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Vocational education for the limited English proficient: A handbook for community college administrators

Pao-Yi Lai

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VOCA TIONAL EDUCATION FOR THE LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT:
A HANDBOOK FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE ADMINISTRATORS

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Education: Vocational Education

by
Pao-Yi Lai
September 1996
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR THE LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT: A HANDBOOK FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE ADMINISTRATORS

A Project
Presented to the
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September 1996

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9/18/96
Date
The objective of this project was the development of a handbook for community college administrators who are directly involved with instructional programs for limited English proficient (LEP) students enrolled in vocational programs. The handbook is intended for community college administrators working with LEP students in vocational education. This handbook is a guide to assist community college administrators in designing vocational education programs which meet the special needs of LEP students.

Contents of the handbook include:

- benefits community colleges have received through serving LEP vocational students
- considerations for planning programs for vocational students who speak English as a second language
- basic program options, components, and strategies for serving LEP in vocational education at community colleges
- instructional staff development
- program evaluation
- key factors to program success

This handbook presents how community colleges are successfully providing LEP students with programs that combine the English language and vocational instruction. As
a result, LEP students in these programs are able to gain the necessary competence to enter and succeed in the United States workplace.
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Chapter One
Introduction

Vocational education programs in the United States, whether at the high school, adult education, or community college level, have provided thousands of students with marketable job skills over the past years. Despite this achievement, a significant portion of the population remains virtually unserved by such programs. This group consists predominately of persons of limited English proficient (LEP). The term LEP is used to characterize persons who speak a language other than English and who do not have the English language skills to take full advantage of educational opportunities.

Several reasons can be offered to explain the low incidence of services to the LEP population. For example, most LEP students in educational institutions are placed in bilingual, Adult Basic Education (ABE) or English as a second language (ESL) programs because of the special assistance available. Unfortunately, these programs are neither designed to provide vocational education nor coordinated with vocational programs. Most importantly, vocational programs, like other types of educational programs, may not possess the human and materials resources necessary to serve linguistically and culturally different students.

The objective of this project was the development of a handbook for community college administrators who are directly involved with instructional programs for LEP students enrolled in vocational programs. This handbook presents an outline to assist
community college administrators by providing programmatic strategies and resource information with which to meet the vocational education needs of LEP students.

**Background**

The population of the United States is changing dramatically. The United States is becoming an increasingly more linguistic and culturally diverse nation. Between 1980 and 1990, the Asian-American population more than doubled and the Hispanic-American population increased by more than 50%. According to the 1990 Census, nearly 32 million people speak a language other than English at home, an increase of almost 9 million (38%) since 1980 (Crandall, 1993).

Today, in the Los Angeles Unified School District, more than 50% of the students speak a language other than English at home (Crandall, 1993). Adult education also presents a similar demographic profile. According to Crandall (1993), in 1980, there were 6.8 million adults of LEP; by the year 2000, that number is expected to grow to 17.4 million. The total adult-level ESL enrollment increased from 432,000 in 1986-87 to 587,000 in 1989-90. The average daily attendance (a.d.a.) increased from 73,000 in 1986-87 to 85,000 in 1989-90. This trend is also expected to continue well into the 21st century (California State Department of Education, 1993).

The above figures have definite implications for ESL programs for adults and their instructional goals. Meeting the linguistic needs of these adult learners is important.
for the future of the United States. Recognition of this fact has prompted the expansion of existing ESL programs and the development of new educational and vocational programs. As the community of LEP adults has expanded and changed, so have the programs designed to meet their needs. Specialized ESL instructional models have been developed to meet specific learner needs, such as life skills ESL, vocational ESL, and academic ESL (California State Department of Education, 1990).

**Purpose of the Project**

The purpose of the project was to present a handbook which will be sound, concise, practical, and efficient for community college administrators to plan instructional programs for LEP students enrolled in vocational college programs. This handbook presents effective techniques for providing vocational education to LEP students in a community college setting. Various models and approaches are discussed and compared for instruction. The scope of the program includes both the English language and vocational instruction. Further, the support services that provide LEP students with the competence to enter and progress in a selected career field are also included in the program.
Significance of the Project

In a summary report issued by the Adult Education 2000 Project, it is estimated that ethnic and racial minorities, who have less education and greater learning needs, will increase their numbers from what was 22% of the population in 1970 to 59% by 2020 (California State Department of Education, 1993). This project was developed in response to the growing national need to provide ESL instruction to LEP vocational students. Effective vocational ESL programs are beneficial to both individuals and to the communities in which they live.

