

A Service Solution Course Design for ITPs

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Road Map

- Introduction
- Background
- Context
- Content
- Development
- Challenges
- Discussion



Me:

- MA Linguistics, TESOL Certificate
- In AEL since 2013
- ESL teaching at all levels
- Career Pathways Navigator and Intensive Course Specialist
- Favorite color: yellow

Question



Y'all:

- Name
- Primary role
- Level of comfort with the subject
 - 😊 1 - 5 😄

Introduce yourself to one another so I can eavesdrop and getting a feeling for where we are.

Quick Glossary:

Some words phrases and abbreviations which may be used in this presentation and discussions on this topic

Source:

<https://tcall.tamu.edu/AELDefinitions.html>

Term	Explanation
ITP	Internationally Trained Professional; An ELL (English Language Learner) who is a professional with a degree or credential from his or her native country.
ESL-P	English for Professionals; Often used interchangeably with ITP. Locally, we use it to refer to the courses designed for ITPs.
LEP	An individual who does not speak English as his or her primary language and who has a limited ability to read, speak, write, and/or understand English.
ELL	English Language Learner: An eligible individual who has limited ability in reading, writing, speaking, or comprehending the English language, and whose native language is a language other than English; or who lives in a family or community environment where a language other than English is the dominant language.

Context: Our Program and Students



Program:

- Birdville ISD
 - Part of Tarrant County AEL Consortium
- PY '20-'21 Targets
 - 390 (4,665)
 - Intensives: 85 (298)
- English for Professionals for ITPs since PY '17-'18

BISD AEL focuses on recruiting in north Tarrant County, which has a population just over 2 million, west of Dallas. There's an unemployment rate of about 7% as of February 2021. About one-third of the population speaks a language other than English at home and about 200,000 may be LEP individuals. In Texas, as a whole, about 25% of immigrants have a college degree or higher.

Students:

Identifying ITP students:

- It is difficult.
- Individuals identify their interest when contacting us.
- We collect education data on local enrollment paperwork.
 - Including a Learning Plan, as well as our basic ITEC form.
- When assigning students to class, we discuss the ESL-P option with qualifying students.

Because of our location, we have historically had a large population of highly skilled immigrants, many of whom are on an H4 visa or who have moved in a supportive role for the spouse. Others have put their professional careers on the backburner for various reasons and are looking to re-enter the workforce or post-secondary education.

Course:

- We usually offer 8 - 12 week ESL-P courses.
- We offer ESL-P courses at every site (or schedule) at least once each program year.
- We offer a Transitions to College for ELLs.
- We offer ESL-P at two levels.

Question



Your program:

- Does your program have a large ITP population?
- Does your program offer services for ITPs?
- Does your program offer a course designed for ITPs?

Content: Structure, Activities, and Services



Course Structure:

- We've designed our ESL-P course with project-based learning in mind, such that students leave with an employment portfolio.
- We've aligned activities to a typical employment timeline, from identifying skills to promotion and resignation.
- Some activities are included to prepare students for credential evaluation.

Course Outline:

Day	Topic	Pro.	Day	Topic	Pro.
1	Introduction and Credential Translation		10	Communicating on the Job: Politeness, (In)appropriate Conversations, and Small Talk	
2	The Education System in the US and Education History	☆	11	Field-Specific Vocabulary	☆
3	Skill-sets and Aptitudes: Hard-Skills, Soft-Skills, Job-Specific/Technical Skills	☆	12	Submitting Documents for Evaluation	
4	Confronting Barriers to Employment		13	Workplace Professionalism Expectations	
5	Understanding Employment Ads, Job Searching Using Digital Resources, and Applying Online	☆	14	Understanding Benefits in the US	
6	Discussing Work History and Building a Resume and Cover Letter	☆	15	Organizational Structures in US Offices	
7	Volunteering and Continuing Education		16	Moving up and Moving on: Promotion and Resignation	
8	Understanding job Applications; Completing and Submitting an (Online Application)	☆	17	Giving a Presentation (Pathway Plan)	☆
9	Interviewing Skills				

Outline Discussion:

- We don't always cover every topic depending on the length of the course, though we prioritize projects and credential evaluation preparation.
- Sometimes we include additional subjects or allow more days per topic.
- We haven't found a textbook which covers all of these topics (well).
- Pacing can be challenging.
- Students may want to increase the amount of language-focused activities.

