due to the way the workplace itself is structured. For example, use of technology, labor-management relations, and compensation offered may affect worker performance. Basic skills or English language training will not ameliorate these issues (Sarmiento & Schurman, 1992).

Empirical research with second language learners supports the contention that engaging in language interactions facilitates second language development. Findings from a study to determine how conversational interaction affects the acquisition of question formation indicate that interaction can increase the pace of acquisition (Mackey, 1999). Research on interaction includes studies of *task-based language learning and teaching and focus on form*.

Even in situations where worker improvement is noticed, it may not be due solely to workplace training. An analysis of a database developed by the American Society of Training and Development (ASTD) to explore the connection between employer investment in training and company performance concluded that, although firms that invested in training seemed to be more productive than those that did not, it was difficult to tie higher performance levels directly to the training offered (Bassi, Harrison, Ludwig, & McMurrer, 2001). In any case, those involved in workplace training report that when there is little or no opportunity provided for the workers to use the new learning, it will not be retained (Kavanaugh, 1999; Pierce, 2001; Sarmiento & Schurman, 1992).

Issue E: Measuring Outcomes

Measuring training and instructional outcomes can be problematic (Affholter, 1995). In classes for immigrant workers, there can be a lack of clarity about the outcomes being sought, i.e., an uncertainty about whether the instructional goals are improved productivity or workers speaking English on the job (Kavanaugh, 1999). Often goals are not clearly stated at the outset of the course, monitored throughout the course, and then evaluated at the end (Affholter). In short, program providers may not know what to measure, how to measure, or when to measure outcomes of the training.

Suggestions

Offer short, highly focused classes with clearly stated, measurable, and attainable objectives

Providing short, targeted classes with limited goals can be effective in the workplace (Burt, 1997; Kavanaugh, 1999). A 6-week course on accent reduction in Pima County, Arizona, for example, has been popular both with employers and with immigrant workers who have at least an intermediate level of English. Similarly, with pre-literate Latino housekeepers, a 3-week course with the three goals of greeting residents, supervisors, and co-workers; expressing lack of comprehension; and asking for clarification has been successful at a nursing home in Falls Church, Virginia (Burt, 2002).

When classes are focused and objectives are clearly stated and realistic as to what can be accomplished in a short time, it is easier to assess and monitor outcomes. Workers are more likely to complete a 6-week course than one that lasts 4 months. Furthermore, if the classes are carefully scheduled so as not to be held during rush times, there is less likelihood that the worker will be pulled from the class to go back to work (Kavanaugh, 1999).

Educate everyone about the process of learning a second language

Few people in this country appreciate the difficulty of learning and using a second language. More than 82% of the people in the United States speak only English (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). Employers, native-English-speaking workers, and immigrant workers all need to appreciate the challenges of learning to speak English on the job. Educators report the value of using "shock language" classes (a short lesson taught entirely in a language unknown to anyone in the room except the instructor) with employers to give them a brief introduction to what foreign-born workers face in an English-speaking environment (Schrage, 1997). Giving native-speaking workers a shock-language experience could likewise increase their understanding of the complexity of learning a new language and help them become more supportive of the immigrant workers' attempts to try out new language and behaviors on the job. This, in turn, would motivate the immigrant workers to use what they have learned on the job.

Use the native language

Limited use of the native language in workplace instruction, particularly in work sites where much of the workforce speaks the same native language, can help avoid miscommunication and can deepen learner comprehension of difficult concepts (Katz, 2000; Moore, 1999; Taggart & Martinez, 2003). Because bilingual instruction does not imply translation of all course content but rather a judicious choice of which language to use for which purposes, bilingual teachers need explicit criteria concerning when to use the native language and when to use English (Taggart & Martinez). The workers' native language should be used to teach difficult content that they need to know in order to do a task. Then the English vocabulary and structures they need to read, listen to, write, and talk about the tasks should be taught (Taggart & Martinez).

