**GLOBAL
TALENT BRIDGE**

SUPPORTING SKILLED IMMIGRANTS

A TOOLKIT FOR ESL PRACTITIONERS

November 2011

Global Talent Bridge

Building Opportunities for Skilled Immigrants

Global Talent Bridge is an initiative of World Education Services (WES) that is dedicated to helping skilled immigrants fully utilize their talents and education in the United States. Global Talent Bridge joins with institutional partners and community organizations to help skilled immigrants leverage their training, achieve their professional goals, and contribute their talents to their full potential.

Global Talent Bridge provides technical assistance, staff training and specialized resources to community organizations, adult education programs, government agencies and academic institutions so they can better support, advise and integrate highly-qualified immigrants. It also conducts research and policy advocacy efforts to advance opportunities for skilled immigrants at the local, state and national level.

www.globaltalentbridge.org

WES
World Education Services

World Education Services (WES) is a non-profit organization founded in 1974 that has served more than 750,000 individuals from around the world. WES's mission is to foster the integration of persons educated outside the U.S. into academic and professional settings. Its primary service is providing foreign credential evaluation reports so that academic credentials earned abroad are understood and fully recognized in the U.S.

By authenticating and explaining foreign education in U.S. terms, WES reports allow employers, professional licensing boards, academic institutions and government agencies to make well-informed decisions regarding their foreign-educated candidates. WES is a founding member of National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES).

www.wes.org

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

How common is it to see a foreign-educated professional driving a taxi, waiting tables, washing dishes or working in other low-paying jobs where they are not able to take advantage of their knowledge, skills and educational background?

As an ESL teacher, **how often** have you faced the dilemma of not knowing what to do when an adult ESL learner with limited literacy skills in his or her native language is seated next to an adult ESL learner holding an engineering, business or medical degree from his or her home country?

How often do immigrants with high-school diplomas or advanced educational backgrounds get misdirected into Adult Basic Education classrooms, GED Preparation programs or entry-level community college programs once they have "placed out" of the NRS[1] ESL class sequence?

Unfortunately, all of these situations are very common occurrences in the U.S. today.

The Migration Policy Institute (MPI) estimates that there are more than 2.7 million college educated immigrants in the U.S. today whose talents are substantially underutilized. Approximately 1.5 million of them – representing **one of every five** highly skilled immigrants in the U.S. workforce - are either unemployed or working in unskilled jobs as dishwashers, super-market delivery men, home health aides, security guards, and taxi drivers. Another 1.2 million are significantly underemployed – that is, working in jobs that are considered "semi-skilled". Taken together, this constitutes an enormous "waste of human capital". [2]

Ironically, many of these individuals have been trained in fields where the U.S. faces tremendous skills shortages, such as health care, IT, and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math). Clearly, the proper recognition of immigrant skills and credentials is of vital importance to the U.S. economy. Yet unfortunately, highly educated immigrants [3] are often overlooked and underserved.

Why is this? And what should we be doing about this?

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[1]NRS = The National Reporting System for Adult Education. NRS is an outcomes-based reporting system for the state-administered, federally funded adult education programs. NRS was developed by the US Department of Education's Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL).

[2] Batalova, Jeanne and Michael Fix. 2008. Uneven Progress: The Employment Pathways of Skilled Immigrants in the United States. Migration Policy Institute, Executive Summary.

[3] For the purposes of this manual, we are using the terms "skilled", "highly skilled", "highly educated" and "professional" interchangeably to refer to immigrants who possess at the very least some post-secondary training prior to migration.

Outlining the Issue

Unfortunately, despite the fact that they represent a substantial and growing share of our immigrant population, our well-educated immigrants are largely invisible in our political and media conversations regarding immigrants. Despite their enormous potential, they are quietly falling through the cracks when it comes to receiving the affordable training, career pathway counseling and appropriate educational services they need to successfully integrate into the U.S. workforce and into U.S. society as a whole.

There are many factors that contribute to unnecessary costs and delays that hinder an immigrant's progress toward successful workplace integration and education completion. They include the structure of adult education program funding streams, the wording of regulations, and sometimes just a lack of critical, factual information getting out to admissions staff, intake counselors and ESL teachers (as well as to the immigrants themselves).

Community based adult programs generally lack the resources to focus on this population. Even in more advanced settings at the community college level, programs rarely offer the kinds of contextualized ESL classes and appropriate support services that are so important in helping this population to advance.

What can be done to change this situation?

Despite the significant systemic challenges noted above, there are some important efforts being made to highlight the issue of "brain waste" and promote targeted and effective interventions that can help educated immigrants find pathways to success in the U.S.

For many of these talented immigrants, the road to integration and career success begins with improving their English language skills. The importance of appropriate and effective English language services and career pathways counseling in ESL classes at the community adult level cannot be overstated. For this reason we provide several chapters specifically for ESL practitioners that offer strategies, lesson ideas and resources for designing and improving outcomes in this essential area.

In addition, this toolkit provides ESL practitioners – as well other direct service providers such as intake counselors, job developers, counselors and program managers – with the essential information, resources and guidelines they can use to offer more effective support to their skilled immigrant students and clients. It may also prove useful to city, state and federal policy makers interested in immigrant integration.

This manual will help equip practitioners with an understanding of how to more effectively help skilled immigrants navigate the complex educational system and career pathways to success in the U.S.

The *Supporting Skilled Immigrants* Toolkit

This *Supporting Skilled Immigrants* toolit addresses the challenges of properly serving this population and introduces solutions to some of the most pressing problems this group experiences. It presents the various barriers facing skilled immigrants as they seek to integrate into academic and professional settings in the U.S. and identifies key challenges that educators face when working with highly-skilled students in mixed classroom settings. It introduces best practices from the field and a directory of successful programs dedicated to serving the needs of skilled immigrants. Following is a brief description of each of the toolkit chapters.

Introduction

Chapter One - Skilled Immigrants- Profiles and Barriers to Integration
This chapter offers a snapshot of our skilled immigrant population and explains the barriers to immigrant integration and the career hurdles they must overcome to succeed including credential acceptance and evaluation and professional licensing.

Chapter Two - Critical Incidents and Exercises
This chapter presents some common incidents that highlight the problems encountered when working with highly-skilled immigrants.

Chapter Three - Adult ESL Classroom Strategies and Lesson Ideas
This chapter focuses on what can be done in the ESL classroom to address the language-learning needs of the highly-skilled immigrant, including general guidelines and standards for creating contextualized curricula, English for Special Purposes (ESP) and Vocational ESL (VESL) courses to meet student needs.

Chapter Four - ESL Program Models and Best Practices
This chapter presents some of the better-known programs that have been created throughout the U.S. to address the needs of the highly-skilled immigrant.

Chapter Five - Advocating for Skilled Immigrants
This chapter presents guidelines for effective advocacy at all levels – in the classroom, within the profession, and in the broader community.

Chapter Six - Program and Resource Guide
The chapter presents a definitive list of programs, resources and references for practitioners

Glossary of Key ESL Terms

Skilled Immigrants-
Profiles and Barriers to Integration

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for Skilled Immigrants
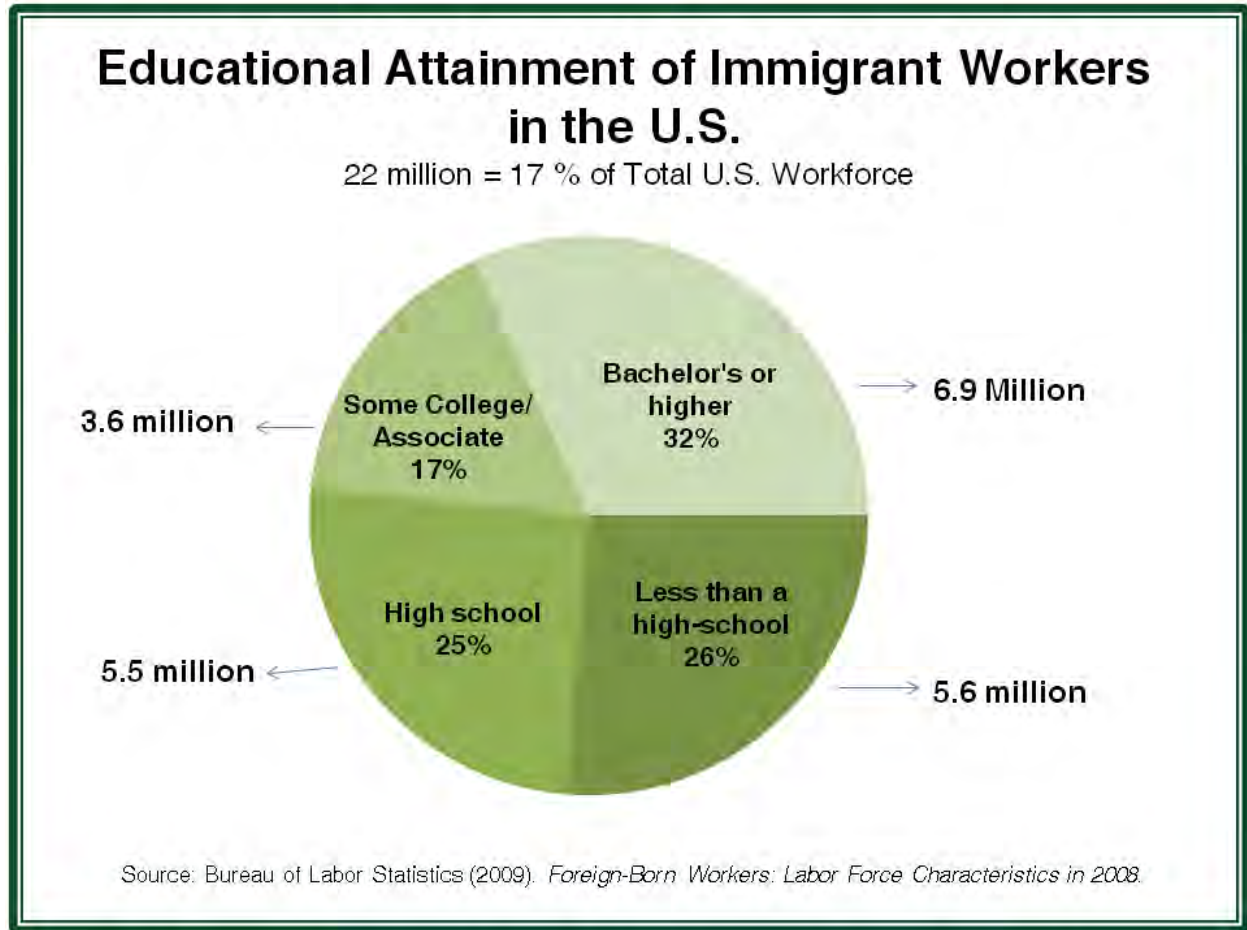
What Do the Numbers Tell Us?

How much do we really know about our immigrant population? Because we are inundated with negative, and often inaccurate, statistics it is important to slow down and take a look at some of the facts.

Skilled Immigrants in the U.S.- How much do you know?

		TRUE	FALSE
1	The share of working-age immigrants in the U.S. who have a bachelor's degree has risen considerably since 1980, and now exceeds the share without a high school diploma.		
2	As of 2006 there were more than 6.1 million immigrants 25 or older with a bachelor's or higher degree, representing 15.2% of all college-educated persons in the US civilian labor force.		
3	25% of the medical doctors and 40% of the nursing staffs in the U.S. are foreign born and foreign educated. The fastest growing group among the RN work force is foreign-born nurses, not US-born nurses.		
4	In the largest 25 metropolitan areas, immigrants constitute 24% of workers in the managerial and professional occupations – executives, doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers, professors, social workers, artists etc.		
5	44 of the nation's 100 largest metropolitan areas are high-skilled immigrant destinations.		
6	High-skilled immigrants who were limited English proficient were twice as likely to work in unskilled jobs as those who were proficient.		
7	California has the largest absolute number of underutilized college-educated immigrants, and immigrants constituted the largest share of the state's underemployed skilled labor force. One-third of New York City immigrants have 2- or 4-year college degrees.		
8	More than half of the highly educated and skilled immigrants in the U.S. obtained their education prior to migration, so that the U.S. benefits from education paid for elsewhere.		
9	25% of technology and engineering companies started in the U.S. in the last ten years had at least one senior executive or founder born and educated outside the U.S.		
10	In four health-care occupational groups – including home health aides and health-care technologists and technicians – the foreign born were much more likely to have a college education than their native colleagues.		