Definition of Terms

**Bilingual Vocational Education** -- Refers to programs which are designed to enable individuals with limited English proficient to acquire the necessary job skills by using two languages as the medium of instruction. An integral part of these programs is the teaching of vocational ESL.

**ESL** -- English as a Second Language - the teaching of English to persons whose native language is not English.
ESP -- English for Special Purposes - ESP emphasizes the specific English structures and discourse styles as well as the specific vocabulary required by various professions.

LEP -- Limited English Proficient - any member of a national origin minority who does not speak and understand the English language in an instructional setting well enough to benefit from educational programs. LEP persons have English as their second language.

VESL -- Vocational English as a Second Language - VESL is to provide non-native English speaking students with English necessary to complete vocational training successfully and secure and keep a job.

Vocational Education -- A training process that prepares one for work. The education and training of students in the skills required by our constantly changing technical workplace. Vocational education includes any education that prepares students for employment.

Organization of the Project

This project is divided into four chapters. Chapter One provides the background, purpose of the project, significance of the project, definition of terms, and organization of the project. Chapter Two consists of review of related literature. Chapter Three
outlines the methodology that includes population, objectives, resources, and handbook design. Chapter Four provides the conclusions, recommendations, and recommendations for future studies. The handbook follows Chapter Four as an appendix. There are five major sections in the handbook: Introduction; Planning Programs; Instructional Options, Components, and Strategies; Instructional Staff Development; and Program Evaluation.
Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

Introduction

A variety of literature was researched in preparation for Vocational Education for the Limited English Proficient: A Handbook for Community College Administrators. It was first necessary to find literature references that described history, philosophy, instructional methods of vocational education, and vocational teacher certification for those who are new to the field. Other aspects of the literature review concerned second-language learning theory, mission of ESL, VESL and how VESL differs from general ESL, academic ESL, and prevocational ESL.

History of Vocational Education

According to Roberts (1965), “The history of vocational education is the history of man’s efforts to learn to work” (p. 31). As described by Friedenberg and Bradley (1984), during the infancy of the United States, a limited number of ways to train for jobs were available. Apprenticeship was the most widely used method. However, with the coming of the Industrial Revolution in the 1860s, apprenticeship was too slow to meet
demand, and factory methods needed a different profile of changing skills (Copa & Bentley, 1992).

The Morrill Act of 1862 (the establishment of the Agricultural and Mechanical colleges) played a large role in clarifying the image of vocational and industrial education in the United States by providing manpower capable of meeting the needs of a rapidly developing industrial nation. By the late 1800s, industrial and vocational training became a formal part of many schools across the nation. Schools began preparing students in occupational areas such as trade, business, and agriculture (Walters, 1986). The programs were similar to those of today.

The Smith-Hughes Act was signed by President Woodrow Wilson on February 23, 1917. The purpose of the act was to provide federal financial aid for vocational education. The Smith-Hughes Act provided approximately 7 million dollars annually as a permanent appropriation for vocational education in the areas of agriculture, trades and industry, home economics, and teacher training (Wanat & Snell, 1980). The act is considered to be the most important single event in the history of vocational education (Walters, 1986).

According to the February 1992 issue of *Vocational Education Journal*, the Smith-Hughes Act created a Federal Board for Vocational Education to administer the new law’s provisions. States were required to create state boards for vocational education, which would prepare a plan, to be approved by the federal board, for
operation of state vocational education programs. The state or local community was required to match each dollar of federal money appropriated to the state. The February 1992 issue of *Vocational Education Journal* also discussed that the efforts of vocational education in 1917-1918 were largely devoted to the needs of the nation in World War I, which caught the country with its skills down. Vocational education classes offered that thousands of civilian workers in the war effort learned their skills and the workers put to good use in the post-war economy. Following the Smith-Hughes Act, many of federal bills supporting vocational education have been approved by the Congress. Following are highlights of federal legislation that have helped to mold vocational education to its present form.

The George-Reed Act of 1929 authorized additional increasing annual appropriations to a maximum of 2.5 million dollars over five years for vocational education in agriculture and home economics. The George-Elzey Act of 1934 authorized an appropriation of 3 million dollars annually for three years. Funds were apportioned equally for salaries of teachers, supervisors and directors of agriculture, trade and industrial, and home economics. The George-Deen Act of 1936 authorized on a continuing basis an annual appropriation of approximately 14 million dollars for vocational education in agriculture, home economics, trade and industry, and for the first time, distributive occupations. The George-Barden Act of 1946 amended and superseded the George-Deen Act of 1936. The act authorized 29 million dollars annually for vocational education and extended provisions of the Smith-Hughes Act and authorized
increased annual appropriations to the states. Funds for vocational education were authorized for agriculture, home economics, trade and industry, and distributive occupations (Wanat & Snell, 1980).