Huerta-Mac'as (2003) offers another model for using two languages: A topic is introduced in the native language; key English vocabulary items are taught; hands-on activities (such as those involving workplace machines) are carried out in English and assessed in English; technology activities follow, with discussion in the native language; and the final discussion and question and answer activity is carried out in whichever language each individual student prefers. When the class has speakers of several different languages, Huerta-Mac'as suggests dividing the class into same-language small groups for discussion of the workplace issues in their native language. Each group then, in English, frames questions about the workplace issues for the teacher.

Get the leaders involved

It is professional wisdom in workplace instruction that, before beginning the classes, the instructor needs to get all the support of all employer stakeholders including chief officers, human resource personnel, and direct supervisors of the workers (Alamprese & Kay, 1993; Burt, 1997). However, worker leaders need to be involved as well-if not directly in the classes, as least as advocates to encourage others to attend (Pierce, 2001). They also need to be involved in planning the classes, setting the goals, and advising the educational service provider. The message that needs to be sent to the immigrant workers is that value is placed on learning English both by the employers and by fellow employees (ABC Canada, 1999).

Provide opportunities to use English on the job

Pierce (2001) describes a workplace where the company established and publicized a process for achieving promotions or higher pay. One of the skills workers had to demonstrate was a certain level of English literacy and oral proficiency. There are other ways, however, to encourage the use of English on the job that do not involve formal assessment of skills: Instructors can invite supervisors to visit classes; they can also encourage supervisors to have conversations in English with the learners about what they are learning and about their job tasks. Employers can promote discussion among native and nonnative English speakers on the job through English language discussion tables at breaks (Burt, 2002) and mentoring or tutoring by the native speakers (Pierce). This tutoring should not be seen as a substitute for language instruction given by a trained instructor but rather as ancillary support. Because merely speaking a language does not give one the skills to teach someone else to speak the language, native speakers who are tutoring co-workers in English should be given training. This training can often be provided for a modest fee through local literacy agencies or other English language service providers (Stuart, 1994).

Conclusion

English language ability is related to higher wages and more stable employment, yet little training is currently offered to immigrants at the workplace. Issues in providing this instruction include unrealistic expectations both of what can be learned in a short workplace class and how quickly language and cultural behaviors can and should be changed; difficulties in defining and assessing outcomes; and a lack of value placed on the instruction. Research is needed on the use of the native language in workplace instruction; on the efficacy of short-term classes; and on creative ways of providing, monitoring, and assessing English language instruction on the job.

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English That Works: Preparing Adult English Language Learners for Success in the Workforce and Community

Brigitte Marshall
Oakland (California) Adult Education
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> *"Today in the class you said something important for me because I do it yesterday in my work. You'll said is a good idea take notes when somebody explain something to you. And that's what I did yesterday when my boss explained to me how to use the cash register. I telled her when I don't understand I'm confused to explain me again and I repeat to her what I understand to know if it's right or wrong. I asked her if sometimes can I see my notes to check if I'm doing it right. Her answer was yes because the notes can help you a lot in you work."*
>
> —Logbook excerpt by a vocational ESL student, San Diego Community College (D. Price-Machado, personal communication, April 15, 2000)

The author of this logbook entry has not learned all the grammar rules of English, but she has mastered skills that are more likely to result in success in the workforce than will a demonstration of perfect grammar. She has learned how to take notes, how to ask for clarification, and how to restate instructions.

Increasingly in the United States, adult English as a second language (ESL) instructors teach language as a means to an end: to help prepare students for success in the workforce and their communities. In the process, they must balance the needs of different stakeholders: the learners, the employers, the community, and the funding agencies.

This digest discusses efforts in adult ESL education to link language instruction to workforce and civic skills (skills needed for successful participation in the community). It looks at the social forces that underlie these efforts and describes how adult ESL educators can integrate workforce and civic life skills into their curricula and convey these skills to their students through learner-centered instructional strategies and classroom management techniques.

Social Forces

Behind current efforts to link language instruction to workforce and civic skills are several social forces: economic shifts, welfare reform, new accountability requirements, and a greater sensitivity among adult ESL educators to learner needs.

Economic Shifts

The United States is shifting from an economy based on industry and manufacturing to one based on services and information (Stuart, 1988). High-paying unskilled jobs are increasingly difficult to find. In today's post-industrial economy, unskilled workers "may get work, but their earnings will not keep them out of poverty and their employment future remains precarious" (D'Amico, 1997, p. 5).