It probably does not come as a surprise to learn that all of the statements in the above chart are "True".
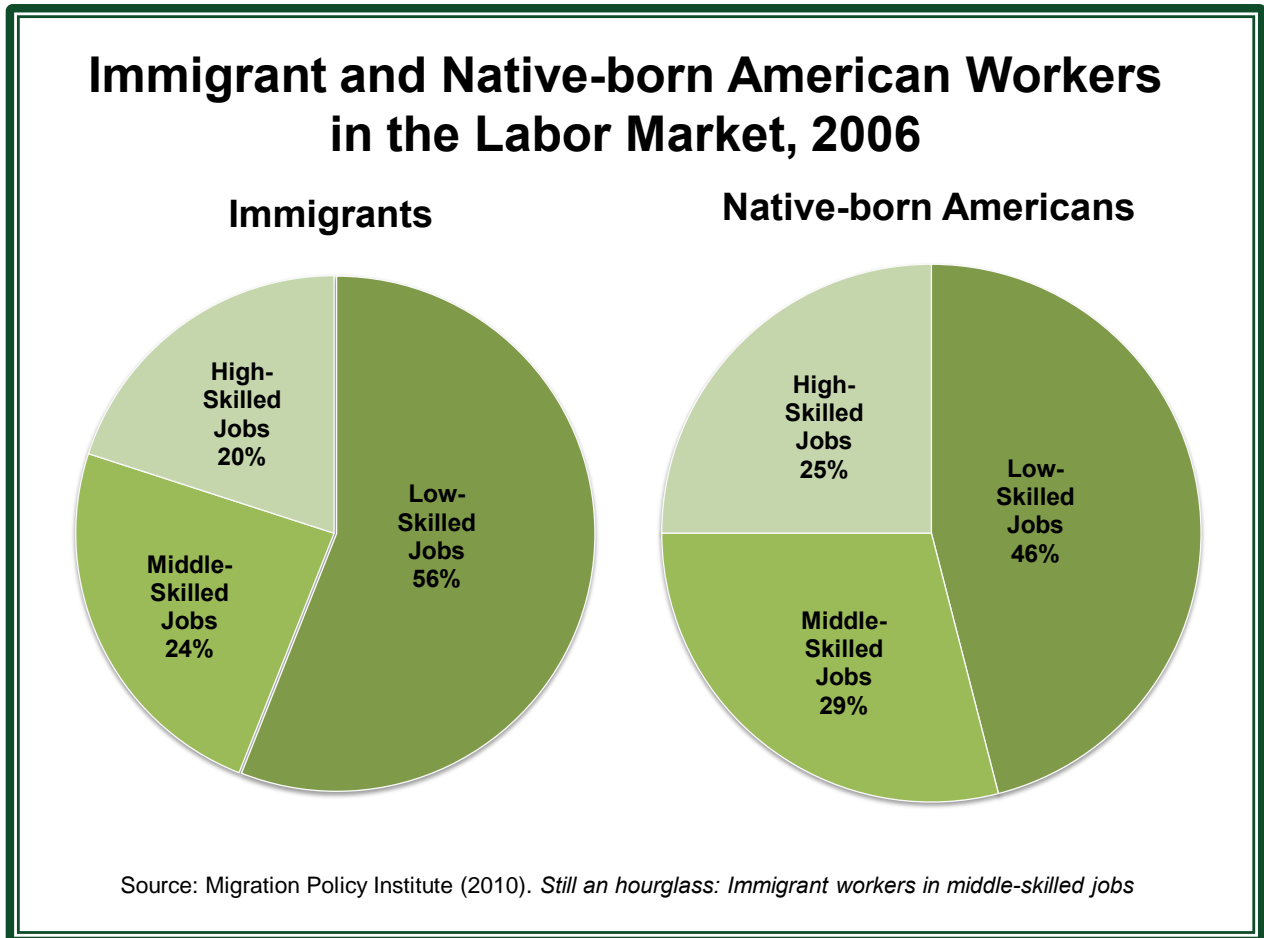
The educational attainment of skilled immigrants to the U.S. is often unknown, underestimated or poorly understood, even by professionals whose job it is to help these individuals access our educational and workplace systems.

To begin this chapter, we present a few basic facts and graphs to help you better understand the context in which you are working. Take a close look at the following charts. What do they tell you about the educational attainment and economic roles of immigrants in the U.S.? Do these facts sound familiar to you from what you know of the students in your own classes or programs? Does anything surprise you? If so, what?

Educational Attainment of Immigrant Workers in the U.S.

22 million = 17 % of Total U.S. Workforce

Bachelor's or higher 32% → 6.9 Million

3.6 million ← Some College/ Associate 17%

5.5 million ← High school 25%

Less than a high-school 26% → 5.6 million

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (2009). *Foreign-Born Workers: Labor Force Characteristics in 2008.*

While it is true that a much larger share of immigrants than U.S. natives had less than a high school education, data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), shows there were nearly 7 million immigrants with a bachelor's degree or higher in the U.S. labor force in 2009. In its latest analysis, based on 2010 data, BLS reports that "Similar proportions of foreign-born and native-born persons in the labor force had a bachelor's degree or higher (31.1 and 35.3 percent, respectively).[1]

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[1] www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/forbrn.pdf (May 27, 2011)

Immigrant and Native-born American Workers in the Labor Market, 2006

Immigrants

High-Skilled Jobs 20%

Middle-Skilled Jobs 24%

Low-Skilled Jobs 56%

Native-born Americans

High-Skilled Jobs 25%

Middle-Skilled Jobs 29%

Low-Skilled Jobs 46%

Source: Migration Policy Institute (2010). *Still an hourglass: Immigrant workers in middle-skilled jobs*

As indicated by the chart above, many of our highly skilled immigrants have been able to move into professional positions, utilizing their skills, contributing to our economy, and achieving the American dream.

Yet, far too often, immigrants who arrive with university degrees and impressive resumes find that their education and training are overlooked or undervalued in the job market. The 2010 BLS data shows a major differential (32.8 percent) in unemployment rates for skilled immigrants compared to their native-born counterparts.

Later in this chapter, we will examine the barriers that prevent so many of these talented individuals from achieving academic and workplace success and integration.

Perception Versus Reality

The profile of immigration has changed considerably in the U.S. in the last twenty years, yet many Americans still hold outdated views of our immigrant population. .

As noted in the introduction, there is an enormous "brain waste" problem in the U.S., as represented by the fact that nearly 1.5 million of our nation's 6.9 million highly educated immigrants (those with the equivalent of U.S. Bachelor's degrees or higher) are unemployed or working in unskilled jobs, and another 1.2 million are working in positions that require only a high school diploma.

In a report entitled "The Geography of Immigrant Skills, Educational Profiles of Metropolitan Areas" from the Metropolitan Policy Program at the Brookings Institution[2], the authors make a case for providing support to immigrant workers at all skill levels to keep the United States globally competitive. They say that "despite the public perception of immigrants as being poorly educated, the high-skilled U.S. immigrant population today outnumbers the low-skilled population". They further note that by 2010, high-skilled immigrants constituted 30 percent, and low-skilled immigrants 28 percent, of the total working-age immigrant population.

This shift in the distribution of immigrant skills occurred during a period in which the working-age foreign-born population in the U.S. more than doubled - from 14.6 million to 29.7 million. And most recently, since 2000, nearly one-third of the immigrants arriving in the U.S. have been highly-skilled, representing a greater total number than that of low-skilled immigrants arriving during the same period.

Nonetheless, despite these facts the perception persists that most immigrants are low-skilled, and our ESL and workforce programs retain their outmoded "one size fits all" approach that fails to meet the needs of our high-skilled immigrant population.

Investing in High-Skilled Immigrants

The authors of the Brookings report cited earlier, from which we have taken many of the statistics and charts cited above, believe that high-skilled immigrants need assistance in transferring their skills to the U.S. labor market. In particular, they call for integrated, contextualized language and job training programs that help immigrants navigate the local job markets. In subsequent chapters of this manual, we will introduce you to ESL curricula, model programs and best practices that do just that.

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[2] Hall, Matthew et al. 2010. The Geography of Immigrant Skills, Educational Profiles of Metropolitan Areas. Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C. www.brookings.edu/papers/2011/06_immigrants_singer.aspx

Barriers to Successful Integration for Skilled Immigrants

According to a report by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)[3], there were almost 7 million immigrants with a bachelor's degree or higher in the United States in 2009. This group of skilled immigrants constitutes almost one-third (31.8 percent) of the entire immigrant labor force. Yet, while many immigrants in the United States arrive with impressive resumes, far too often their education and training are overlooked or undervalued in the job market.

In this section, we will examine the main barriers that prevent this talented population from achieving academic and workplace success and integration, and explain some of the remedies/solutions that can be utilized to address them.

The Three Barriers to Success

There is clear consensus on the part of immigration specialists and researchers that the key barriers to successfully integrating highly-skilled immigrants into the American workforce are the following:

1) Credential Recognition: foreign academic credentials are in an unfamiliar form, possibly in another language and, therefore, not readily understood or accepted by employers and others to whom they are presented for review.
2) U.S. Job Search Knowledge and Skills: Most immigrants lack an understanding of the American labor market, licensing and certification requirements, etc. They are also not aware of the U.S. employment process of creating "winning" resumes, joining professional networks, successfully interviewing, managing online and/or classified ad job searches, etc.
3) English Language Proficiency: Many immigrants' English language skills are not sufficient, whether in terms of meeting employers' expectations or passing formal language exams required for professional licensing or certification.

In this discussion we will focus primarily on the little-understood issue of foreign credential recognition, explaining how the process works in both academic and professional contexts. We will also touch upon some of the challenges and resources related to the professional job search in the U.S. and offer key resources for further research and reading. We will address the final barrier – that of English language proficiency – in succeeding chapters.

Foreign Credentials – Is It Really Necessary to Start Over?

First the good news: most American employers, academic institutions, government agencies and other organizations value legitimate credentials, education and training obtained outside of

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[3] Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010), Labor Force Characteristics of Foreign-Born Workers in 2009. Report can be found online at www.bls.gov/news.release/forbrn.nr0.htm

the United States. This includes high school diplomas, college degrees, professional training, and work skills training.

The bad news is that policies and practices regarding foreign credentials vary from place to place, and too often frontline staff, including admissions counselors, job developers, case managers, program managers, and even ESL teachers, think that if it wasn't "Made in America", it can't possibly be acceptable here.

The first step in removing this barrier can be achieved by making accurate information about the foreign credential evaluation process available to key gatekeepers, such as intake counselors and ESL teachers.

Foreign Credential Recognition in the U.S.

While there are well-established systems and methods for the recognition of foreign academic credentials, the process is generally not well understood and the steps to achieving recognition of foreign credentials in different circumstances can vary tremendously. Careful research is required so that an individual can successfully navigate this process.

In the first place, there is no single authority that governs the recognition of foreign qualifications in the United States. Instead, three types of authorities are involved in evaluating and recognizing foreign credentials: institutions of higher education, employers, and state boards of professional licensing.

Furthermore, within these broad categories, each individual institution, employer or board is free to establish its own standards and procedures for credential recognition. Some of these authorities conduct their own evaluations, but most rely instead on specialized credential evaluation agencies. Evaluation services analyze non-US academic credentials and issue recommendations as to how a particular credential compares to a similar credential or set of credentials in the U.S. education system.[4]

What is a Credential Evaluation?

A credential evaluation compares academic credentials earned abroad to those issued in the U.S. An evaluation allows academic institutions, professional bodies and employers to understand the level and content of foreign education. Evaluations can be used to help skilled immigrants gain admission to academic programs, pursue professional licensing or qualify for employment.

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[4] Yildiz, Nejdan. 2010. Reducing Brain Waste: Skilled Immigrants and the Recognition of Foreign Credentials in the United States. World Education Services (WES).

Sample Credential Evaluation Report

Basic evaluation reports provide a description and U.S. equivalency for a foreign credential. Detailed reports list all subjects completed at the post-secondary level and may also provide a U.S. semester credit, grade point equivalent and U.S. Grade Point Average (GPA) on a 4.0 scale.

Choosing a Credential Evaluation Service

It is important to keep in mind that unlike most other countries, the U.S. systems of education and professional licensing are highly de-centralized. Specific procedures for recognizing foreign credentials vary by institution, state, profession, agency, employer, etc. Therefore, it is important to properly research the policy of the intended recipient to find out what type of evaluation report they require.

Even in cases where the intended recipient provides no specific guidance, an individual should still choose carefully. Not all credential services are reliable. Many independent credential evaluation services belong to the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services

(NACES), established in 1987 in response to a lack of government regulation with the aim of promoting professional standards. Individuals can check with NACES (www.naces.org) for a list of reliable credential evaluation services. Be careful of "sponsored" links found through web searches (found in the shaded areas at the top or side of a Google or Bing search), as some services that advertise are not widely accepted, or may even be fraudulent.

Evaluations for Education

American universities and colleges, including community colleges, have long-standing procedures for the recognition of foreign credentials, as evidenced by the fact that there are more than 700,000 foreign students[5] on non-immigrant visas attending U.S. institutions. This familiarity with the process of foreign credential evaluation applies to foreign-educated immigrants as well.