1. Education History

- Prepares for resume and credential evaluation
- Students write a narrative from high school through their highest education level and leave with a concise record for later.

2. Skills

- Prepares for resume and interviewing
- Students read articles and take assessments to create a list they can draw from.

3. Job Search

- Prepares for real-world application, integrates digital literacy, prepares for in-class Pathway Plan presentation
- Students see various platforms and leave with login credentials

4. Resume and Cover Letter

- Prepares for future interviews and application process
- Students write and review resume and cover letters, and leave with general documents and information for future use.

5. Personal Sample Application

- Prepares students for authentic applications and interviews, especially employability vocabulary.
- Students complete applications to preview the real-world experience and create an artifact they can draw from later.

6. Field Specific Vocabulary Glossary

- Introduces students to vocabulary necessary to discuss their skills and abilities in English.
- Students use resources to create a glossary of terminology for their careers.

7. Career Pathway Plan Presentation

- Prepares students for presenting in English and substantiates the work they've done throughout the course.
- Students leave with thought-out goals directly related to employment and education, informed by the knowledge they've gained in the course.

Question



What are some other projects that would be beneficial for students to complete in this course?

Non-Project Activities and Topics

1. Well yeah, that makes sense:

- Benefits in the US, interview skills, promotion and resignation
 - Benefits can differ wildly, but these activities set expectations for things like healthcare and vacation time.
 - While we practice interviews and discuss what to expect, we don't want students to sound overly rehearsed. So, we shy away from doing things like listing interview questions and responses; instead, we have a more conversational, communicative approach.
 - It's difficult to make a project out of changing positions, but this helps with planning.

2. Okay, I can see that:

- Professionalism, Organizational Structure, Communicating on the Job
 - We've found that culturally, it can be really helpful to address some of these things to set expectations.
 - Many of our students may be used to structures that can be considered more casual (i.e, arrival/departure times, directing requests, etc.) whereas hierarchy, as well as conversational boundaries may be relatively more strict here in the US.

3. Tell me more...

- Barriers, volunteering, and continuing education
 - Students may have impractical expectations about working in the US, or may not be eligible or ready to work in the US.

Rhetorical question



Okay, but where's the
English?

Managing perceptions

Students can become apprehensive at the beginning of the course.

Many are not used to such a workplace focused class, and many expect a more traditional English class.

There has to be an infusion of clear-cut English language activities, but *also* a transparent discussion about objectives and rationale.

- Be intentional with recruitment information.
- Discuss the value and connection when introducing activities.

English Language Activities

- Clear English language warm-ups focusing on grammar and mechanics
- Use reading strategies like any other English class, but with more rigorous and focused content
 - Read aloud to students, echoing, round robin can all be beneficial
- Address meaning, pronunciation, and grammar of vocabulary as you go.
 - Students at this level tend to be more comfortable with small caveats.
- Clearly explain how more advanced English language topics (like pragmatics or suprasegmentals) relate to increased fluency.
- Have frequent check-ins for comprehension and clarification.
- Prepare relevant cool down activities.
 - Some of these topics are heavy, so having something lighter is fun and keeps students engaged. Try business idioms and jargon.

Credential Evaluation Process and Activities

The Process for Students:

1. Collect documents
2. Translate documents
3. Complete application
4. Send documents to company
5. Receive evaluation

Facilitating:

- Provide the list of required documents to students and review that they are correct
- Assist in translation, either by reviewing translation or submitting it to company
- Guide students through application to ensure it is completed correctly
- Facilitate, within reason, logistics related to actually sending the documents; and track that they have been submitted.
- Respond to any question in the process or evaluation
- Track receipt of evaluation for billing and budgeting.

Activities:

- **Introduction:** Explain the function of the evaluation, assess need, present a roadmap of the process, encourage students to find their documents.
- **Education History:** On the application, students must provide specific education details. Integration of the education history narrative ensures students have the details before the application process begins.
- **Pre-Submission Meeting:** Students meet with the CPN to verify that the documents that they have gathered are the ones requested by the company, as well as to assess translation needs.
- **Application Preview:** Walking students through the application prior to submitting expedites the actual process of doing it and makes them aware of the kind of information they need to have prepared.
- **Guided Application Submission:** The application is complicated, so we do it together.
- **Sending and submitting:** (Not necessarily an activity, but) once we hit 'submit', money is in action, so we help students throughout the process until the evaluation gets back.