A recent survey found that more than 33% of job applicants nationwide lacked the math and reading skills to do the jobs they were seeking, up from 19% in 1996 (American Management Association, 2001). The sharp increase was attributed to the higher skill levels required in today's workforce, where new technologies have raised the bar for job applicants in terms of literacy and math.

The survey confirmed a trend found by the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS), a group of business and education leaders convened in 1990 by the U.S. Department of Labor to determine what schools can do to better prepare students for the workforce (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1991). Describing successful workers as "creative and responsible problem solvers" (p. v), the commission identified the specific skills needed in today's workforce: Successful workers are able to manage resources, work with others, manage information, operate within organizational systems, and use different technologies. To perform these workforce competencies, workers need literacy and computational skills; higher order thinking skills such as decision making, problem solving, representing information, and learning to learn; and certain personal attributes, such as maturity, honesty, and sociability.

Welfare Reform

Recent welfare reform legislation has pressured welfare recipients to find work and leave public assistance. Yet many welfare recipients lack the skills needed for jobs that lead to self-sufficiency (Carnevale & Desrochers, 1999). The jobs they get offer little opportunity for training and advancement. As a result, learners turn to adult education programs to provide the training that they need to advance.

Accountability Requirements

In 1998 the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) established accountability requirements for states receiving federal funds for adult education. The National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS), designed to collect information on adult education learner outcomes, became the vehicle for states reporting performance data (National Reporting System for Adult Education, 2001). NRS identifies five core outcome measures that meet the AEFLA requirements for core performance indicators: educational gain, employment, employment retention, placement in postsecondary education or training, and receipt of a secondary school diploma or GED. For educational gain, NRS identifies six ESL levels from beginning to high advanced. Each level is described in terms of competencies across three skill areas: speaking and listening, basic reading and writing, and functional and workforce skills.

Using the NRS descriptors as guidelines, adult ESL programs assess learners at intake. After a predetermined amount of instruction, programs assess learners again, using the level descriptors to determine progress. States have the option to use either a competency-based standardized test, such as the Basic English Skills Test (BEST; Center for Applied Linguistics, 1984); the CASAS Life Skills Tests (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System, 1996); or performance assessments, as long as the procedure is the same for all programs.

Learner Needs

In recent years adult ESL education has developed the tools to assess learner needs and interests. Today, curriculum developers take into account the expectations not only of employers, funding agencies, and the community but those of learners and workers as well (Burt, 1997).

In 1994 the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) launched the Equipped for the Future (EFF) initiative in response to the National Education Goals Panel challenge for a literate nation by 2000 (National Education Goals Panel, 1993). EFF asked from the perspective of adult learners, "What is it that adults need to know and be able to do in the 21st century?" SCANS had asked from the perspective of employers, "What does work require of schools?" The answers were similar, indicating enough overlap between the two for programs to develop curricula that reflect the needs of both the worker and the workforce. From the responses to the EFF question, NIFL identified 16 core skills organized in four major areas: communication, decision-making, interpersonal, and lifelong learning (National Institute for Literacy, 2000). A comparison of the EFF Standards and the Scans Competencies is provided at the end of this brief.

Developing Workforce and Civic Competencies

The SCANS competencies and the EFF standards combine basic communication, interpersonal, and thinking skills (such as problem solving, making inferences, and predicting outcomes) that form a part of any good adult education curriculum. Often a competency is embedded in the existing curriculum of an adult ESL program. It simply needs to be emphasized and its relevance to the workforce or the community made explicit.

The adult ESL classroom is a natural place to develop workforce and civic skills. This happens when instructors view learners the way that today's workforce increasingly views successful workers as active, creative, and self-directed problem solvers who can work effectively on their own and with others.

The following ESL methods and techniques can be used to develop workforce and civic skills.

