

Texas Workforce Commission
Adult Education and Literacy



Fall Institute 2020
Handout

September 15, 2020

Day 2, Session 6

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

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Session Description: This session will look into best practices that incorporates the tenets of AEL during the pandemic, specifically on how instruction and training is done remotely. Speakers will present instructional practices based on a tested curriculum that incorporates English literacy/language acquisition instruction, financial literacy, and workforce training to prepare adult learners to model the "retain/re-obtain employment and literacy" skills after training. This is to prove that workforce training and incorporating the tenets of AEL can work even during the pandemic. At the same, adapting the R.E.A.L model might just ultimately strengthen your organization.

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- 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

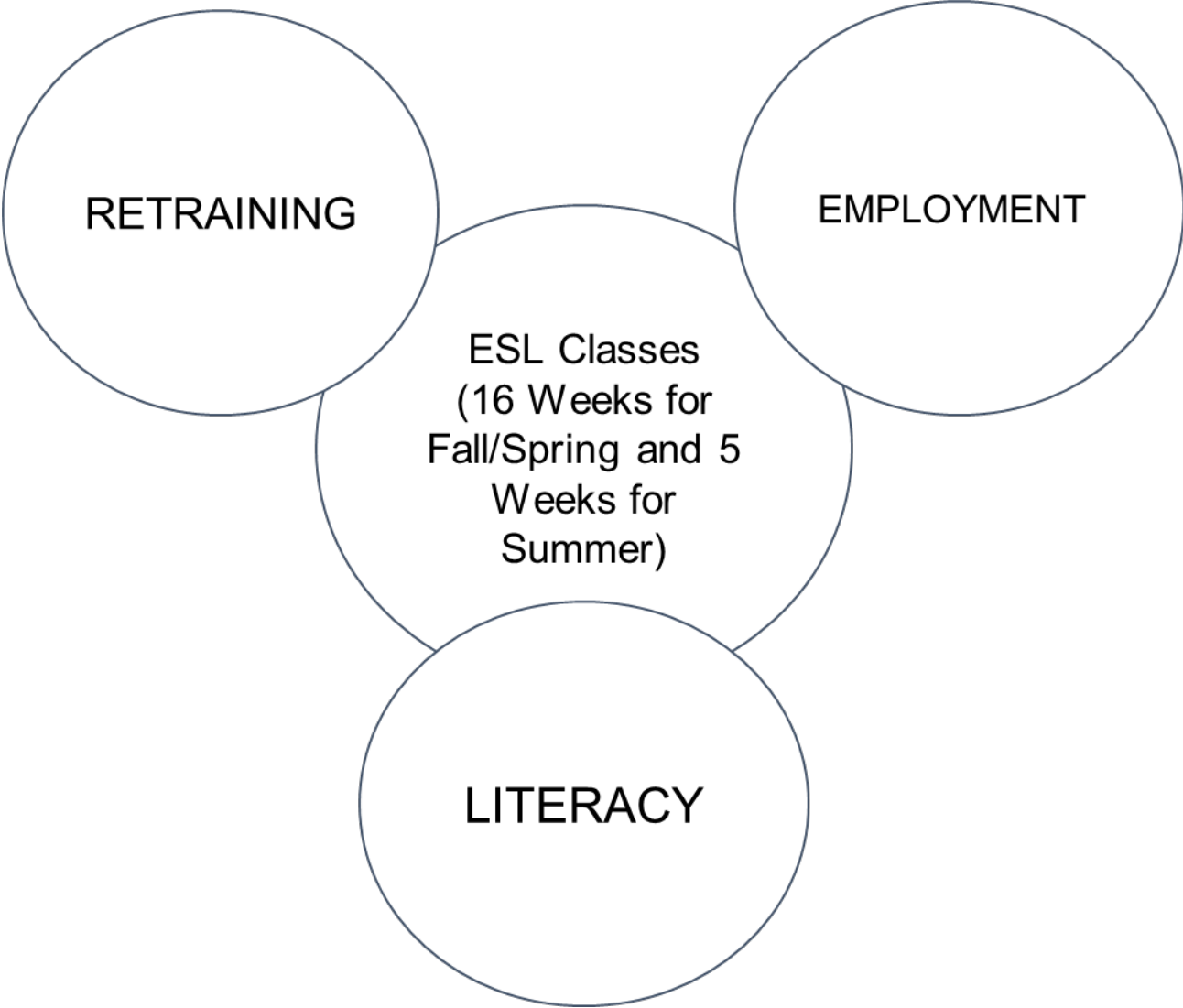
What we learned from our R.E.A.L. Model

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)
- Core components - activities/programs
- Literacy
- English Language Acquisition
- Integrated English Literacy
- Workforce Preparation and Training

R.E.A.L. Conceptual Framework

Retraining, Literacy and Employment



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.

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?"*

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

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
- 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)

Date/Topic

- July 6, 2020 – Discrimination
- July 7, 2020 – Technology Marketing
- July 8, 2020 – Community College Systems, Learning Styles
- July 9, 2020 – Current Events
- July 13, 2020 – Healthcare
- July 14, 2020 – Workplace Communication
- July 15, 2020 – Small Business, Shopping
- July 16, 2020 – Meeting Memos/Workplace Simulation
- July 20, 2020 – Writing
- July 21, 2020 – Writing
- July 22, 2020 – Song Analysis and Writing
- July 23, 2020 – Song Analysis and Writing
- 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’Neyln White)
- 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

- 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)

"An investment in knowledge pays the best interest."

Benjamin Franklin

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Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996). *Creativity flow and the psychology of discovery and invention*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

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