Most academic institutions rely on external credential evaluation services to perform authentication as well as interpretation of foreign education. Some universities, usually ones with large immigrant and/or foreign student enrollments, perform their own evaluations and will not accept an evaluation from an external service. If an institution relies on external services, it is important to obtain a list of acceptable credential evaluation services (usually provided by the Admissions, Registrar's, or International Student Services office). Also, do not assume that a credential evaluation accepted at one university will be accepted at another.

Educated immigrants considering further education should be made aware that their previous foreign education has value in the U.S. – they do not have to start over!

If you have students with the equivalent of a:

1) **High school diploma** – they are eligible for college admission in the United States. They do NOT have to get a GED diploma first! Advising individuals who have completed secondary school in their home countries to obtain a GED is one of the most common mistakes made by immigrant service providers.
2) **Some university / post-secondary education** (short of a completed degree) – they are eligible to receive transfer credit or gain advanced standing in a U.S, undergraduate program. There are limits to the amount of transfer credit that can be applied, and each institution handles this process in its own way, but relevant previous education can allow students to complete their U.S. degree more quickly and affordably
3) **Bachelor's degree** – they are eligible for graduate or professional study in the U.S.

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[5]   According to WES, "Foreign students" are defined as students who are enrolled at institutions of higher education in the US who are not citizens of the US, immigrants or refugees.

Evaluation is Only Part of the Admissions Process

While an essential element in determining the level and quality of previous education, the credential evaluation is only one of many requirements in the admissions process for undergraduate, graduate and professional programs. Other requirements include standard application forms and fees, English language proficiency exam (e.g. TOEFL, IELTS, etc.), admissions exams (e.g., SAT, GRE, GMAT, LSAT, etc.), recommendations, essays, resume, etc. College and universities set their own guidelines for admission.

> **A Note on In-State Tuition**: It is extremely important to note that ALL immigrants with permanent status applying to state or public colleges and universities are eligible for in-state tuition after fulfilling that state's residency requirement.

Evaluations for Professional Licensing

Most people are unaware of the variations that exist when it comes to professional licensing requirements. Each licensing board, within each state or territory, establishes its own requirements with regard to credential evaluation, examinations, internships, work experience, English language tests, etc. As a result, it is extremely important to research the requirements of the relevant professional board in your state. Even when foreign degrees are deemed substantially equivalent to the U.S. degree required, foreign-educated candidates will often be required to take supplementary courses or gain additional training before they are eligible to take the required exam(s).

It should be noted that obtaining professional licensing based on foreign credentials is often an arduous, time-consuming and expensive process. The following table, provided by Upwardly Global, provides examples of the significant investment of time and money involved in pursuing professional licensure in the U.S.

Licensing Timeframes

PROFESSION	Approximate Time/Costs More Efficient Path	Approximate Time/Costs Less Efficient Path
Accountant (CPA)	10 months $1,600	4 years $4,500
Architect	5 1/2 years $6,600	11 years $10,680
Dentist	4 years 8 months $101,800	7 1/2 years $122,500
Pharmacist	3 years 9 months $2,265	7 years 8 months $8,110
Physician	5 years + 1 to 5 years residency $9,900	10 years + 1 to 5 years residency $15,650
Professional Engineer	4 years 8 months $800	10 years 9 months $1,700
Teacher (K-12)	1 year and 4 months $650	4 years $31,000

Source: Upwardly Global (2011). *Guides for Licensed Professionals*

Alternatives to Licensing

You should also be aware that there are a number of professions that do not require licensing in the U.S, even if it was required in the immigrant's home country. In addition, in some fields a license grants specific professional privileges but non-licensed individuals may practice in their fields in a more limited fashion or find opportunities in related positions.

To cite just a few examples, accountants without a CPA license can work as bookkeepers, budget analysts and cost estimators. Non-licensed teachers can work in private schools, as instructors at community colleges, as adult educators and as corporate trainers. Healthcare professionals will need licensing for clinical positions, but can hold administrative, research and community health positions without a license. Non-licensed engineers and architects can work in technical advisory and management positions and as project managers.

Given that the road to professional licensing in regulated professions can be a long and difficult process, alternatives and transitional occupations should always be explored. For more information on professional licensing, please visit the Program and Resource section of this

toolkit for a comprehensive list of resources to help skilled immigrants navigate the licensing process and explore alternative career options that will utilize their skills.

Evaluations for Employment

Searching for a job in the U.S. is something that needs to be taught to immigrants - from creating an appropriate resume and cover letter to making use of professional networks and practicing for the job interview. Since many employers are unfamiliar with foreign credential evaluation, individuals should be advised to thoroughly market their foreign education on their resume and in job interviews.

There are many organizations that support skilled immigrants in their job search, as well as some really useful online resources. For a comprehensive list of programs and resources dedicated to integrating skilled immigrants into the workforce, please visit our Program and Resource section.

A Need for Accurate Information and Good Counseling

By now, it should be clear that accurate information and good counseling are essential for the successful integration of skilled immigrants into the workforce. Log onto the following websites and browse through the many resources they contain. You will use these resources in the next chapter of this toolkit. There are also additional resources available in **Chapter Six** of the Toolkit.

Global Talent Bridge provides a comprehensive overview of the issues and offers selected resources that will assist you in supporting your immigrant students and clients. www.globaltalentbridge.org

Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians offers clear, comprehensive information, most of which applies to skilled immigrants anywhere, along with some Pennsylvania-specific resources. www.welcomingcenter.org/publications/publication-downloads

Upwardly Global provides detailed information regarding the steps to licensure for 10 professions in three states (CA, IL, and NY) along with advice on pursuing alternate and intermediate career options. www.upwardlyglobal.org/job-seekers/american-licensed-professions

RefugeeWorks Guides for Refugee Professionals offers helpful resources that provide labor market information geared towards highly skilled refugees. www.refugeeworks.org/about/publications.html

In the next chapter, we will take a look at a few case studies that illustrate some of the concepts and resources that we discussed above.

Chapter 2 .... **2.1-2.11**
Critical Incidents and Exercises

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What Would You Do If….?

Now that you have learned a bit about what you need to know to properly counsel and instruct skilled immigrants hoping to make use of their foreign credentials, let's practice a bit with some real cases.

In this chapter, we provide several case studies of immigrant professionals to see how adept you are at helping them. Readers should draw upon their existing knowledge to formulate a plan to help each of the students navigate a successful career pathway. We recommend that you do these exercises with a group of your colleagues or with members of your adult education program staff. At the end of each vignette, you will find a few hints and explanations of how to best deal with each person in order to gain the most effective results. The more you learn about the needs of this special population, the better you will become at helping them find solutions to their particular situations.

At the end of this chapter, we also present a brief exercise in creating an effective intake form for your program, as well as a number of other discussion questions.

Critical Incident # 1: The Engineer from Iraq

Mahmoud Zahid is a 35-year-old married civil engineer originally from Baghdad. He is a 1998 engineering graduate of the University of Baghdad and has worked as a licensed professional engineer for ten years in Iraq. During his career, he was a project manager on several large infrastructure projects in the capital as well. He was resettled as a refugee in the U.S. in 2010 without his wife and two children. Mahmoud came with the expectation that he would be able to quickly get a well-paying engineering job since he was told there was a shortage of good engineers in the U.S. So far, he has had no luck in finding work in his profession.

He is currently living in Irvine, California, and is attending a three-hour/week ESL grammar class at Saddleback Community College. He is also taking a calculus class just for fun. He is proud of his math ability. He is amazed at how much more he knows than the American students in the class. He works at a minimum-wage job as a night cashier at a 7-Eleven in Santa Ana and also, occasionally, as a pizza delivery man for Domino's. He has been told by his 22-year old boss at 7-Eleven that he needs a GED to get a full,

daytime position with the company. His cousin told him that he can just send a copy of his diploma to the engineering board to become a professional engineer. But he has had no luck finding organizations who will accept a copy of his diploma. He is very frustrated and believes that the reason he can't get work is because of post-9/11 anti-Muslim prejudice on the part of local employers. His ability to read textbook English on engineering subjects is very good but his oral communication skills are relatively poor. Due to his very strong accent, people have trouble understanding him. He speaks Arabic and French fluently and believes this should count for something. He thinks getting his professional engineering license will help him get an engineering job. He has been living off of his savings but that is quickly running out.

Questions

1) How would you begin to help Mahmoud in his career search? Help him sort out what his priorities should be by first listing all the things that you think he is doing "wrong" in his job search.

2) Go to Upwardly Global's Licensed Professions Guides at www.upwardlyglobal.org/job-seekers/american-licensed-professions. How long do you estimate that it will take Mahmoud to earn his professional engineering (P.E.) license in California? What would it cost? Does he need to take an exam? What kind? Do all engineers need a P.E. in California?

3) Mahmoud is eager to start his professional career in the U.S. What advice would you give him about alternative careers to engineering given his current skill set?

4) What would you tell Mahmoud about the GED? Do you think he knows what the GED is? What do you think about Mahmoud taking grammar and calculus classes at Saddleback?

5) What advice would you give Mahmoud on how to develop his professional portfolio while he looks for opportunities?

6) How would you help Mahmoud put into perspective his growing belief that his difficulties are because of post 9/11 anti-Muslim prejudice? How would you help him manage his expectations?

Suggested Course of Action for the Engineer from Iraq

Mahmoud's is a classic case of what happens to many highly-skilled, well-educated immigrants when they come to the U.S. His expectations before migration were, unfortunately, based on dreams, not facts. You need to help him get his facts straight in order for him to create an effective path to workplace success. Mahmoud must understand and accept the fact that without mastering oral communication skills in English – what we call Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) – he is not going to go very far in any professional setting. A grammar class – or what we like to call Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) – is not what he needs right now.[1] He also doesn't need to study calculus "just for fun", unless he can start a business tutoring the less-skilled students in the class. This is just avoiding the obvious issues at hand. The fact that he speaks Arabic and French is nice, but, unfortunately, in the U.S., it really doesn't count for much in gaining a well-paying engineering job in Southern California.

In sum, Mahmoud has his priorities all skewed. Help him sort them out. Begin by getting him into a communicative ESL class and start dealing with the professional engineering licensing issue. Make sure he knows how long this will take, how much it will cost and, most importantly, that he actually doesn't need to have a P.E. license to work in most engineering jobs, including project management jobs. He most certainly does not need a GED diploma. He really should not be taking advice from a 22-year-old night manager, even if he is his boss for the moment. He should be seeking out advice from other civil engineering professionals by becoming involved in the CE professional societies and networks in the area. Perhaps he could take an engineering course at UCI Extension to meet some of these professionals (and brush up on or learn some new skills at the same time). He may even want to think about graduate school in engineering to better position himself for the local job market. He should also attempt to get a credential evaluation; he or a family member or trusted friend back home can contact the University of Baghdad to send his official transcripts to a reliable credential evaluation service. Finally, he needs to truly understand that his job problems stem more from his inability to communicate and be understood than any lingering post 9/11 prejudice.

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[1] BICS and CALP will be discussed in greater detail in Ch.3: Adult ESL Classroom Strategies.

Critical Incident # 2: The Accountant from Guinea

Mamadou Barry is a 27-year-old accountant from Guinea. He is a graduate of the Gamal Abdel Nasser University of Conakry and has three years of work experience in banking in Guinea. He immigrated to the U.S. last year to reunite with his family members who have been living in Colorado. He is currently living outside of Denver and is unemployed. He is eager to become a certified public accountant (CPA). He has been told by an uncle that this is what he should do and that it is easier to do this in Colorado than elsewhere in the U.S., but he has no idea how to start this process.

Questions

1) How would you begin to counsel Mamadou? What do you need to know about his education, work experience and English ability that you don't yet know from the description given above?
2) According to the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) at www.nasba.org/, what does Mamadou need to do to become a CPA in the U.S.? Is it easier to become a CPA in Colorado?
3) What are some alternative careers for accountants in the U.S.?
4) What level of English does Mamadou need to work as an accountant? To pass the Exam?
5) What advice would you give Mamadou on how to develop his professional portfolio while he looks for opportunities?

Suggested Course of Action for the Accountant from Guinea

Mamadou is actually in a better situation than he might think he is. His uncle isn't completely incorrect when he says that living in Colorado is good for him. Colorado is one of the few states where work experience in the U.S. is not required to sit for the CPA exam. You need to find out a few things in order to properly help Mamadou. What is his proficiency level in English? This is critical. Has he taken a standardized, academic English proficiency test such as TOEFL, TOEIC or IELTS? If not, he should think of sitting for one of these exams. He may know accounting, but the CPA exam is in English. He would also be well advised to seek out opportunities to learn more about U.S. accounting standards and practices, whether through

further education or hands-on experience. Direct him to NASBA's resources so that he is working with the facts. Also, make sure he knows there are many viable work alternatives that do not require CPA licensing. Accountants without a CPA license can work privately analyzing budgets and costs. They can also work as bookkeepers, in banking and in other finance areas involving accounting. He should explore these areas, as well as what skills he might need to acquire to improve his job prospects (such as learning to work with popular bookkeeping or accounting software programs). Make sure he starts to work on his resume and interviewing skills as well.