Classroom Simulations

The SCANS and EFF workforce and civic skills do not define content knowledge (what people know) but rather process knowledge (what people do and how they do it). The most direct way for instructors to help learners develop these skills is to create a learning environment that simulates the situations in which these skills are used in the outside world. For example, if talking

and reading about foods is a topic of interest to learners, the instructor can teach the necessary language (e.g., food-related vocabulary, comparative and superlative statements, and language functions for expressing preferences) within the real-life context of making a budget and comparing prices of food items at different supermarkets in order to plan a reception.

In the process, learners practice a variety of workforce and civic skills. When they determine what their budget will cover, learners are making decisions and allocating resources. When they compare food prices at different stores, they are acquiring and organizing information and using math to calculate. When they select and reserve a location for the reception and develop a timetable for setup and cleanup, learners are developing an organized approach, evaluating alternatives, and anticipating problems. Throughout the process, they are working as part of a team.

Cooperative Learning

In cooperative learning, small groups of learners work together to accomplish a task, with each member playing a role needed to complete the task. As learners interact, they seek and offer input, advocate and influence, negotiate, and teach one another-all valuable civic and workforce skills and all part of SCANS and EFF frameworks.

Jigsaw activities provide practice for cooperative learning skills by requiring students to learn new information and teach it to others.

Jigsaw Activity

1. Learners form "home" teams of four members each.
2. In their home teams, learners number off one through four. Learners with the same number form "expert" teams.
3. Each expert team studies a specified segment of information.
4. Home teams come together again. Learners teach each other the segment of information they have learned in their expert teams or contribute their knowledge to complete a team project.

Project assignments allow students to learn independently and with others as they research, organize and interpret information, and communicate their findings. Students can use technology (e.g., the Internet and videos) to research and present their projects, thereby developing information management and technology competencies.

Information gathering and reporting activities, such as surveys, also promote independent learning and effective interaction skills in the classroom. For example, a simple survey idea is "Who are you and where are you from?"

Survey Activity

1. Learners interview their classmates to learn names, the spelling of names, countries of origin, and the spelling of the country names.
2. Learners record the information in a table: last name, first name, and country of origin.
3. Learners tally the figures, listing the countries represented and the number of learners from each country.
4. Learners create a graph, such as a bar graph or pie chart, to present the information in the tally.

Conveying Workforce and Civic Skills Through Classroom Management Techniques

Standards of expected behavior exist within every society, both in the workforce and in everyday interactions with individuals in the community. Through classroom management techniques, instructors can create an environment for English language learners that prepares them for the behaviors that will help them achieve success in the workforce and the community.

Establishing Behavioral Expectations

In the United States, employees are expected to be on time, to be accountable for their actions, and to show initiative. Individual responsibility, integrity, and self-management are also fundamental to success.

These expected behaviors reflect the culture of the United States and may or may not coincide with attitudes, values, and behaviors that learners bring with them from their countries of origin. Discussing cultural differences helps learners understand and develop the patterns of behavior and interaction skills expected of them in their new communities. Another benefit of understanding cultural differences is that in this country's increasingly diverse society, people need to work well with individuals from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Price-Machado, 1996).

The basic requirement for effective classroom management is for instructors to model the expected behavior. The instructor arrives on time and comes prepared with an organized instructional plan that is communicated to learners. An effective way to do this is to start each class session with an agenda that can be referred to at various times throughout the session. This draws students' attention to organization and class structure, invites them to reflect on what has been achieved within an allocated time period, and keeps them aware that they are functioning within a system.

Building Skills Through Classroom Rules and Routines

Classroom routines provide a context in which organizational skills, self-management, appropriate attitude, and personal responsibility can be modeled and practiced. Rules and routines enable learners to be systematic as they learn and operate effectively within social, professional, and technological systems. Procedures and rules can be documented and displayed in the classroom, and learners can be asked to accept responsibility for informing new students about the procedures and rules.

Instructors can create systems in the classroom that set expectations for personal organization, preparedness, and responsibility, and also provide opportunities for learners to document that they are meeting those expectations. For example, learners can maintain weekly checklists to keep track of what they need to bring to class and tasks they need to complete in class. Those with school-age children can compare their own charts and checklists with the ones their children bring home from school. In this way, parents can help their children learn as they themselves are learning.