The Vocational Education Act of 1963 provided funds to assist states to maintain, extend, and improve existing programs of vocational education. The act provided instruction so that persons of all ages in all communities will have ready access to vocational training or retraining that is of high quality, realistic in relation to employment, and suited to the needs, interests, and ability of the persons concerned (Wanat & Snell, 1980). The Vocational Education Amendments of 1968 set up under the 1963 act to review its impact provided the basis for reauthorization of federal vocational education. The act earmarked funds for the disadvantaged, postsecondary, and handicapped. Consumer education was authorized as a legitimate vocational expenditure. The Vocational Education Amendments of 1968 also earmarked funds for new and expended cooperative vocational education programs (Wanat & Snell, 1980).

The Education Amendments of 1976 enabled the Commissioner to make grants to higher education institutions. The act specifically included funds for bilingual vocational training, in addition to bilingual vocational instructor training and bilingual vocational materials development. This is considered the most important legislation for bilingual vocational education (Friedenberg & Bradley, 1984).
The Carl D. Perkins Act of 1984 established funding authorization for a five-year period, and focused on improving vocational programs and serving special populations. The law was reauthorized in 1990 as the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act. This new Perkins Act brought the largest ever federal funding authorization for vocational education - up to 1.6 billion dollars a year through 1995 - with a major portion of funds earmarked for tech prep programs and greater opportunities for disadvantaged people (Vocational Education Journal, 1992). The School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 was passed to address the nation’s serious skills shortage through partnerships between educators and employers. The act gives every student the opportunity to sign up for a program that provides a clear pathway to a career. Also, the federal administrators hope school-to-work programs will alleviate the dropout problem by providing all youths enriched learning experiences and assistance in obtaining high-skill, high-wage jobs or continuing their education (Brustein & Mahler, 1994).

According to Copa and Bentley (1992), although the state and local funding contribution to vocational education was considerable, the federal government still had important power in setting direction, and focus on curriculum in vocational education. Significant impacts of federal legislation were to strengthen vocational education’s unique purposes to prepare for work.
The Philosophy of Vocational Education

According to Lynch and Griggs (1989), a philosophy for vocational education based on beliefs of what vocational education is and what it does for students and society:

"The basic beliefs--the philosophy--undergirding vocational education and vocational teacher education regularly needed to be examined to ensure that they remain viable in complex, dynamic educational and societal contexts. By beliefs, we include those concepts, ideas, and notions that are used to describe and fix in thought and language what vocational education is and what it does. As with most disciplines, they emanate from the perceived ideal, tested opinion, and common experience rather than solely from hard data or empirical research. Nevertheless, it is the philosophy or basic beliefs that undergird practice" (p. 4).

Lynch and Griggs (1989) also described the requirements for vocational education:

"Vocational teaching, and thus vocational teacher education, must not only be responsive to the learner’s needs and characteristics, but must also be relevant to the changing nature of work, changes in the workplace, new and emerging technology, and the needs of the employment community. This belief speaks to the challenge of educating the learner--regardless of
his or her academic, sociological, cultural, or economic situation—for meaningful employment acceptable within the infrastructure of the contemporary workplace” (p. 7).

Vocational Teacher Certification

Vocational teacher certification requirements are unique within the profession. To be a vocational ESL teacher, it is necessary to have an understanding of vocational teacher certification requirements. According to Friedenberg and Bradley (1984), vocational teachers must be prepared to teach students the skills that are actually needed by business and industry. Therefore, successful vocational teaching has always been perceived as the result of a combination of pedagogical and occupational competence.

Vocational teachers are required for certification to have actual work experience in the occupation that they teach. However, the amount of required work experience differs from state to state, and varies across the vocational program areas. Now, a growing number of states require baccalaureate degrees for all beginning vocational teachers. An increasing number of university vocational teacher certification programs are designed to encourage completion of a degree program even when this is not a requirement of the state. It should also be remembered that in some vocational program areas the vast majority of vocational teachers have always held at least a baccalaureate
degree before being employed as teacher (Friedenberg & Bradley, 1984). To be a vocational ESL teacher, it is also necessary to have at least a baccalaureate degree, adult basic education (ABE) credential, and/or vocational teacher credential, and/or second language proficiency.

