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TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY  
**TRAIN PD CENTER @ TCALL**

# ***“Are You for R.E.A.L. (Retraining, Employment and Literacy)?” Keeping Our Students Engaged During Remote AEL Instruction***

- Dr. Charity Embley
  - Dr. Kristi Latimer  
Odessa College



# Dr. Charity Embley

- Associate Professor of Education at Odessa College
- Ph.D in Curriculum & Instruction - Language, Literacy and Diversity Studies from TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
- Courses Taught at OC: Education, Child Development, English & Writing
- ESL Level 6 - Odessa College Transitional Learning Center
- 22 years of teaching - Secondary, Collegiate
- 4 years = non-profit; developed the curriculum; under the South Plains College Workforce Development/Elms Learning Center of Goodwill Industries of Northwest Texas



# Dr. Kristi Latimer

- Associate Professor of Education at Odessa College
- Ed.D. in Instructional Leadership
- Courses Taught at OC: Child Development and Education
- ESL Level 4 and 6 - Odessa College Transitional Learning Center
- 7 Years teaching elementary and secondary levels
- 7 years as Assistant Principal



# Talking Points

The R.E.A.L Conceptual Framework

How R.E.A.L was put into action

What we learned from our R.E.A.L. Model



# Review of TWC's AEL:

To provide adults with sufficient basic education

Acquire basic educational skills necessary for literate functioning

participate in job training/retraining programs

obtain/retain employment

continue their education (to a secondary level completion)



# Review of TWC's AEL:

Core components - activities/programs

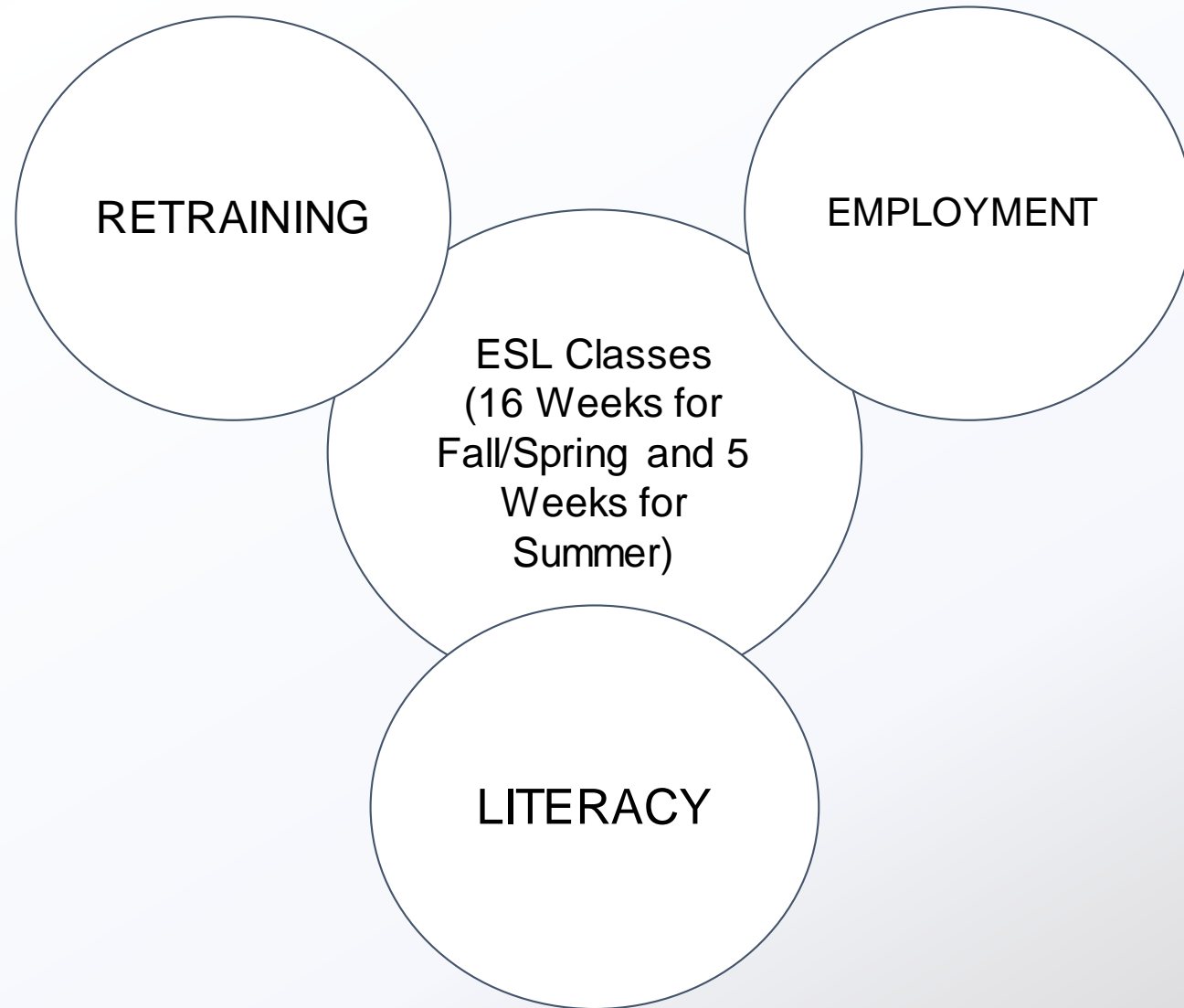
Literacy

English Language Acquisition

Integrated English Literacy

Workforce Preparation and Training

# R.E.A.L. Conceptual Framework





# RETRAINING

Context #1: Students are coming from different places armed with college degrees from their native countries

Context #2: Students are already armed with work experiences and skills acquired from their native countries





# RETRAINING

Our ESL students are intelligent in their own way.