Critical Incident # 3: The Physician from Cuba

Dr. Jose Luis Llorente Barrueco is a 44-year-old physician from Cuba with a specialty in hematology and oncology. He has been living in Brooklyn, NY, since 2009 and currently works as a "waste disposal" janitor at Maimonides Medical Center in Borough Park. Though he knows this job is menial, given his qualifications, he is just happy to be back in a hospital setting. It beats his previous jobs as a security guard, a busboy, and a shoe salesman. He had been taught Russian in his military school in Cuba and knew no English when he arrived in the U.S. He knows his English is not what it should be, but feels that since there are so many Spanish speakers in NYC, this shouldn't be a problem in getting a job in medicine. He feels he is needed but that he doesn't get any respect. He has tried to attend ESL classes at his church but can't seem to find the motivation and energy to continue them. Though the teacher is very kind, the other students are not as educated as he is. He feels that the class is beneath him and is afraid that the other students and, maybe even the teacher, think he is arrogant. He isn't. He is just frustrated and depressed. He has been told that he needs to pass four exams given only in English, and then put in several years of training as a hospital resident to practice in the U.S. He feels he is too old to dedicate years to studying for exams and finding and completing a residency program. Others have told him to think about becoming a nurse, a job that would at least allow him to work with patients. He has a hard time thinking this is a solution. Deep down he is a doctor. He is almost at the point of feeling that he should never have left Cuba.

Questions

1) Where would you begin in helping Dr. Llorente get on a pathway to a more successful career? What should his priorities be?
2) What advice would you give him about alternative careers given his current skill set?
3) What kind of English program should he, ideally, be enrolled in? Is there one in his area?

Suggested Course of Action the Physician from Cuba

First, Dr. Llorente needs to enroll in a Contextualized Medical English program. He needs to explore other medical careers beside that of physician. Third Dr. Llorente should start

networking with other medical professionals of all types. Where can he do all three of the above? Well, he's in luck living in New York City. He should be directed to the Welcome Back Center (www.laguardia.edu/nycwbc/) for foreign educated healthcare professions based in La Guardia Community College in Queens, New York. Like its sister programs around the country[2], this program helps immigrant healthcare professionals get back into medical careers. If Dr. Llorente lived outside of the New York area, he might want to visit a local community college to explore career options in allied health, such as cardiovascular technology, respiratory therapy, or surgical technician. He might be eligible for advanced standing in some of these programs given his training as a physician. He might also consider master's level programs in public health or health administration, or think about alternative occupations in medical research or community health.

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[2] Welcome Back Centers are currently located in San Francisco, San Diego, Boston, Rhode Island, Puget Sound/Seattle, suburban Maryland, San Antonio/Alamo area, Denver, and Northwest Washington State. Visit www.welcomebackinitiative.org/wb/about/centers.html for current list and links.

Critical Incident # 4: The Diplomat's Daughter From Venezuela

Adriana Garcia is the daughter of a diplomat from Venezuela. Her family fled Caracas in 2003 after her father fell out of favor with President Chavez's administration. At the time, Adriana had just completed her first year of university studies at The Central University of Venezuela in Caracas, studying English Literature. Adriana and her family immigrated to New Jersey when Adriana was 22. For several years now, Adriana has been trying to complete her university education. She has also picked up some part-time work doing translations and teaching ESL at a local community center in Union City, NJ. She is fluent in Spanish and French and scored a 610 on an unofficial institutional paper-based TOEFL that she took at the International Institute of New Jersey in Jersey City. She also sat for and passed the GED on the advice of a counselor at Hudson County Community College in Jersey City and has taken some composition classes at Union County College in Cranford, NJ. She really wants to become a professional, certified high school English teacher or an ESL teacher to adults.

Questions

1) How would you help Adriana? What are some options and alternatives for her given her background? Did she need a GED?
2) Can she use the education she received at Central University of Venezuela? Does she qualify for transfer credits? How can she find out the answers to these questions?
3) What does Adriana need to do to prepare a good career portfolio? What would you suggest she do to pursue her dream of becoming a teacher in the U.S.? Is this a real possibility for her? What does she need to do to accomplish this goal? How long will it take?

Suggested Course of Action for the Diplomat's Daughter from Venezuela

This is someone we would love to have as an English teacher at either the adult or secondary level. She has skills and talents that shouldn't go to waste. Though she has been given some inappropriate advice in the past, it hasn't set her back all that much. Her English is already good - she has jumped the biggest hurdle. If she can obtain her official transcripts from Caracas, she is one more step ahead of the game. She should be advised on how the U.S. system of higher education works. More specifically, she should be helped to understand the

educational and certification requirements for secondary teachers in NJ and how they may differ from adult ESL teacher requirements. A trip or a phone call to a workforce development program specializing in the issues of highly skilled immigrants, like Upwardly Global, would certainly be worthwhile.

The Importance of Really Knowing Who Our Students Are

Quite a bit of attention has been paid in recent years to the importance of having a comprehensive, systematic and organized intake process in community adult education programs to assure that student and program goals are being met. Adult education programs should have intake procedures that prepare students to enter an appropriate level of instruction and persist long enough to make measurable progress.[3] During the intake process, programs should gather all pertinent information from students about their skills, past education, needs, and goals, while students should gather information about the kinds of services offered by the program and the kinds of services they will need to achieve their goals. Intake procedures should also provide students with a realistic assessment of the time and effort required to achieve their personal goals. This is especially important when working with highly-skilled immigrants.

Discussion Exercise #1: Creating a Useful Intake Tool

Complete the following discussion exercises with your ESL colleagues or your program staff.

Instructions: After working through the critical incident exercises at the beginning of this chapter and from your own experience on the job, you should understand the value and importance of knowing where your clients are coming from. The more background information you can gather about the immigrants you are assisting, the better able you will be to meet their language, educational and employment needs. With this in mind, work on the following exercise thoughtfully, discussing the questions below with your colleagues.

Imagine that you are starting a new position as an ESL Instructor in a multi-service agency that provides ESL instruction, job-readiness and job placement. Your agency serves immigrants and refugees from all educational backgrounds. The agency assists new arrivals as well as more established clients with extensive work history in the United States. Your first task as the new ESL instructor is to design an intake form for new students. Given the variety of students with very diverse backgrounds in this program, what needs to be included? Given your interest and what you know about counseling highly skilled immigrant students, what do you think should be

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[3] Rymniak, Marilyn J., (2009) NYSED ALECC Module # 7, Indicators of Program Quality, Entering a Program 2, page 17, Adult Literacy Education Core Curriculum.

a part of this intake form? What would you want to know about your students before you meet them in class?

Discussion Exercise #2: Things to Think About

With your ESL colleagues or program staff, discuss the following:

1) Do you feel that highly educated immigrants are more likely to be unemployed than their American counterparts? Why or why not?

2) Do you believe that highly educated immigrants get less sympathy (empathy) and therefore less help from American social services and even ESL teachers than low skilled immigrants? Why or why not?

3) What makes highly skilled immigrants hesitate to ask for help?

4) How important is English proficiency in creating a successful career pathway for a skilled immigrant? If important, why is this hard to achieve for some?

5) What is the purpose of the GED diploma in the American education context? Why are so many skilled immigrants with high school diplomas and college educations from their home countries advised to sit for the GED tests? Does this make sense? Explain.

6) Do you think interview coaching is a <u>must</u> for highly educated immigrants in the professional job search? Why or why not? What do you see as some areas that may be difficult for new immigrants in a job interview?

7) Does it make sense to take time to help a skilled immigrant build a better resume? Why or why not?

8) Choose two or three professions that usually require licensing in the U.S. and explore how you might advise students to pursue alternatives to licensure.

9) At a minimum, what do skilled immigrant students with educational backgrounds from their home countries need to know about the American education system to effectively plan their career paths? How does the U.S. system differ significantly from most education systems in other parts of the world?

Global Talent
Bridge **Building Opportunities for Skilled Immigrants**

The Importance of English Language Proficiency

Educators, job developers and employers alike have long identified the lack of fluent English language skills as a fundamental obstacle to professional career advancement for immigrants in English-speaking countries.[1] According to a recent survey of Limited English Proficient (LEP) adults in Greater Boston, 70% of immigrants who speak English "very well" are gainfully employed as contrasted with only 37% who do not. College educated immigrants with good English communication skills can earn an additional $20,000 or more than their counterparts who do not possess good English skills.[2] Adult English language learners, especially those who enter the U.S. with high school diplomas and college educations, understand the need to improve their language skills but have often expressed great frustration and disappointment with the erratic length[3], inconsistent methodology, and at times, irrelevant content presented in many affordable public "English as a Second Language" (ESL)[4] programs available in their communities.

So what is the solution to this problem? As we have seen in the previous chapters, for successful immigrant integration, there is often a need to obtain further education and work-directed training to find meaningful employment, explore career pathways, market skills effectively, and prepare for success on the job.

Acquiring a level of English proficiency and "communicative competence"[5] to function successfully in the workplace often requires going beyond a basic command of English. It also requires the use of a "contextualized curriculum".[6] Skilled immigrants often find it difficult to locate classes that focus on contextualized communication skills for a specific workplace or professional need.

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[1] Schellekens, Philida. 2001. English Language as a Barrier to Employment, Education and Training, The Department for Education and Employment. United Kingdom.

[2] Commonwealth Corporation. 2011. Breaking the Language Barrier, A Report on English Language Services in Greater Boston. The Boston Foundation.

[3] This is a reference to the common practice of offering "open enrollment" or "rolling admission" programs in many adult ESL programs as opposed to having "managed enrollment" which increases the length of study.

[4] We have chosen to use the term "ESL" instead of "ESOL" to describe community adult English language learning classes for immigrants.

[5] Now seen by most language teaching experts as the goal of ESL classes - the ability to communicate functionally in the language for a variety of purposes, including academic, professional, workplace, and social.

[6] A contextualized curriculum is an ESL curriculum that uses authentic materials, phrases and lexical items taken from a particular context, e.g., English for Engineers, Medical English, Business English.

In this chapter, we will present an overview of good principles and best practices for the ESL classroom, aimed at preparing highly skilled immigrants for workplace integration. We will define the hallmarks of using a well-constructed, integrated contextualized curriculum for ESL and present some examples of appropriate lesson ideas.

In the following chapter, we will introduce some select model ESL programs using curricula that put these principles into practice.

A Reminder of the Basic Principles of Adult Education

First, we want to give a brief reminder of the basic principles for effective adult education. Part of being a successful adult educator involves understanding how adults learn best. Adults have special needs and requirements as learners. Below, we list some of the common learning characteristics of adult language and literacy learners.[7]

Adult Language and Literacy Learning Principles

1) Adult learners are goal-driven.

2) Language and literacy are social processes that involve interaction with others.

3) Language and literacy development require risk taking.

4) Language and literacy develop when the target language is slightly above the current level of proficiency of the user.

5) Language and literacy development require focus, engagement and practice.

6) Language and literacy are multi-dimensional and require different kinds of interactions with different kinds of genres.

7) Language and literacy develop through interactions with tasks that require cognitive involvement.

8) Language and literacy develop more deeply if skills are connected to an overall topic, theme or context.

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[7] Taken from Spruck-Wrigley, Heidi and Jim Powrie. 2002. What Does It Take for Adults to Learn? Originally developed for CyberSytep.

The Importance of Contextualized Learning

The last item above speaks to the importance of teaching ESL skills and strategies within real life contexts. This is what we call "contextualized learning" or Functional Context Education (FCE). Contextualized learning requires the creation of a contextualized curriculum. The FCE approach to learning is not new. It was developed in the late 1960's and early 1970's specifically for adult technical and literacy training in military programs during the Vietnam Era.[8] Major workplace training programs sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor have used this approach since that time.

There are four guiding principles to FCE as related to ESL language learning. They are:

1) Instruction should be made as meaningful as possible to the adult learner by making use of the learner's prior content, workplace or professional knowledge.

2) Direct use in the classroom is made of materials, tools, equipment and "things" ("realia") that the learner will actually use after training.

3) English language skills are improved at the same time that the learner's content knowledge, information knowledge, processing skills, discourse skills, turn-taking skills, cross-cultural skills and sociolinguistic skills are improved.

4) Valid assessment of learning requires context/content specific measurement.

In language teaching, the wide use of these principles coincided with the arrival and universal acceptance of the principles underpinning what has become known as the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Approach**.** FCE and CLT move and work in tandem and complement each other.

What Is the Best Method for Teaching Adult ESL?

It may be surprising to some, but this is a question that we no longer ask or should no longer ask in quite this way. We are in what applied linguists like to call the "Post-Method" Era.[9]

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[8] Sticht, Tom. 2000. Functional Context Education: Making Learning Relevant.
http://library.nald.ca/item/5893
[9] Richards, Jack C. 2008. 30 Years of TEFL/TESL: A Personal Reflection. SEAMO Regional Language Centre, Singapore.