Instructional Methods in Vocational Education

According to Friedenberg and Bradley (1984), individual students vary in ability and learning style, and in many other ways that may influence their performance in a learning situation. Vocational instructors have recognized the need to provide instruction designed to meet the different needs and abilities of individual students. Instructors have also recognized that it is difficult to meet the needs of individual students while using group methods of instruction.

The concept of individualized instruction is established in vocational education. The teacher in an individualized instructional program is a manager of learning who selects, modifies, develops, and provides a variety of instructional resources to tailor instruction to the particular needs of individual students (Friedenberg & Bradley, 1984). Friedenberg and Bradley (1984) also discussed that in an individualized instructional program, students are involved in a different learning activity. The teacher spends considerable time meeting with individual students or small groups, responding to questions, suggesting activities, and demonstrating skills.
According to Friedenberg and Bradley (1984), some of the most frequently used instructional methods in vocational education program include the following:

**Demonstration**  Most demonstrations involve the teacher showing how to perform a particular process. These demonstrations are followed by students practice of the process. Other demonstrations simply show a principle or concept in action and do not require students practice. Demonstration is probably the most widely used instructional method in vocational education.

**Field Trips**  Visits to places such as business, industry, museums, and institutes to observe some relevant activities or objects in their normal setting. Field trips often involve structured observations.

**Resource Persons**  Individuals from business, industry, or the community are invited to speak to the class on professional experiences or to demonstrate processes, or products.

**Discussion**  Generally small-group problem analysis followed by consideration of alternatives and selection of the most viable solution.

**Oral Questioning**  The teacher asks students questions. The purpose is to require creative and thoughtful responses by students.

**Learning Packages**  Individualized, self-instructional kits contain all the instructional materials and resources that are needed for a give sequence of instruction.

**Laboratory**  The instructional technique and physical facilities in which students make practical applications of principles and concepts learned in the classroom.
Structured Observation  Structured observation involves preparing students to gain meaningful insight from observation of individuals in real-life situations. Students are prepared prior to the observation so that they know what to look for in order to obtain the greatest value from the observation.

Programmed Instruction  Written or tape-recorded individualized instruction that involves (1) providing the student with a small amount of information, (2) having the student actively respond to that information, and (3) giving the student feedback regarding the appropriateness of his or her response.

Second-Language Learning Theory

According to a spokesperson from the California State Department of Education (1993), “Administrators of ESL programs should ensure that those who select staff and learning resources for their programs recognize the differences between teaching English to native speakers and teaching English as a second language” (p. 4). In teaching English as a second language, emphasis is placed on the use of the language, not merely on talking about the language. No single method is used to the exclusion of other methods because students come from a variety of educational backgrounds and have diverse life experiences and learning styles (California State Department of Education, 1993).

A spokesperson from the California State Department of Education (1993) also described that in the ESL classroom, the context of language use determines the syllabus.
All communication in the classroom is conducted in English, except for short explanations to individuals or to the class when all students speak the same native language. Instructional activities emphasize the communication of meaning and move from modeling and guidance by the teacher to student-to-student interaction. Instructional materials and strategies provide opportunities for students to listen and show comprehension without speaking and stress meaning rather than form.

Mission of ESL

According to a spokesperson from the California State Department of Education (1992), the mission of ESL programs for adults in California is to equip students with the language and cultural proficiencies required for the eventual fulfillment of personal, vocational, academic, and citizenship goals, so that they may participate in the United States society. To fulfill this mission, ESL administrators must ensure that ESL programs will:

* Provide nurturing low-anxiety learning environments that foster the “risk-taking” that leads to language fluency and enhance the self-esteem of learners.

* Integrate language acquisition with relevant life experiences and stress the importance of critical thinking, problem solving, and self-sufficiency.

* Develop students' proficiencies in listening comprehension, speaking, reading,
and writing.

* Provide students with the skills to use appropriate English in social, work-
related, and academic settings.

* Use proficiency standards for assessing the major accomplishments of the
students (California State Department of Education, 1993, p. 17).

How VESL Differs

In order to help the reader to understand the uniqueness of the vocational
situation, it is important to describe the differences among VESL instruction and other
types of ESL programs. The following provides a discussion of general ESL, academic
ESL, and prevocational ESL.