Question



Does your program offer credential evaluation? If so, is your process different?

Question



What are your questions about content, activities, and the evaluation process?

Framework: Policy and Motivation



Policy and Guidance

04-16, Change 1

- English Language Learners “[...] including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries.”

01-17

- “Grantees should also document and build on ELLs’ previous education, credentials, experience, and skills, including education and employment experience from native countries.
- [Participants] can benefit from educational and career counseling services, [...] specialized assessments, credential evaluation of international degrees, credentials, and licenses
- [As well as] services [to] support a more articulated identification of employment assets and barriers and the development of appropriate employment goals, and, with related counseling support, can accelerate educational and career advancement.”

Policy and Guidance Website (<https://www.twc.texas.gov/agency/laws-rules-policy/workforce-policy-and-guidance>)

Motivations:

- Students capping out at traditional advanced classes before reaching their goals
- Needing to provide a launchpad to direct advanced students toward outcomes and exit
- Widening our base of recruitment of employment-focused students
- Offering a pathway for individuals who don't qualify for or are not interested in IETs
- {Moment of full honesty} It's the easiest and most reliable source for intensive targets.

Question



Are you familiar with the policy we just discussed, and if so, have you interpreted it similarly?

Do you see similar motivating forces in your program?

Development

Base of Understanding

Our guiding question:

- *What do our students need to get into the workforce?*

Acknowledgement of student barriers:

- *Even many highly proficient students still lack the understanding of the systems of employment in the US, as well as the confidence to seek employment*

Acknowledgement of student backgrounds:

- *Many of the students who qualify for these services have extensive professional backgrounds and do not want or need the kind of content meant for other students in our population who may also need help entering the workforce. (Students who worked in corporate offices for 20 years likely don't need the same materials as an HSE student looking for their first job).*

Building the Course:

- I started by building the course outline and figuring out which topics should be covered.
- I compared the topics with other class offerings to focus this course on specific goals.
- I built in specific outcomes that I wanted to be met and made note of how I thought would be best to get there.
- I began searching for curriculum and gathering resources to support the ideas I had.
- I collaborated with teachers and staff to fill out the lessons.
- We set an open standard for iterative design and continuous improvement (including discussing with administration the need for time between cohorts to reassess materials).

The end result? It's
a pretty good
course. But there
are still challenges.



Challenges:



Okay, but you first:



What challenges do you have in your program with offering services to ITPs?

If you aren't offering services for ITPs yet, what challenges do you anticipate?

Opportunities for Growth:

- The market lacks adequate curriculum to support these courses.
- MSGs can be hard to come by.
- The content may overwhelm students.
- Buy-in can be difficult for a lot of our traditional students.
- Buy-in can be difficult for a lot of our traditional teachers.
- It can be difficult to focus on this course and its services when pulled between other obligations.
- Students may need a lot of individual guidance.

Potential for Change:

- Shorter, more intensive courses with immediate focus on employment
- Longer, more general courses to provide services at lower levels with similar expectations for outcomes
- Community stakeholder integration for direct relationships with employers and training providers
- Decentralized services to allow the offering of services with less interruption to traditional classes
- Cross-training instructors to allow for more cohorts to be offered

Discussion



What ideas do you have to offer similar services or to innovate and expand on what is currently being offered?

Thank you!

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Links:

- **TWC AEL Policy and Guidance Letters:**
<https://www.twc.texas.gov/agency/laws-rules-policy/workforce-policy-and-guidance>
- **TCALL AEL Definitions:**
<https://tcall.tamu.edu/AELDefinitions.html>
- **United Way Tarrant County Technical Report:**
<http://www2.unitedwaytarrant.org/content/CommunityAssessmentTechnicalReport.pdf>
- **Texas Languages Other Than English Map:**
https://www.lep.gov/sites/lep/files/resources/TX_cnty_LEP.ACS_5yr.2014.pdf
- **Texas Immigrants with a Degree:**
<https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-in-texas>