The 1970s was the decade when Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) came to replace the never-ending search for "the best method".[10] CLT ushered in an era of change and innovation in language teaching which incorporated breakthroughs in our understanding of the nature of language itself and how language learning takes place and, consequently, how one should best teach a second or foreign language. These changes have had a tremendous impact on what materials we deem suitable for effective use in the ESL classroom and have led to the creation of contextualized curricula to meet particular needs.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) refers to a diverse set of rather general and noncontroversial principles. CLT can be interpreted in many different ways and can be used to support a wide variety of classroom procedures and contexts. The six widely accepted CLT principles, similar to the four FCE principles, are as follows:

1) The goal of language learning is "communicative competence".

2) Learners learn a language by using it to communicate real messages.

3) Authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities.

4) Fluency and accuracy are both important dimensions of communication.

5) Communication involves the integration of different language skills.

6) Learning is a gradual process that involves trial and error.

As with any academic field, the fields of TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), Applied Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) have created a lot of "buzz-words" and professional jargon. The following is a comprehensive list of different terms that all refer to communicative language teaching approaches using a contextualized curriculum.[11] This list gives you an indication of how widely practiced the use of this type of communicative, contextualized language training has become. It is for this reason that many

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[10] Methods such as Audiolingualism, Total Physical Response (TPR), The Silent Way, Counseling Learning, Suggestopedia, Structural-Situational Approach, Grammar Translation, Direct Method, Rassias Method.

[11] These terms are defined more fully in Chapter 7.

of these approaches continue as mainstream approaches today.[12] This move of the second language teaching field into "special purpose" or contextualized training has spurred the design, development and creation of contextualized curricula, which is at the heart of contextualized learning.

A quick internet search of these terms can bring you to various curricula designed for these specific purposes.

Content-Based Instruction	Cooperative Language Learning	Task-Based Instruction	Project-Based Instruction	English for Special Purposes
English for Academic Purposes (EAP)	English for Medical Purposes (EMP)	English for the Law (ELP)	English for Business and Economics (EBE)	English for Science and Technology (EST)
English for Diplomacy (ED)	Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL)	English for the Construction Industry (ECI)	English for Restaurant Workers	English for Hotel and Hospitality Workers

Communicative Competence for Job Success and Advancement

The goal of all ESL classes, and particularly work-related classes, according to CLT principle # 1 is "communicative competence". Communicative competence involves the ability to converse or correspond with a native speaker of the target language in a real-life situation, with emphasis on communication of ideas rather than on simply correctness of language form or knowledge of grammar rules. It is facilitated when learners are engaged in interaction and meaningful communication. Meaningful communication results from students processing content that is relevant, purposeful, interesting and engaging.

Communicative competence includes the following[13]:

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[12] Johns, Ann and Donna Price-Machado. English for Specific Purposes: Tailoring Courses to Student Needs and to the Outside World. Found in Celce-Murcia, Marianne (ed.), Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language. 2001. Heinle and Heinle.

[13] Rymniak, Marilyn J. 2008. NYSED Adult Literacy Education Core Curriculum (ALECC), Module # 5: Teaching English to Adult Speakers of Other Languages, Workshop Handout # 5, page 13.

1) **Grammatical competence** or accuracy - the degree to which the language user has mastered the linguistic code, including vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, spelling and word formation.

2) **Sociolinguistic competence** - the extent to which utterances can be used or understood appropriately in various social contexts. It includes knowledge of speech acts and functions such as persuading, apologizing and describing.

3) **Discourse competence** - the ability to combine ideas to achieve cohesion in form and coherence in thought, above the level of the single sentence.

4) **Strategic competence** - the ability to use strategies like gestures or "talking around" an unknown word in order to overcome limitations in language knowledge; the use of appropriate body (non-verbal) language.

Communicative competence also requires the instructor (or the curriculum developer) to be aware of what language they intend to teach. Is it BICS or is it CALP? Is the goal to teach social language or academic language?

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS)

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) are language skills needed in social situations. It is the day-to-day language needed to interact socially with other people. Jim Cummins[14] was the first to differentiate between social English and academic language acquisition. His research was primarily dealing with immigrant children. BICS refers to the basic communicative fluency achieved by all normal native speakers of a language. It is cognitively undemanding and contextual and is better understood as the language used by students in informal settings, say, on a playground or cafe. Social interactions are usually context embedded. They occur in meaningful social contexts. Immigrant children tend to "pick up" BICS quickly by interacting with English-speaking children. This differs for most adults who have trouble "picking up" BICS unless given direct instruction on how to do this.

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[14] Jim Cummins is a professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto where he works on language development and literacy development of child learners of ESL. In 1979, Cummins coined the acronyms BICS and CALP to refer to processes that help a teacher to qualify a student's language ability.

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), on the other hand, refers to formal academic learning and the ability to think in and use a language as a tool for learning. Academic language acquisition includes not only understanding content area vocabulary, but also skills such as comparing, classifying, synthesizing, evaluating, and inferring. Research tells us that skills, ideas and concepts students learn in their first language will be transferred to the second language. Interestingly, most adult learners of English, especially our highly skilled or educated immigrants tend to already be fairly good in CALP - these skills have been transferred from their native language to English. In some cases, they have studied for their professions (medicine, engineering, accounting, computer science) using English textbooks. They are sorely lacking, however, in Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills. These sociolinguistic, strategic and discourse competencies must often be directly taught in a classroom using a contextualized, communicative curriculum. It is a lack of proficiency in these interpersonal, contextualized competencies that keeps skilled immigrants from getting jobs in their professions and advancing in their careers.

Teaching and Assessing Communication

Speaking has always been a major focus of language teaching, but the nature of speaking skills and the way we should be teaching them has undergone a major shift since the introduction of the Communicative Language Teaching Approach. The goal of communicative competence requires the development of communicative syllabuses and contextualized curriculum. Language learners need to learn how to communicate in ways that are culturally acceptable in the target community or setting. It is now accepted that models for oral interaction cannot be based simply on the intuitions of applied linguists and textbook writers. They must be informed by the findings of conversation analysis and corpus analysis.[15] These have revealed the following:

1) the role of learning "chunks" in spoken language to gain native-sounding fluency, rather than learning individual words (e.g., the following are chunks in English: *the other day, when I got a call, I got a real surprise, from an old school friend*.)

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[15] See Chapter 7 for definitions and the end of this chapter for specific corpus references.

2) the frequency of fixed utterances or conversational routines in spoken language, e.g., *is that right, you know what I mean, uh-huh, no kidding*

3) the interactive and negotiated nature of oral interaction involving such processes as turn-taking, feedback, and topic management

4) the difference between interactional talk (person-oriented) and transactional talk (message-oriented)

Taking all of these points into consideration, what are the signs a teacher should look for to know that learners are gaining communicative competence? Hint: It's not the score on a grammar test.

The Layman's Litmus Test of Language Learning

Scores on standardized proficiency tests of English as a second or foreign language, such as TOEFL, TOEIC, IELTS, CASAS, BEST Plus[16], and others, are important but, perhaps, more significant are what we like to call the "Layman's Litmus Test" of language learning. It is when the immigrant's construction foreman, project manager, supervisor, cubicle mate, office receptionist, doorman or other lay person makes a positive comment on the improvement of the immigrant's communication skills. Hearing "Boy, you have really improved your English in the last few weeks!" is when a language learner really knows that his or her "communicative competence" is showing.

Here are some examples that ESL teachers should be looking out for to evaluate that a language learner's communicative competence is showing:

1) the student knows how to express genuine concern, and sympathy when told a colleague has had a death in the family. *Ex: "I am so sorry to hear about your brother. Had he been sick for a while?"*

2) he apologizes and makes an appropriate (even if it's a white lie) excuse for why he is late for a meeting or class. *Ex: "The subway was running slow again this morning."*

3) she can comfortably make small talk at a business reception or before the start of a meeting. *Ex: "I can't believe what a hot summer it has been. Will it ever end!"*

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[16] See Glossary of Key ESL Terms for definitions of the standardized tests listed here.

4) she is able to comfortably invite someone to lunch. *Ex. "Have you eaten yet? Do you want to go across the street for a bite?"*

5) she can initiate questions and not just respond to answers. *Ex. "Hey, Rose, did that report come in yet?"*

6) he can use common, everyday fixed and semi-fixed expressions and utterances that make speech sound natural and native-like. *Ex. "See you soon."; "I think so."; "I'll get back to you as soon as I can."; "That sounds great."; "That'll be the day."*[17]

7) she comfortably uses native-like intonation properly and appropriately to express meaning. *Ex. "Sorry?" (with rising intonation to mean "Excuse me. Can you repeat that?")*

8) he knows how to use turn-taking protocol and conversational gambits[18] correctly, whether the conversation is in person or over the telephone, including when and how to use silence appropriately, how to begin a conversation, how to tactfully change the subject, how to know when someone wants to end the conversation, etc. *Ex. "Well, I have to be going. My dinner is burning."*

Can you suggest some additional examples to the ones listed above?

For more ideas on fostering communicative competence in the ESL classroom, refer to the books listed below:

- Lewis, Michael. *The Lexical Approach: The State of ELT* and *a Way Forward*. LTP, Pearson Education. 1993.

- Lewis, Michael. *Implementing the Lexical Approach: Putting Theory Into Practice*. LTP, Pearson Education. 1997.

- Lewis, Michael. *Teaching Collocations: Further Developments in the Lexical Approach*. LTP, Pearson Education. 2000.

- Norman, David, Ulf Levihn and Jan Anders Hedenquist. LTP. *Communicative Ideas: An Approach With Classroom Activities*. LTP, Pearson Education. 1986.

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[17] For additional examples of chunks, conversational gambits and other expressions, see the Michael Lewis books and the other examples at the end of this chapter.

[18] Sacks, H. (1992). "Lectures on Conversation, Volumes I and II" Edited by G. Jefferson with Introduction by E.A. Schegloff, Blackwell, Oxford.

What Skilled Immigrants <u>Do Not</u> Need

A GED Diploma: Skilled immigrants have already obtained a high school diploma, and often a partial or completed university degree, in their home country before migration. Their prior education can be recognized in the U.S. by obtaining a credential evaluation.

ABE Classes: Immigrants who have completed the 6th level of NRS ESL should not be placed, for the sake of convenience, in an ABE class with native speakers of English. It is unfair to both the native speakers and the immigrants and produces inaccurate outcomes data for the National Reporting System.

The TABE: It is an inappropriate exam to give non-native speakers of English. It is an exam normed on native speakers of English and produces skewed, inaccurate scores when given to non-native speakers.

A Second Bachelor's Degree or Associate's Degree: Skilled immigrants with the equivalency of a Bachelor's degree in their home country should not be advised to pursue a second Bachelor's Degree or Associate's Degree just for the sake of having a "U.S. degree". Unless they are planning to pursue education in a completely different field, they should instead be encouraged to enroll in a higher level (Master's or Professional) degree program or pursue relevant professional training in their field.

What Skilled Immigrants <u>Do</u> Need

Contextualized ESL: Skilled immigrants can master the English that they need best if they enroll in an integrated, contextualized ESL program relevant to their field of professional interest.

Intensive ESL: Skilled immigrants can master English faster when enrolled in an intensive ESL program. An intensive ESL program is defined as one which meets at least 12-15 hours or more per week for a fixed number of weeks.

Managed Enrollment Programs: Second language learners of English master English faster when enrolled in a managed enrollment program. Skilled immigrants should avoid open-admission and rolling admission programs.

Proper English Language Assessment: To assess whether their academic or professional English is good enough to successfully pursue academic coursework or professional opportunities, skilled immigrants should sit for the TOEFL, TOEIC, TSE or the IELTS, not the TABE or Best Plus.

Sample Contextualized ESL Lessons

Following are four sample ESL lesson ideas that make use of the contextualized learning strategies discussed in this chapter. These lesson ideas are meant to give ESL practitioners an idea of how to practically implement contextualized learning theories in the classroom. Practitioners should feel free to expand and adapt these ideas to develop full lesson plans appropriate for individual classroom settings.

Lesson Idea One: Business "Chunks"[19]

Have your students look at the following sentences. These are expressions that are commonly heard within a business office environment. Ask your students to define the underlined phrases.

   a. I'm still not clear on <u>what you're driving at</u>. <u>Do you mind</u> if I <u>sleep on it</u> and we can <u>talk it over</u> again tomorrow?

   b. I can't understand these accounts <u>at all</u>. Would you <u>try your hand at them</u>? Perhaps you can <u>throw some light on the situation</u>?

   c. You're totally responsible. If anything goes wrong, there's to be no <u>passing the buck</u>.

   d. This is <u>off the record</u>, but one of the managers is leaving the company soon and you <u>could be in line for</u> his job.

   e. The meeting was a <u>dud</u>. There wasn't <u>enough common ground</u> between the two clients to <u>draw up a contract</u>.