General ESL

The goal of the general ESL class is to provide learners with opportunities to gain
knowledge of, and better control over, the environment that governs their daily lives as
they are learning English (California State Department of Education, 1990). In general
ESL classes, students learn the language and language skills - listening, speaking,
reading, and writing - in the context of real-life situations. Every attempt is made to
recreate situations that students will face and for students to practice tasks that are related
to their lives outside the class (California State Department of Education, 1993).
**Academic ESL**

According to a spokesperson from the California State Department of Education (1993), “An academic ESL program focuses on skills or competencies that students need to succeed in an academic program. In academic ESL, students develop such study-related skills as note-taking, outlining, dictionary use, library use, and test-taking” (p. 7). The learners are directed to some higher form of education, such as preparation for college or university entrance. The students of academic ESL learn the skills necessary to compete with native English speakers in situations in which a more formal knowledge of English is required (California State Department of Education, 1990).

**Prevocational ESL**

The purpose of this program is to provide learners with the English language necessary to survive in the United States community. The content and sequence of instruction are usually situational, including such topics as “calling a doctor,” “understanding banking and checking practices,” “using public transportation,” “finding out about health care,” and “job hunting” (Friedenberg & Bradley, 1984).

**VESL (Vocational ESL)**

The purpose of VESL instruction is to provide non-native English speaking students with English necessary to complete vocational training successfully and secure
and keep a job (Career Resources Development Center, 1994). Vocational ESL requires the integration of vocational and linguistic objectives. Vocational ESL begins with a review of the contexts and tasks of the job and assesses the appropriate linguistic skills. The most important structures and vocabulary that must be understood or used in that job are identified (Crandall, 1979).

Friedenberg and Bradley (1984) indicated that effective VESL programs contain three essential elements:

1. VESL programs are based on job-specific language with little concern for grammar and vocabulary.

2. VESL programs actively involve the students in communicative learning activities which approximate the language situations found on the job and in the vocational classroom.

3. VESL programs are provided simultaneously with bilingual job skills training (either bilingual vocational education or on-the-job training).

Summary

VESL instructors should work closely with vocational instructors. A good relationship between VESL instructors and those vocational instructors is essential to a successful VESL program. Understanding vocational education and being able to use its
language correctly will help VESL instructors in building positive relationships with vocational instructors. In this Review of Related Literature, the first four sections explored a brief history and philosophy of vocational education, and examined the unique requirements for vocational teacher certification and instructional methods in vocational education. Section five reviewed the second-language learning theory. The literature indicated that in teaching English as a second language, emphasis is placed on the use of the language, not merely on talking about the language (California State Department of Education, 1993). Section six reviewed the mission of ESL. The mission of ESL programs for adults in California is to equip students with the language and cultural proficiencies required for the eventual fulfillment of personal, vocational, academic, and citizenship goals, so that they may participate in the United States society (California State Department of Education, 1992). Section seven studied that how VESL differs from general ESL, academic ESL, and prevocational ESL. Section eight concluded that the purpose of VESL instruction is to provide non-native English speaking students with the English necessary to complete vocational training successfully and secure and keep a job (Career Resources Development Center, 1994).
Chapter Three
Methodology

Introduction

This chapter details how the project was carried out. The population that will be served by this handbook is described. Further, the handbook objectives and resources are discussed. The handbook design is also outlined. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Population

The handbook is intended for community college administrators working with LEP students in vocational education. The population to be served by this handbook is community college administrators who are involved with instructional programs for LEP students enrolled in vocational and pre-vocational college programs.

Objectives

The primary objective of this handbook was to outline how community colleges are successfully providing LEP students with programs that combine the English
language and vocational instruction. As a result, LEP students in these programs are able to gain the necessary competence to enter and succeed in the United States workplace. This handbook is a guide to assist community college administrators in designing vocational education programs which meet the special needs of LEP students.

Resources

The content of this handbook has been extracted from the existing resources which list at the end of the project. Telephone interviews with effective programs and services administrators were selected from El Camino College, San Diego Community College, and San Francisco Community College, which provided ideas and examples need in this handbook.

Handbook Design

This handbook is written for community college administrators who are involved with instructional programs for LEP students enrolled in vocational and pre-vocational college programs. There are five major sections in this handbook: Introduction; Planning Programs; Instructional Options, Components, and Strategies; Instructional Staff Development; and Program Evaluation.
Community colleges face the challenge of serving an increasingly culturally diverse student body. This challenge is magnified by the skill and educational requirements of a competitive global economy. Effective programs and support services for LEP students are critical to meeting the challenge. This handbook outlines how community colleges are successfully meeting these challenges by providing LEP students with programs that combine the English language and vocational instruction. As a result, LEP students in these programs are able to gain the necessary competence to enter and succeed in the United States workplace.