Generating Learner Involvement

The foremost goal of classroom management techniques should be student responsibility. Involving learners in the establishment of class rules and procedures helps develop student responsibility as well as the student support that is critical to the success of classroom management techniques. Simple strategies can give learners control over how a classroom functions and can encourage them to make decisions collaboratively, solve problems, think creatively, and exercise responsibility. Suggestion boxes provide opportunities for student input on issues from interpersonal conflicts in the classroom to furniture layout. Instructors and learners together can develop a list of classroom jobs and a job-assignment rotation.

Using Teamwork to Simulate the Work Environment

Another way to simulate the work environment is to create teams to perform classroom maintenance tasks, such as erasing the board, turning off the computers, and training new students. Teams provide a real-life context for learners to practice workforce and civic competencies. Each team role has duties and responsibilities attached to it, with clear performance criteria established in advance. Job descriptions can be posted in the classroom or printed on cards and distributed to team members as jobs are assigned. In open-entry classes, where there are frequent arrivals and departures, learners can experience a typical workforce situation where team members train new employees or fill in for absentees.

Criteria for grouping learners into teams will vary depending on the makeup of the class and the priorities of the teacher. Instructors may group learners on the basis of mixed language backgrounds, ability levels, or gender, or learners may form their own groups. No matter how the groups are formed, interpersonal challenges will exist within them, just as they exist in a workforce team. Managing these conflicts helps build interpersonal skills.

Conclusion

Instructional activities and classroom management techniques provide opportunities for learners to develop workforce and civic competencies and to apply what they are learning to the reality of their everyday lives. A successful program produces outcomes that are responsive to the goals of all stakeholders, and in doing so, prepares students for success in the workforce and in the wider community.

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EFF Standards and SCANS Competencies

EFF Standards	SCANS Competencies
Communication Skills	
Reading—Determine purpose, select strategies, monitor comprehension, analyze and integrate information **Writing**—Determine purpose, organize and present information, use language correctly and appropriately, revise **Speaking**—Determine purpose, organize information, use language correctly and appropriately, monitor effectiveness **Listening**—Attend, use appropriate strategies, monitor comprehension, integrate new information with prior knowledge **Observing**—Attend, use appropriate strategies, monitor comprehension, analyze and integrate information	**Basic Skills**—Read, write, do math, listen, speak, interpret, organize information and ideas **Thinking Skills**—Think creatively, make decisions, solve problems, visualize, know how to learn and reason **Personal Qualities**—Responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, integrity, honesty
Decision-Making Skills	
Math—Understand and work with symbolic information, apply math to solve problems, select data, use symbols to communicate **Problems and Decisions**—Anticipate problems, understand causes, identify and evaluate solutions, establish criteria for solution selection **Planning**—Set and prioritize goals, develop organized approach, carry out and monitor plan, evaluate effectiveness	**Resource Management**—Identify, organize, plan, and allocate time, money, materials, staff
Interpersonal Skills	
Cooperate—Interact courteously and respectfully, seek and give input, adjust actions to others' needs and group goals **Advocate and Influence**—Define goals, gather supporting information, make a case, revise **Conflict Resolution**—Identify areas of agreement/disagreement, generate win/win options, engage parties in negotiation, evaluate and revise approach **Guide Others**—Assess others' needs and own ability, use appropriate strategies, build on others' strengths	**Interpersonal Skills**—Work on teams, teach others, serve customers, lead, negotiate, work in culturally diverse settings **Information Management**—Acquire and evaluate facts, organize and maintain data, interpret and communicate information, use computers

EFF Standards	SCANS Competencies
Lifelong Learning Skills	
Responsibility—Establish goals, identify own strengths/ weaknesses, employ range of strategies, monitor progress, test in real life **Reflect and Evaluate**—Assess extent and relevance of current knowledge, make inferences, predictions, judgments **Research**—Pose questions, use multiple lines of inquiry, organize/analyze findings **Technology**—Use electronic tools to acquire, process, and manage information and practice skills	**Systems**—Understand social, organizational, and technological systems, monitor and correct performance, improve/design systems **Technology**—Select appropriate technology, apply technology to tasks, maintain and troubleshoot equipment

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