For more Business English lesson ideas and classroom materials, go to Mike Nelson's Business English Lexis website <u>users.utu.fi/micnel/BEC/downloadable_materials.htm</u>

Lesson Idea Two: Medical History Taking "Chunks"[20]

As a medical practitioner, transition words, phrases and utterances (making a verbal response without using exact words) are important for smooth segues from one topic to the next when taking a patient's medical history. When medical practitioners want to move from one line of questioning to another, they might use the suggestions shown below. These "chunks" give the patient a chance to talk uninterrupted and allow the interviewer a few

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[19]   Taken from Rymniak, Marilyn J. (2000) Business English Communication Review Course. Kaplan, Inc.

[20] Taken from Rymniak, Marilyn J. (2000) Medical English Communication Review Course. Kaplan, Inc.

minutes to think of what to say next. Have your students practice using these transitional expressions with a partner taking turns being "the medical practitioner" and "the patient".

Intro to chief complaint	Chief complaint to history of present illness	Present illness to past medical history	Past medical history to social/sexual history
So, ... Okay, then ... Alright ... Well then ... Let's see if I understand you ... So, in other words ...	Mmmmm … Hmmmm … Tell me … I see. So, ….	So, ... Let me ask you … Tell me ... Now then ... Okay. Can you tell me if ….	Okay. Now I'm going to ask you a few personal questions. Please answer as honestly as you can. Don't worry. This is all strictly confidential. Alright, what about ... So, tell me about ... Just a few more questions before we begin the physical examination. Okay. How would you describe ...

The "patient" should pretend to have some illness which has brought him/her to the hospital.

Lesson Idea Three: Conversational Gambits[21]

A "gambit" is a strategic move in a game like chess. "Gambit" is also used in teaching conversational skills in English to non-native speakers. It is in the use of these common conversational gambits that second-language speakers begin to sound proficient. Have your students work in pairs to read through the list below, putting a check next to the "gambits" they have heard or used before. Encourage them to discuss any "gambits" they are not familiar with or do not understand, asking for further clarification when needed. Next, direct each pair to write ten sentences using a variety of the "gambits" shown. Have students share their sentences with the class. Give feedback on the effectiveness and appropriateness of their "gambit" usage.

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[21] Taken from Rymniak, Marilyn J. (2000) Business English Communication Review Course. Kaplan, Inc.

Asking for an Opinion	Asking for Clarification	Paraphrasing	Persuading
What's your position on ...? I'd like to hear your views on ... What do you think about ...? I was wondering where you stood on ...	What do you mean? What does ... mean? What do you mean by ...? I'm sorry but I didn't follow you. I'm not sure what you mean.	I think he means In other words, What I mean is The point I am trying to make is	You must admit that You have to agree that Don't forget that Let's not forget that Don't you think that

Counter-Arguing	Politely Interrupting	Rejecting a Suggestion	Avoiding Answering
Even so, Nevertheless, But then again, In any case, Even if that is true,	Excuse me, Pardon me for interrupting, but Sorry to interrupt, but	Unfortunately, I'm sorry but ... Well, the problem is I'm not sure that will be possible because ...	I'm afraid I don't know. I can't really say. It's difficult to say. I'll check with ... and get back to you on that.

Beginning a Conversation	Ending a Conversation	Talking About Yourself	Talking About Your Job
How's it going? Have you heard...? Have you met ... How do you like the ...? And what about you?	Glad to have met you. See you around. Take care. See you tomorrow. Let's do lunch next time.	I was born in ... After that I ... More recently I have been working as/in/with ... I'm really interested in .. I have a degree in ...	I work for ... I mostly deal with ... I'm responsible for ... My job involves a lot of ... What I like about my job is ...

Making a Suggestion	Accepting a Suggestion	Rejecting a Suggestion	Asking if it is Acceptable
Let's ... Perhaps we could ... We might ... Why don't we ... I suggest that we ... I think we ... How about ...	Yes, of course. Certainly. By all means. Yes, that's a good idea. Yes, let's give that a try.	Unfortunately, I'm sorry but ... Well, the problem is I'm not sure that will be possible because ...	Would that be okay? Would it be okay if ... I hope this will be acceptable. I hope it will be okay if ...

Lesson Idea Four: Body Language Skills for the Workplace

The idea of "communicative competence" includes mastering sociolinguistic and strategic competencies. This includes learning appropriate body and non-verbal language. These skills are especially important for the workplace so as not to be misunderstood. These skills must be directly taught and practiced as body language differs widely across cultures.

Some body language is clearly inappropriate for the workplace. For example:

- Standing too close to someone may be interpreted as being too aggressive, intimidating or invasive.

- Speaking too softly or not making eye contact may make people think you are shy or lacking in confidence.

- Rarely smiling in an office environment may make people think you are unfriendly.

In the table below are some common non-verbal gestures and their meanings. Notice that some have more than one meaning.

Body Language	Meaning
Tilting your head to one side	Curiosity or sympathy
Looking down at the floor	Shyness, evasiveness
Crossed arms	Defensiveness, disagreement
Fidgeting	Nervousness
Rolling eyes	Disrespect

Considering the examples above, have your students read the following incident and answer the questions:

While Faraj was telling his boss about his weekend plans, he noticed that she made very little eye contact and kept looking at her watch. His boss also glanced at her computer screen every few seconds.

1) What body language did Faraj's boss use?

2) What do you think these non-verbal cues were saying?

3) How should Faraj respond to his boss's non-verbal cues?

The Contextualized Curriculum

The development of an effective contextualized curriculum is ensured by using everything we have reviewed in this chapter:

- The Importance of Language Proficiency

- Adult Language Learning Principles

- Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

- BICS and CALP

- Communicative Competence

- The Layman's Litmus Test of Language Learning

- Sample Communicative Language Lessons

In the next chapter, we will review some models of such curricula.
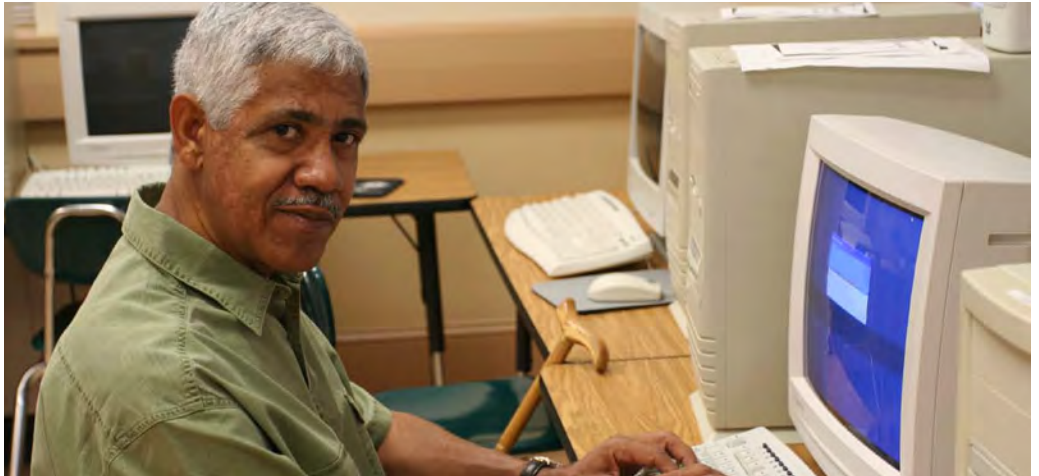
Chapter 4.. **4.1-4.8**

ESL Program Models and Best Practices

Global Talent Bridge Building Opportunities for Skilled Immigrants

Who Does It Best?

In the previous chapter, we showed how an integrated, contextualized ESL curriculum is the best route to take to meet the needs of skilled immigrants eager to successfully integrate into the workforce at a professional level. In this chapter, we will focus on four model programs which have built such contextualized curricula. These are best practice model programs that have been successfully replicated nationally with diverse populations.

They are (1) The Welcome Back Initiative begun in San Francisco, (2) The I-BEST model from the State of Washington, (3) The Massachusetts' Integrated Career Awareness (ICA) curriculum, and (4) the specialized curricula from the Spring Institute of Colorado.

It will come as no surprise that many of these model programs come out of the community college system. Community colleges have taken the lead in transitioning skilled immigrants into the workplace with innovative programs. They have been the major players in supporting academic and professional integration for immigrants at every level, by providing ESL and adult education, workforce training, certification programs, affordability and flexibility of schedules.

We encourage you to examine these four programs in depth to learn what works and what might be replicated at your institution. At the end of this chapter, we have listed other programs of note around the country.

1. The Welcome Back Initiative and the English Health Train Curriculum
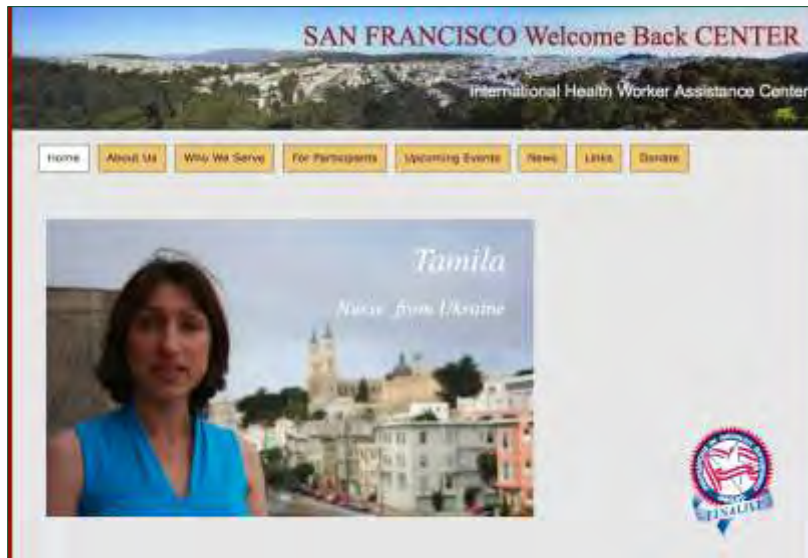
The San Francisco Welcome Back Center is the lead site of the California statewide **Welcome Back Initiative** (www.welcomebackinitiative.org/wb/) established in 2001 to "build a bridge between the pool of internationally trained health workers living in the United States and the need for linguistically and culturally competent health services in under-served communities."[1] Initially established as a joint project between San Francisco State University and City College of San Francisco, the California Welcome Back Initiative has developed a highly specialized, health-focused ESL curriculum called the English Health Train (EHT).

This innovative and comprehensive curriculum is an in-depth program designed to accelerate the employment readiness of non-native English speakers. Focusing on the language, communication, and career development skills needed to enter and succeed in health careers in the U.S., the curriculum is suitable for theme-based workshops, stand-alone lessons, quarter-long, or comprehensive year-long programs. It is targeted to help those who are planning to enter the healthcare sector, as well as those who are already working in healthcare positions and looking for advancement.

English Health Train consists of 320 hours of contextualized communication activities in five major themes, or modules, as well as strategies for career advancement, special projects

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[1] Fernandez-Pena, Jose Ramon and Helena Simas and Paul Rueckhaus. 2008. *Meeting the Language Needs of Immigrant Health Professionals: An Innovative Approach*.

and assessment components (see Figure 1). The curriculum also includes 40 hours of web-based listening exercises. The modular approach is also applicable to Web-based distance education and stand-alone workshops. All units consist of activities that help develop language and communicative competence for everyday and challenging situations in healthcare environments with a special focus on cultural variables, health disparities and serving underserved communities (www.englishhealthtrain.org).

The Welcome Back Initiative has proved popular and effective and, consequently, has led to the opening of nine additional centers in San Diego, Boston, Rhode Island, Puget Sound, Northwest Washington State, New York City, suburban Maryland, Colorado and Alamo area Texas. We encourage you to learn more about the services offered by the Welcome Back Centers (www.welcomebackinitiative.org/wb/about/centers.html).