Section one \textit{Introduction} focuses on basic concerns that include understanding the diverse demographics of the LEP students, appreciating and welcoming culturally and linguistically diverse students to the community college, structuring instructional programs to meet the needs of LEP students, and balancing institutional mission, resources, and capabilities. Section two \textit{Planning Programs} offers the considerations for planning and establishing programs for vocational students who speak English as a second language. This section provides some of the necessary steps to planning successful programs in support of LEP student participation in vocational education. This section also identifies faculty and staff to effectively serve LEP vocational students.

Section three \textit{Instructional Options, Components, and Strategies} presents the basic vocational program options for short-term job training and longer-term credit programs. The section continues with a variety of language instruction components that can be implemented either independently to address particular student needs or as part of
an overall program strategy. The section concludes with four major program strategies commonly used in community colleges to provide LEP students' needs.

Section four *Instructional Staff Development* discusses that the instructional staff, both ESL and vocational, require inservice activities and experience to develop effective techniques for working with LEP vocational students. Section five *Program Evaluation* provides information on the essentials of program evaluation. Clearly stated goals and objectives, and a good evaluation plan provide the basis for a successful program, but commitment and flexibility on the part of community college administrators and faculty are vital to assisting LEP students to be successful in vocational education.

This handbook presents effective techniques for providing vocational education to LEP adults in a community college setting. The scope of program includes a sequence of the English language and vocational instruction combined with support services that provide LEP students with the competence to enter and progress in a selected career field.

**Summary**

This chapter discussed the population to be served for this handbook. The methodology consisted of a discussion of the handbook objectives and resources. Discussion of the handbook design was presented.
Chapter Four

Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section presents the conclusions. The second section contains recommendations. The third section specifies recommendations for future studies.

Conclusions

The United States continues to be a nation of immigrants. California is the home for many immigrants, many of whom come from countries that reflect the socio-political-economic unrest of the times. The demand for ESL classes is great and will continue well into the 21st century. Mastery of the English language is one of the greatest challenges for adults in California's English as a second language classes. Adult who have effective communication skills in English will further their own opportunities for social and economic growth.

Community colleges that offer programs for LEP students need to employ instructional staff who have professional preparation for facilitating second language learning among LEP students. Such staff can serve the needs of LEP students and can assist them toward the development of communicative competence and fulfillment of personal goals.
This handbook is a guide to assist community college administrators in designing vocational education programs which meet the special needs of LEP students. The handbook focuses on planning programs; instructional options, components, and strategies; instructional staff development; and program evaluation which help to facilitate learning for these LEP students, regardless of their language backgrounds.

Recommendations

The recommendations are considerations for those who are interested in serving vocational ESL students in community colleges. Administrators are directly involved with support services and related functions for LEP vocational students, such as admissions officers, academic testers/assessors, career counselors, academic advisors, financial aid personnel, and job placement staff. Senior level community college administrators, state educational policy makers, college trustees, and other community and government leaders concerned with enabling LEP students to attain work-related language and technical skills through the community college system will find important considerations for decision making in this handbook.
Recommendations for Future Studies

This handbook is the baseline for the following recommendations for future studies of serving vocational ESL students in community colleges.

1. Studies on multicultural considerations encompasses the diversity issues of not only serving LEP students but embracing the bigger question of how to move the entire campus towards a multicultural community.

2. Studies on support services completes the picture with institutional responses needed to supplement instructional efforts.

3. Studies on collaboration within the college and with external agencies extends the network of resources for programs and services for LEP vocational students.

4. Studies on funding policy considerations balances the institutional resources with the financial aid available to LEP vocational students.

Summary

This chapter described the conclusions and recommendations of the project. Recommendations for future studies were presented.
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VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR THE LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT:
A HANDBOOK FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE ADMINISTRATORS
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Community colleges face the challenge of serving an increasingly culturally diverse student body. This challenge is magnified by the skill and educational requirements of a competitive global economy. Effective programs for LEP students are critical to meeting the challenge. The LEP student population encompasses racial as well as ethnic diversity among groups of students that include immigrants, refugees, migrant laborers, dislocated workers, displaced homemakers, Native Americans, and American-born non-English speakers.