They have a bit of knowledge in English because they also watch English movies (with subtitles), commercials and may have extended families in the U.S. who bring back news to them.

Remember Sofia Vergara's character in Modern Family?

Gloria Delgado-Pritchett: *"Do you know how smart I am in Spanish?"*



# RETRAINING

Our ESL students have the knowledge, life skills, experiences and work ethics to survive in the U.S.

They just need “retraining” in workforce development and English language skills.

Training versus Retraining.



# LITERACY

Proficiencies in Reading, Writing, Speaking and Digital Skills

The pandemic has really tested our digital skills (instructors and students)

Well-rounded curriculum → integrating the RWS component with digital tools



# EMPLOYMENT

Personal: Students want to work but are very unsure of their English speaking skills

Emotional/Psychological: Anxiety over making mistakes and unable to explain themselves

Political Atmosphere: Visa/residency restrictions placed on non-US citizens

# R.E.A.L in Action



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IT'S ABOUT  
EFFORT, NOT  
BEING  
PERFECT



# Know Your Participants

Vested interest in each individual → assessing their needs, especially for prospective participants

Have REAL conversations with students after Testing (e.g., BEST Plus Training) → know where they are at in their lives

Focus on the SPEAKING skills if possible

Practice more on common daily life scenarios in the U.S. (role playing)



# Remote Instruction

Equip ourselves with knowledge of digital tools (e.g., Google apps, Wakelet training, TCALL workshops, etc.) to make remote instruction better

Lots of support from colleagues → daily conversations and morning minutes

Lesson planning together

NOTE: Engagement is Multifaceted.





# Student Engagement is a Multifaceted Construct

Student engagement can be measured with all the dimensions dynamically interrelated.

- Behavioral engagement = focusing on participation in academic, social, and co-curricular activities
- Emotional engagement = focusing on the extent and nature of positive and negative reactions to teachers, classmates, academics, and school
- Cognitive engagement = focusing on students' level of investment in learning



# Workforce Development

Advocacy → consider individual barriers to employment and need for specific job skills (Francis, 2013)

Securing higher employment and maintaining economic performance → maximizing the intelligence and creative abilities of the labor force (Craft, 2005)

Place-Based versus Sector-Based Approach →  
Supply versus Demand



# Workforce Development

One-on-one CV consultation with ESL instructors (e.g., Zoom meetings/Blackboard Collaborate)

Guide students in applying or filling out job application forms online

Coaching students regarding seeking proper references

Dressing for Success sessions

Mock interviews



# Integrated R.E.A.L. Curriculum

Incorporated literacy workshops in family, health, financial, workforce development

Real life applications → The personal approach to put the problem into a manageable context (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).

Invited experts/professionals

Explore local resources (e.g., library as a continued resource to enhance their literacy skills)

Explore continued education for students (career change)



# Integrated R.E.A.L. Curriculum

Date	Topic
July 6, 2020	Discrimination
July 7, 2020	Technology Marketing
July 8, 2020	Community College Systems, Learning Styles
July 9, 2020	Current Events
Date	Topic
July 13, 2020	Healthcare
July 14, 2020	Workplace Communication
July 15, 2020	Small Business, Shopping
July 16, 2020	Meeting Memos/Workplace Simulation

Date	Topic
July 20, 2020	Writing
July 21, 2020	Writing
July 22, 2020	Song Analysis and Writing
July 23, 2020	Song Analysis and Writing

Date	Topic
July 27, 2020	Health Literacy (TBA)
July 28, 2020	Financial Literacy (c/o Dr. Michael Ladick)
July 29, 2020	College and Career (c/o Mr. William Council)
July 30, 2020	Ector County Public Library/Overdrive (Ms. J'Nelyn White)

Date	Topic
August 3, 2020	Dress for Success
August 4, 2020	Mock Interview (Ms. Juwainor West)
August 5, 2020	Mock Interview (TBA)
August 6, 2020	Mock Interview (TBA)



# Ongoing Professional Development

TCALL, Essential Education, Burlington, Literacy Works, etc.

COABE and Google Applied Digital Skills Training (Appski) → train other local programs

# What We Learned



# What we learned...

Teamwork is necessary (e.g., morning minutes)

Important to revisit our literacy content standards and how it aligns with occupational content and employability skills

Differentiated Instruction → participants can struggle with comprehending instructions or understanding expository text (e.g., due to disability)

Go back to the essentials in instruction: How do we know if our students are learning the daily content? (e.g., language accuracy, check for understanding)





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**An investment in  
knowledge pays  
the best interest.**

Benjamin Franklin



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Questions?

[cembley@odessa.edu](mailto:cembley@odessa.edu)

[klatimer@odessa.edu](mailto:klatimer@odessa.edu)