Figure 1: English Health Train Offers Five Modules of Eight Units Each

	MODULE 1 Exploring Career Goals in Health Care	MODULE 2 Communicating with Patients and Families	MODULE 3 Communicating with Other Health Professionals	MODULE 4 Exploring Critical Issues in Health Care	MODULE 5 Intercultural Communication in Health Care
UNIT 1	Health Care Professions and Career Paths	The Patient-Health Professional Relationship	Interaction among Health Professionals	Understanding Health Care Systems	Culture and Communication in Health Care
UNIT 2	Requirements for Entry in Health Field	Gathering Patient Information	Using Medical Terminology Appropriately	Understanding Health Care Cultures and Sub-Cultures	Beliefs and Traditions about Health and Illness
UNIT 3	Job Search Skills	The Patient-Centered Interview	Assertive Communication with Co-Workers	Critical Health Issues in the U.S.	Cultural Diversity in Health Care
UNIT 4	Job Application Process	Examining and Monitoring Patients	Professional and Social Communication	Healthy Lifestyles and Behaviors	Serving Multicultural Patients
UNIT 5	Job Interview Skills	Developing a Treatment Plan	Working Effectively on a Team	Alternative Health Perspectives	Working with Multicultural Health Professionals
UNIT 6	Professional Behavior and Workplace Expectations	Medical Charting and Reporting	Supervising Health Professionals	Health Care for an Aging Population	Ethnic and Racial Disparities in Health Care
UNIT 7	Work and Safety Issues for Health Professionals	Patients with Special Needs	Telephone and Electronic Communication	Legal & Ethical Issues in Health Care	Analyzing the Needs of Diverse Communities
UNIT 8	Professional Development in Health Care	Handling Challenging Situations with Patients	Handling Challenging Situations with Co-Workers	Future Directions for Health and Health Professionals	Serving Underserved Communities

2. I-BEST: Washington State's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training

Washington State's **Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST)** (sbctc.edu/college/e_integratedbasiceducationandskillstraining.aspx) began as a pilot program at 10 community and technical colleges in the state of Washington in 2006 and has since been implemented in all 34 colleges in the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) System. These colleges also provide higher levels of support and services to address the needs of non-traditional students. There are now more than 140 approved programs using the I-BEST model.

The I-BEST model challenges the traditional notion that one must first complete an ABE or ESL curriculum before moving to college-level or job-training course work. The I-BEST model pairs ESL or ABE instructors with content area instructors to co-teach college-level vocational courses and workforce training.

The I-BEST Model

- I-BEST programs must include college-level professional-technical credits that are required of all students in the selected program and are part of a career pathway.
- All students must qualify for federally supported levels of basic skills education.
- Students must be pre-tested using CASAS (the standardized test used statewide to assess ABE and ESL students).
- An instructor from basic skills and an instructor from the professional-technical program must jointly instruct in the same classroom with at least a 50 percent overlap of the instructional time.
- Faculty must develop integrated program outcomes, jointly plan curriculum, and jointly assess student learning and skill development.
- I-BEST programs must appear on the demand list for the local area and meet a minimum set wage.

3. Massachusetts' Integrated Career Awareness (ICA) Curriculum

In conjunction with the National College Transition Network and SABES (System for Adult Basic Education Support) with authors from Northern Essex Community College, Massachusetts has created an **Integrated Career Awareness** curriculum (www.collegetransition.org/publications.icacurriculum.html), which can be used by both ABE and ESL populations. It is comprehensive and contextualized with very practical lessons and resources.[2] This is a flexible curriculum that presents life skills in an effort to prepare adult learners for post-ESL careers and college. The handouts in this curriculum are some of the best ever produced.

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[2] Oesch, Martha and Carol Bower. 2009. *Curriculum Guide for Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE and ESOL Classroom*. NCTN and SABES.

4. The Spring Institute of Colorado

The Spring Institute of Colorado offers a program model that could be used to train skilled immigrants; however, it is currently offered to visiting professionals from abroad. In partnership with the Denver International Program (DIP), The Spring Institute of Colorado (www.spring-institute.org/?action=englishforinternationalprofessionals) provides mid-career international professionals the opportunity to learn English and gain training and expertise in their careers. A typical Spring Institute course is 18 weeks in length divided into the following two parts:

1. Six-Week Intensive English Program: Spring Institute provides a six-week intensive (23 hours/week) English study course tailored to prepare participants for their training assignments. Part-time instruction for professional English also continues throughout the 12-week practical training.

2. 12-Week Training Program: Training assignments, arranged through DIP, are generally 12 weeks in length in specific industries. Training opportunities have included, but are not limited to banking, petroleum, mining, accounting, government, micro-credit lending, academia and non-profits.

These programs have been found to be very effective in preparing participants for positions of higher responsibility, in developing leadership skills, increasing job possibilities, enhancing effective communication and improving overall quality of work.

Other Initiatives You Should Know About

The popularity in the use of specifically-designed contextualized curricula for ESL and job training programs is spreading across the country.

The Center for Employment Training (CET) model focuses on providing hands-on training for occupation-specific job skills integrated with English language learning. It uses a case management system that provides advocacy for the English Language Learner. (www.cetweb.org/index.php)

The National Center for Construction and Research (NCCER) is a NCCER also drives multiple initiatives to enhance career development and recruitment efforts for the industry. NCCER has begun development of ESL components designed to be integrated with their construction trade curricula. (www.nccer.org/about)

Met Council offers contextualized ESL classes for foreign-trained nurses along with preparation and training for international nurses who want to take the NCLEX Nursing Exam. They also offer an electronic health records training program. (www.metcouncil.org/site/PageServer?pagename=Programs_Career_Services_Nurses_FAQ)

Project ACE (Accelerated Content-Based English) of Miami Dade College created a curriculum offering an accelerated parallel track in English for Academic Purposes. The program saves students time and money by reducing the number of ESL courses required before they enter the workforce or an academic program of study. (www.sunywcc.edu/cccie/pdfs/practices/Miami_Dade_ACE_Accelerated_EAP_submission.pdf)

American Dream Team ESL for Employment Initiative of Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) enrolls intermediate level ESL students into 60-hour non-credit ESL for Employment courses. The course curriculum helps participants master the English language and cultural competencies needed for many entry-level, career track jobs, as well as in the job search process. (www.sunywcc.edu/cccie/NOVA%20ESL%20for%20Employment.pdf)

Upwardly Global and the Jewish Community Council of Coney Island's Business English Program for Skilled Immigrants is a result of a strategic partnership between the two organizations that offers a Business ESL class for highly motivated, immigrant professionals, for whom English communication is a barrier to their employment. The class is conducted over a total of 150 hours and focuses on helping intermediate level English speakers develop advanced English skills in a business context. (jccgci-vocational-services.blogspot.com/2010/11/unique-model-in-addressing-adult.html)

Chapter 5.. **5.1-5.4**

Advocating for Skilled Immigrants

Global Talent Bridge Building Opportunities for Skilled Immigrants

Advocating for Your Students

There is a common misperception in the nation's debate over immigration – articulated by lawmakers, pundits and advocates on all sides – that the surge in immigration in the last twenty years or so has been comprised of mostly unskilled laborers. The data, as we have seen in earlier chapters of this toolkit, tell a very different story.

As shown in a recent report[1] by the Fiscal Policy Institute, a nonpartisan group in New York, overall the 25 million immigrants who live in the country's largest metropolitan areas (about two-thirds of all immigrants in the country) are nearly evenly distributed across the job and income spectrum.

David Dyssegaard Kallick, director for immigration research at the Fiscal Policy Institute, told the *The New York Times* that "The United States is getting a more varied and economically important flow of immigrants than the public seems to realize,"[2]

The findings are significant because Americans' views of immigration are based largely on the work immigrants do. How can we become better advocates for the immigrants that we work with? We can't all be "K" Street lobbyists, but there are things we can do as frontline ESL teachers, adult education program managers, career and college pathway counselors and academic advisers to collectively help change practices and policies that can hinder the success of skilled immigrants in our classes and programs.

What is Advocacy?

Advocacy is not just being a "K" Street lobbyist or writing letters to your Congressman. Advocacy is defined as the act or process of supporting a cause. If your cause is to improve ESL programming and create greater opportunities for your skilled immigrant students, there are many ways in which you can advocate on their behalf, including advocating for improved policies. ESL program staff are often the best advocates because "at the frontline", they are often the first to recognize trends and phenomena that others do not.

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[1] Fiscal Policy Institute. 2009. Immigrants and the Economy, Contribution of Immigrant Workers to the Country's 25 Largest Metropolitan Areas with a Focus on the 5 Largest Metro Areas in the East.
[2] www.nytimes.com/2010/04/16/us/16skilled.html

The fact that many of the immigrants that are in ESL classes at the community adult school and community college levels are skilled, highly skilled and often professionally educated is nothing new to the average ESL teacher. They often are the first to see that students are falling through the cracks due to a lack of the services that they need. Yet the funding allocations and program models of recent years have failed to call attention to this population.

What can you do?

If you think of advocacy as a pyramid with three levels, you can start at the base.

Level One: Advocacy at the ESL classroom teacher level.

> Whenever possible advocate on behalf of your students, whether it is encouraging them to seek out appropriate programs and services or helping them adequately represent their experience and education to a potential employer.

> Make sure that your students pursue appropriate academic programs after they leave your classroom. For example, be sure that your student with a bachelor's degree does not take the GED or pursue a second bachelor's degree in the U.S.

> Do a proper assessment of the resources available in your community. Are there contextualized ESL programs available? What types of programs are offered at the local community college? Are there workforce development programs that may be able to assist your students with career pathways counseling and information?

> Identify reliable and supportive allies in referral agencies so that you can direct your students to relevant programs with confidence.

> Mobilize mentors or volunteers (retirees, recent college graduates, successful immigrant professionals) to help your students navigate academic and professional pathways once they are ready to move beyond the ESL classroom.

Level Two: Advocacy at the program and professional levels of adult education:

Encourage the managers and directors of your programs to consider designing a program or offering complementary services aimed at helping immigrant professionals gain access to professional and academic opportunities beyond the classroom.

Partner with colleagues from other programs and/or institutions that may be facing similar issues with service delivery to their skilled immigrant students. This type of collaboration may open up opportunities for your students. For example, resource sharing among programs might enable you to start a specialized program or collectively purchase contextualized curriculum that can be used by each organization.

Raise awareness among your colleagues and peers. Consider presenting on this issue at a local, state or national conference to raise awareness as well as identify potential partners.

Suggest creating a task force of ESL teachers or local program managers to brainstorm what can be done as a group and then bring this issue to the wider field.

Be an advocate for adopting managed enrollment policies and contextualized curricula that are more conducive to better and faster language learning.

Level Three: Policy advocacy at the local, state and national level

Identify elected officials interested in immigrant integration at the local, state and national level who might be receptive to hearing information about the value of focusing additional resources (and the resulting high return on investment) on programs and services for skilled immigrants.

Find allies in the private sector who employ skilled immigrants and would like to see improved programming to better serve the population.

Seek interest from private foundations dedicated to improving educational outcomes and living standards for the poor. They may be able to offer funding opportunities or technical assistance for program creation.

Collect data on your skilled immigrant students and offer your findings to organizations dedicated to research on immigrant integration.

And, finally, why not write a letter - or better yet - pay a visit to your local, state and federal representatives? Make them aware of these issues and solicit their support for policies and/or funding allocations that could make a difference in your community.

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for Skilled Immigrants

Skilled Immigrant Integration Resources

➢ Leading Organizations in the Field

Welcome Back Initiative- www.welcomebackinitiative.org
Assists internationally trained healthcare workers in utilizing their experience and training to fill the need for culturally competent healthcare in the United States

Upwardly Global- www.upwardlyglobal.org
Helps work-authorized, skilled immigrants rebuild their professional careers in the U.S. through its job seeker services and a robust employer network

Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians- www.welcomingcenter.org
Connects newly arrived individuals from around the world with the economic opportunities that they need to succeed

World Education Services (WES)- www.wes.org
Provides credential evaluations to help immigrants gain access to professional and academic opportunities in the U.S. Also provides resources, information and training to immigrants and immigrant service providers through its Global Talent Bridge initiative – www.globaltalentbridge.org

Community College Consortium for Immigrant Education (CCCIE)- www.cccie.org
Raises awareness of the important role community colleges play in delivering educational opportunities to immigrants and promotes the expansion of quality programs and services for immigrant students

IMPRINT- www.imprintproject.org

A coalition of organizations active in the emerging field of immigrant professional integration

*Visit the **Global Talent Bridge Partners** page to find more organizations serving skilled immigrants around the country - www.globaltalentbridge.org/partners*

➢ Selected Resources for Advising Skilled Immigrants

Education

Global Talent Bridge Education Resources- www.globaltalentbridge.org/info/education.asp
Provides information and advice to help skilled immigrants navigate the complicated process of planning further education

College Navigator- nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator
Offers tools for researching postsecondary institutions in the United States, fields include: programs offered, retention and graduation rates, prices, aid available, degrees awarded, campus safety, and accreditation

Education USA- educationusa.state.gov
Provides accurate, comprehensive, and current information about educational institutions in the United States and guidance to qualified individuals on how best to access those opportunities

Employment

Global Talent Bridge Employment Resources-
www.globaltalentbridge.org/info/employment.asp
Offers clear advice and links to organizations that provide useful information and resources to help skilled immigrants overcome barriers in their job search

Career One Stop- www.careeronestop.org
Provides resources to help individuals learn about different careers, find career information, and locate career resources

Explore Health Careers- explorehealthcareers.org
A multi-disciplinary, interactive health careers website designed to explain the array of health professions and provide easy access to students seeking information about health careers

Professional Licensing

Global Talent Bridge Professional Licensing Resources -
www.globaltalentbridge.org/info/licensing.asp
Offers advice and resources for immigrants interested in pursuing professional licensure and/or certification in the U.S. in a variety of professions and provides information regarding alternative career pathways

Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE) -
www.credentialingexcellence.org/p/cm/ld/fid=121 ICE's accrediting body, the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), maintains a list of accredited professional certification programs in all fields

The Council on Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation (CLEAR) -
clearhq.org/Default.aspx?pageId=481144 Maintains online directories regarding hundreds of regulated occupations and professions in the U.S. (e.g. licensing and regulatory boards, professional associations, etc)

Upwardly Global's Licensing Guides for Immigrant Professionals-
www.careersfornewamericans.org A guide for professionals trained outside the U.S. and now residing in a U.S. state where they wish to earn a license for the same field.

