Creating a Literacy Vocational ESL Curriculum for Adult Refugee Learners

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Purpose

To develop a VESL curriculum geared towards adult immigrants and refugees.
Task

Our project seeks to address the gap in employment-related materials for literacy learners.

Our objective is to develop students’ skills in:
- Filling out employment application forms
- Participating in job interviews

Teaching Context

Community-based non-profit in the SF Bay Area serving refugee and immigrant communities

VESL Class Learners’ Information

Age: 20 - 60
Regions: Central America, Asia, Southeast Asia, Middle East
L2 Proficiency: literacy - low beginning
Framework (adapted from Richards, 2001)

- Situational Analysis
- Needs Analysis
- Problematizing
- Goals & Objectives
- Scope & Sequence
- Materials & Activities
- Assessment

Situational Analysis

**Resources**
- Multi-purpose room in a church
- Assigned textbook, CASAS sample test, teacher-designed worksheets
- Limited concrete teaching materials (realia)

**Administrative Policies**
- Open-entry and open-exit enrollment
- CASAS (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems)
Needs Analysis

Objective

- Basic literacy skills
  - Letter/word recognition
  - Numerical literacy
  - Motor skills for writing
- Classroom language and procedures

Subjective

- Life skills to be independent
- Language to be social and build community
- Employment
- Variety of instructional practices

Problematizing

Needs and Challenges

- Multilevel
- Limited time
- Rote memorization
- Open entry/exit
- Lack of familiarity with class norms

Proposed Solutions

- Literacy level curriculum
- Complementary worksheets
- Practical language
- Flexible materials
- Simple classroom instructions
Course Goals

- Become familiar with basic employment vocabulary.
- Recognize and answer interview questions.
- Fill out employment applications.

Unit Goals

Unit 1: Demonstrate proper interview etiquette.

Unit 7: Identify weekdays, weekends, and their abbreviations to describe availability.

Unit 8: Write and speak about past, present, and future jobs.

Unit 9: Write and speak about skills learned in current jobs and their relevance to future job prospects.

Sample Unit 8 Goals & Objectives

Unit 8: Students will be able to write and speak about past, present, and future jobs.

Objectives:
- Students will be able to identify and write names of jobs.
- Students will be able to use be and want to respond to questions about their past, present, and future jobs in an interview.
- Students will be able to fill out the “job title” category in a job application.
## Scope & Sequence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week in the Semester</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Unit 8: Jobs</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Trace, write, and match the names of jobs</td>
<td>Worksheets for Sections 8.1, 8.2, 8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 9-11</td>
<td>● Use be and want to trace, write, and speak about past, present, and future jobs</td>
<td>Worksheets for Sections 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.7, 8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Fill out the “job title” category on a job application form</td>
<td>Worksheets for Section 8.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Materials & Activities

- Writing
- Fine motor skills
- Speaking
- Recycling / Repetition
- Scaffolding
Materials

Unit 8: Jobs
8.1 Trace. Write.
- student
  - s _____
- bus driver
  - b ____ d _____
- hair stylist
  - h _____ s _____

Unit 9: Job Skills
9.1 Trace. Write.
- speak English
  - s ____ E _____
- drive a bus
  - d ____ ____ b ____
- cut hair
  - c ____ h ____

Materials (cont.)

Unit 8: Jobs
8.5 Walk. Ask. Check.

What's your job now?
I'm a server.

Unit 9: Job Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job</th>
<th>What is your name?</th>
<th>What's your job now?</th>
<th>What job do you want?</th>
<th>What can you do?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mechanic</td>
<td>Yu Ping</td>
<td>dishwasher</td>
<td>cook</td>
<td>cook food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hair stylist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gardener</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>salesperson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>stay-at-home mom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assessment

- Formative Assessment
  - Self-assessment
  - Performance-based Assessment

Self-assessment

Unit 7 - Work Availability
Performance-based Assessment

Job Application

Job Interview Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greeting</th>
<th>2 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hello, what’s your name?</td>
<td>~Student gives name (1 point)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hi, I’m _______.</td>
<td>~Student responds to greeting “Nice to meet you” (1 point)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nice to meet you.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nice to meet you too.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present work</th>
<th>2 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What’s your job now?</td>
<td>~Student uses present form of BE (1 point)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>~Student indicates job (1 point)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past work</th>
<th>2 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What did you do before?</td>
<td>~Student uses past form of BE (1 point)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>~Student indicates job (1 point)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Future work</th>
<th>2 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What job do you want?</td>
<td>~Student uses the verb WANT (1 point)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>~Student indicates job (1 point)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Implications

Curriculum Development Framework: use for structure/guidelines

The importance of...

Situational Analysis: identifies weaknesses/strengths of context

Needs Analysis: provides purpose and direction with gathered information

Problematizing: anticipate challenges and propose solutions

Material Creation: requires time and effort; every detail should be the result of careful consideration

Making Do with What You Have: make the best of a situation, regardless of challenges or limitations
Implications

*The Impact of the Project*

**As a group:** positive group dynamics and professionalism are crucial for success

**As individuals:**
- language learning from the learners’ perspective
- gaining confidence in curriculum design for future projects