* The Census Bureau estimates that the LEP population in the United States is presently between 3.5 and 6.5 million individuals. By the turn of the century, these demographers estimate that more than 40 million Americans will be non-native speakers of English.

* The Department of Labor (DOL) projects that almost one-quarter of the new workers in the United States labor force will be immigrants by 2000.

The second part of the challenge is educating LEP students for the changing scope of skills required for success in the workplace.

* Recently published reports on the New American Economy stress the competitive technical skill requirements for the work force of the new
global economy.

* The DOL Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) outlines a three-part foundation that encompasses basic skills, thinking skills, and personal qualities, plus five competencies that include the ability to productively use resources, interpersonal skills, information, technology, and organizational systems.

This handbook outlines how community colleges are successfully meeting these challenges by providing LEP students with programs that combine the English language and vocational instruction. As a result, LEP students in these programs are able to gain the necessary competence to enter and succeed in the United States workplace.

**Meeting the Challenge**

LEP students face a variety of challenges and barriers to entering and successfully completing vocational programs at community colleges. Some of these obstacles mirror those faced by other adults and economically disadvantaged students. Barriers unique to LEP students stem from their struggle to adjust to a new culture and acquire a new language.

In order to achieve successful program initiatives, colleges need to eliminate and circumvent barriers to entry for LEP students. Potential barriers need to be anticipated at each stage of the student's progress in the college process: entering college, attaining the
necessary prerequisites, participating in the program, completing the program, and finding meaningful employment. Comprehensive planning requires systematic verification of a student’s standing and level of progress at each step in order to ensure appropriate referrals to academic as well as support service departments serving the LEP students. Assessment considerations need to include aiding adult students with family issues, providing individualized support services for students who are mentally or physically challenged, and helping overcome societal or institutional discrimination based on gender, age, or ethnicity.

Tracking recruitment and admissions as well as program progress and participation of LEP students in vocational programs provides essential planning information. This data also documents the college’s effectiveness in serving LEP students. Documentation of student progress and outcomes, combined with community-based needs assessments, significantly affects government funding patterns (federal, state, and local).

Benefits

Documenting the positive impacts of LEP vocational education programs on local and/or state economies is essential to gaining future support for the programs. Making the community aware of the benefits from such programs enables the college to be perceived as an active partner in the local or regional economic development process.
Programs and activities for LEP students also contribute to the cultural diversity of the college, enriching faculty, staff, and students. In order to reap these benefits, the college must scrutinize its institutional perspectives and develop systematic plans to promote multicultural awareness both among faculty, staff, and students and in the wider community. For example, community colleges often find that the benefits of programs and courses for LEP vocational students go far beyond the initial goals of the program.

Expected benefits might include:

* Improved English proficiency test scores
* Increased refugee/immigrant enrollments in college certificate and degree programs
* Improved retention and program completion rates
* Added funding and average daily attendance for the college
* Higher employment rates and better jobs for graduates

Additional benefits community colleges have received through serving LEP vocational students include:

* Increased capacity to do international training
* Lowered community welfare rates
* More small businesses in the community operated by former students of the programs
* Increased prestige for the community college due to participation in federal or state programs for LEP students
* Added cultural diversity, which enhances the educational experiences of all students
* More interaction with and contribution to the wider college community

Community colleges have met many challenges while enabling their students to gain the necessary skills and self-assurance to build successful careers. Extending the community college opportunity to LEP students means meeting new challenges. Welcoming a culturally and linguistically diverse population of students mandates building a multicultural campus. Programs require careful evaluation and redesign for LEP students. Finally, the institution needs to find a new balance among resources, mission, and capabilities.
Section 2

Planning Programs

Community colleges are responding to the presence of LEP students in a variety of ways. Some are offering ESL in preparation for entry into college, others are providing short-term job training, and many are offering a full range of services to students speaking English as a second language who are in vocational programs.

This section discusses the considerations for planning and establishing programs for vocational students who speak English as a second language. The following steps are necessary to planning successful programs in support of LEP student participation in vocational education.