Credential Evaluation

National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES)- www.naces.org
An association of credential evaluation services committed to formulating and maintaining ethical standards in the field of foreign educational evaluation, individuals can use NACES to find reliable credential evaluation services

World Education Services (WES)- www.wes.org
WES is the leading international credential evaluation service in North America and a member of NACES. Individuals educated outside the U.S. can present WES evaluation reports to demonstrate their academic achievements when seeking opportunities for further education, professional licensing, employment or immigration opportunities in the U.S.

➢ Data and Research

Migration Policy Institute (MPI)- www.migrationpolicy.org
provides analysis, development, and evaluation of migration and refugee policies at the local, national, and international levels

Selected Reports:
- *Uneven Progress: The Employment Pathways of Skilled Immigrants in the United States* (2008) www.migrationpolicy.org/news/2008_10_22.php
- *Still an Hourglass: Immigrant Workers in Middle-Skilled Jobs* (2010) www.migrationpolicy.org/news/2010_9_20.php
- *Adult English Language Instruction in the United States: Determining Need and Investing Wisely* (2007) www.migrationpolicy.org/news/2007_07_31.php

The Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings Institute- www.brookings.edu/metro.aspx
provides decision makers with timely trend analysis, cutting-edge research and policy ideas for improving the health and prosperity of cities and metropolitan areas

Featured Report:
- *The Geography of Immigrant Skills: Educational Profiles of Metropolitan Areas (*2011) www.brookings.edu/papers/2011/06_immigrants_singer.aspx

Immigration Policy Center- www.immigrationpolicy.org
provides policymakers, the media, and the general public with accurate information about the role of immigrants and immigration policy on U.S. society

Featured Data:

- *The Economic and Political Impact of Immigrants, Latinos and Asians State by State* (2012) www.immigrationpolicy.org/just-facts/economic-and-political-impact-immigrants-latinos-and-asians-state-state

The American Immigrant Policy Portal- www.usdiversitydynamics.com/nj provides resources related to the challenges and opportunities associated with immigration to the United States

Visit the **Global Talent Bridge Research and Policy** *page for a more extensive list of policy resources, research reports and data on skilled immigrant integration-*
www.globaltalentbridge.org/policy

ESL Resources

➤ Model ESL Programs for Skilled Immigrants

Massachusetts' Integrated Career Awareness (ICA) Curriculum
www.collegetransition.org/publications.icacurriculum.html

Washington State's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training
www.coeforict.org/resources/ibest-curriculum

The Welcome Back Center ESL Health Train Curriculum
welcomebackinitiative.org/englishhealthtrain.org/about

The Spring Institute's English for International Professionals

www.spring-institute.org/?action=englishforinternationalprofessionals

➤ Advanced English as a Second Language Program Directories

American Association of Intensive English Program (AAIEP) www.aaiep.org

University and College Intensive English Programs (UCIEP) www.uciep.org

➤ Academic English Language Tests

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) www.ets.org/toefl

International English Language Testing System (IELTS) www.ielts.org

Test of English as an International Language (TOEIC) www.ets.org/toeic

➢ **Online Resources for ESL Practitioners**

Adult Education Wiki wiki.literacytent.org/index.php/Main_Page

Center for Adult English Language Acquisition (CAELA) ESL Resources and Research www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources

Community Language and Literacy swearercenter.brown.edu/Literacy_Resources/efa.html

Community Partnerships for Adult Learning www.c-pal.net

Education Resource Information Center www.eric.ed.gov

English Language Learner University (ELL-U) www.ell-u.org

Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS) Professional Development Page lincs.ed.gov/lincs/resourcecollections/resource_collections.html

LiteracyWork International www.literacywork.com

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Glossary..**7.1-7.6**

Key ESL Terms

Global Talent
Bridge **Building Opportunities
for Skilled Immigrants**

In this section, you will find a glossary of key ESL terms that have been used in this toolkit. Definitions are general in nature.

BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) – oral-based, conversational and highly-contextualized language; usually associated with basic listening and speaking skills.

CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) – the more formalized reading language that one learns in school, such as found in textbooks, standardized tests, employee manuals, health booklets, driving manuals and other formal written texts; includes the ability to make inferences, summarize, paraphrase, as well as perform other academic functions.

CASAS (Comprehensive Assessment System for Adult Students) – California-based system of tests – the largest standardized testing system of adults in the U.S. – which uses 300 competencies to measure language, literacy, life skills and workplace competencies needed for adults to be successful members of their families, communities, and the workforce; form the basis of an integrated assessment and curriculum management system; ideal for use with contextualized curricula programs.

chunks or collocations – used in corpus and computational linguistics to refer to the fact that certain words are always associated with other words (called "collocations" since they co-locate with each other); second language acquisition experts that use the Communicative Language Teaching Approach believe these utterances should be learned as whole units rather than broken up into individual words, a practice heavily used in contextualized curriculum development.

CLT (Communicative Language Teaching Approach) – the most widely-accepted approach to second and foreign language teaching, including the teaching of adult ESL in the U.S., since the 1970s; defines the goal of language learning as communicative competence and recommends the learning of language in context using real language and experiences as the class content; used by contextualized and special purpose curriculum in ESL teaching.

content-based instruction – teaching ESL through the use of a particular academic subject matter, content or theme; an example of contextualized learning.

contextualized curriculum – curriculum developed for use in a contextualized learning program; uses real-life situations and language in a particular context (workplace, medicine, engineering, construction, etc.) to teach English.

contextualized learning – learning that using real language and situations as its content and context, thus keeping the student engaged because the learning is relevant.

conversation analysis (CA) – a discipline within sociolinguistics founded by Harvey Sacks and Emanuel Schegloff at UCLA in the 1970s, wherein conversation was analyzed to define turn-taking protocols and other interactions; commonly used to create contextualized curricula in English for Special Purposes training courses.

cooperative language learning – makes maximum use of pairs and small groups learning together in a classroom.

corpus analysis – the analysis of a body of text (corpora) to determine how language actually works; a term that comes from the field of corpus linguistics.

corpus linguistics – the study of language based on examples of "real life" language use stored in corpora (or corpuses) - computerized databases created for linguistic research; key in the development of contextualized curricula in English for Special Purposes; corpus studies have boomed from 1980 onwards, as corpora techniques and new arguments in favor of the use of corpora have become more apparent.

EAP (English for Academic Purposes) – an ESL curriculum for the purpose of admission into college and successful completion of a degree program; includes training in academic reading, writing, presenting and note-taking.

EBE (English for Business and Economics) – an ESL curriculum for the purpose of working in a business, finance or corporate setting; includes teaching the English of accounting, finance, banking, the marketplace, Wall Street and other economic topics; a common course for in-house corporate training.

ECI (English for the Construction Industry) – an ESL curriculum for those working in the construction industry either as project engineers, project managers or skilled laborers; includes teaching the English of project management, construction cycles, interaction with trades unions, and other topics relevant to the construction site workplace; may include

English language training for particular trades such as plumbing, HVAC, electricians and carpenters.

ED (English for Diplomacy) – an ESL curriculum for diplomats working at the United Nations or in an international capacity where English is the common language; includes teaching the English of meetings, meeting planning, tactful and polite conversational gambits, as well as other topics relevant to diplomats.

EFF (Equipped-For-the-Future-Based ESL) – a set of 16 standards developed by the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) in the 1990's that describe what every adult needs to know to be considered a successful family member, worker and member of the community; contextualized curriculum developers, CASAS and FCE programs all use these standards, which came out of the SCANS report.

EHT (English Health Train) – a contextualized Medical ESL curriculum tailored to the healthcare industry; works with immigrants with medical training backgrounds to reenter the medical field in the U.S.; launched in San Francisco as part of the Welcome Back Initiative.

EHW (English for Hospitality Workers) – an ESL curriculum for those working in the hotel industry either as desk managers, hostesses, maintenance and kitchen staff, and housekeepers; includes teaching the English needed to present good customer service and workplace cooperation.

ELP (English for the Law) – an ESL curriculum for those working as lawyers, interpreters, paralegals, court clerks, court reporters, security personnel or others; includes training for foreign-educated lawyers who simply want to understand how American lawyers think; see Georgetown University program as a model.

EMP (English for Medical Purposes) – an ESL curriculum for those working in the healthcare industry including doctors, nurses, lab technicians, pharmacists, community health workers, home care aides and others; English Health Train is an example of this type of curriculum.

English Plus Programs – an ESL curriculum which teaches English through the teaching of something else, such as film making, flower arranging, cooking, computer programming, etc.; the same as content-based ESL.

EPP (English for Professional Purposes) – any contextualized ESL program that is developed for professionals.

ERW (English for Restaurant Workers) – an ESL curriculum for those working in the restaurant industry either as wait staff, cooks, managers, hostesses, busboys and others; includes teaching the English for proper customer service and effective cooperation and team work.

ESP (English for Special Purposes) – the overall category encompassing ESL designed for a target audience

EST (English for Science and Technology) – an ESL curriculum primarily for engineers and technical experts; emphasizes communicative tasks such as presenting papers at international conferences, directing projects, and using laymen scientific terminology rather than textbook language when talking to non-technical managers; also emphasizes clear pronunciation.

FCE (Functional Context Education) – an approach to teaching and learning that stresses making learning relevant to the experience of the learners and their work content; key approach used in all contextualized learning ESP programs and forms the basis of the EFF standards; uses real material in the same way that the Communicative Language Teaching Approach does in ESL; Tom Sticht is the leading proponent of this approach, which was developed for the military in the Vietnam Era of the 1960s and 1970s.

fixed utterance – a chunk or collocation; a common expression used in everyday speech.

I-BEST (Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training) – A contextualized workforce curriculum and program model developed by the State of Washington Community College system and now used in many other places around the country to help immigrants successfully transition into the workplace.

IELTS (International English Language Testing System) – An academic test of English as a foreign or second language to admit non-native speakers of English into college or university in English-speaking countries; created by Cambridge University in the UK in partnership with the Australian University System; many universities in the U.S. now accept IELTS scores for admission purposes.

Institutional TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) – unofficial paper and pencil version of TOEFL used by many academic ESL programs as Pre and Post test exams; created by Educational Testing Service (ETS).

managed enrollment – an admissions practice in some adult education programs, including ESL classes, where there are fixed start and end dates with a fixed curriculum delivered over a fixed length of time; most contextualized ESL programs follow this practice.

NRS (The National Reporting System for Adult Education) – an outcome-based reporting system for state-administered, federally funded adult education programs; developed by the US Department of Education's Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL).

open enrollment – an admissions practice in some adult education programs, including ESL classes, where there are no fixed start and end dates allowing students to enter at any time; this practice is not appropriate for contextualized ESP programs.

Project-Based Instruction – an ESL curriculum built around students learning English by working on a particular project together.

rolling admissions – the same as open enrollment; see above.

SCANS (Secretary of Labor's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills) -Based ESL – an ESL program developed by Elizabeth Dole, Secretary of Labor under President George H.W. Bush, which abides by the standards of EFF.

Task-Based Instruction – teaching ESL through the performance of certain tasks; work-based programs commonly use this type of instruction; similar to Project Based ESL.

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) – an examination of the Educational Testing Service (ETS) used to decide if foreign or other non-native, English-speaking applicants have sufficient English language skills to successfully complete a college or university degree; a norm-referenced test that measures speaking, reading, writing and listening.

TOEFL iBT (TOEFL Internet-Based Test) – the current form of the TOEFL taken on computer.

TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) – an examination of the Educational Testing Service for Business English.

TSE (Test of Spoken English) – an examination of the Educational Testing Service used by schools of pharmacy and nursing to measure the communicative skills of these healthcare professionals.

VESL (Vocational English as a Second Language) – special purpose English language classes for training in craft and trade occupations and other manual vocations; uses contextualized curricula.

VESL-Sector Cluster – VESL training by industry sector.

VESL Workplace – VESL training at the workplace.

WBI (Welcome Back Initiative) – an initiative launched in San Francisco to serve immigrants who enter the U.S. with healthcare training backgrounds to gain English fluency and reenter the health field in the U.S.; English Health Train is WBI's contextualized curriculum; there are currently 9 Welcome Back Centers across the U.S.