Step 1: Identify Needs of Community and Students

* Analyze labor market needs

* Identify potential employers of LEP students

* Assess general client population needing improved language and technical skills

Step 2: Build Institutional Support

* Meet with relevant deans and faculty
* Meet with potential employers of program graduates

* Identify other relevant stake-holders

* Meet with community organizations and schools involved with target populations

* Meet with leaders in potential student peer group

Step 3: Design Program

* Identify all appropriate and necessary program services

  -- instructional (VESL, basic skills, technical skills)

  -- counseling, employment placement, follow-up

  -- cultural awareness, work readiness

  -- support services (child care, transportation, health, financial aid)

* Identify appropriate location for service or program delivery

* Identify instructional and noninstructional personnel

* Plan for funding, establish preliminary budget

* Establish contacts with community resources for information, materials, and faculty and staff development

* Establish an advisory group or panel
* Designate a position responsible for oversight of program components

* Designate a liaison person for each component

* Develop a plan for linkage with resources outside the college and for coordination between academic departments (for example, ESL and vocational instructors) and student services (for example, bilingual counselors, immigrant counselors, and regular student advisement and counseling staff)

* Develop outreach and recruitment plan

Step 4: Design Instruction

* Analyze content of vocational or academic courses where applicable

* Set program goals and objectives

* Determine curriculum competencies and needed courses

* Determine class size, number of classes, and grouping of students by
  -- language level
  -- vocational goal
  -- individualized instructional plan

* Establish entry/exit criteria
* Arrange class schedule

* Identify appropriate class setting (vocational classroom, college classroom, learning laboratory, other)

* Arrange for necessary facilities and equipment

* Identify instructional staff qualifications and job descriptions

Step 5: Implement Program

* Recruit and assess students

* Develop instructional plans

* Provide cross-cultural and other training for instructors working with LEP students and for others, according to college goals

* Provide ongoing staff development and time for planning, materials development, and coordination between departments

Step 6: Plan Evaluation

* Establish evaluation questions in relation to project goals and objectives

* Develop a data collection plan, instruments, and procedures
Identify Instructional Staff

Identify instructional staff with the necessary skills, commitment, and flexibility to work effectively with LEP students. Specific skill requirements for instructors will vary according to the vocation selected and the program model identified. In general, community college instructors successful in working with LEP vocational students require:

* Competence in the vocational area and the English language proficiency
* Cultural sensitivity to LEP students
* Expertise in vocational education, bilingual education, or ESL
* (For bilingual programs) Ability to communicate with students in students’ native language
* Ability to adapt instruction for LEP students without lowering academic standards (The exit competencies must be the same for all students; only the method of communicating the content varies)
* Willingness to make an effect to learn about students’ home cultures and educational systems
* Ability to resolve conflicts between the community college environment
and the home culture in a positive manner

Community college LEP vocational program staff agree that vocational instructors need special support in working with LEP students and that some training in the instruction of LEP students is helpful. Coordination is necessary between ESL and vocational instructors to plan instruction and to provide support in handling special needs of LEP students. Having the ESL classes located in the same building as the vocational training to facilitate interaction between vocational and ESL instructors is helpful. Frequent contact with other LEP program staff on an informal basis to talk about student problems and progress is also valuable.

This section provided the necessary steps to planning successful programs in support of LEP student participation in vocational education. Careful needs assessment, clearly stated goals and objectives, and a good evaluation plan provide the basis for a successful program, but commitment and flexibility on the part of community college administrators and faculty are vital to assisting LEP students to be successful in vocational education.
Section 3

Instructional Options, Components, and Strategies

This section presents the basic vocational program options for short-term job training and longer-term credit programs. This section continues with a variety of language instruction components that can be implemented either independently to address particular student needs or as part of an overall program strategy. The section also describes four basic program strategies currently being used at community colleges: ESL followed by a mainstream vocational program; Pre-vocational ESL (Pre-VESL) followed by a vocational program with VESL support; ESL/Pre-VESL followed by a vocational program with concurrent VESL; and Bilingual Vocational Training (BVT).

Basic Program Options

Many community colleges serve LEP vocational students in one of two program types:

* Short-term job training, usually beginning with some preliminary Adult Basic Education (ABE) and/or ESL and usually noncredit

* Longer-term certificate or degree programs that require more advanced language and
literacy abilities and components

Short-Term Job Training

Short-term job training programs leading to immediate employment are often operated by a separate center from the main campus and are usually not integrated with the semester credit programs or schedules. Students begin with intensive ESL, supplemental ABE, and sometimes general vocational ESL classes with emphasis on employability skills before beginning job training. The job training programs are either held at the center where the pre-vocational classes are held or at a technical center that offers a greater variety of more technical programs. These technical centers often work with both public funding sources and in coordination with local industries or unions to provide training for industries' labor demands and to place graduates in jobs. The training programs may include VESL classes and academic support such as tutoring and learning labs, and may have on-the-job training. The main focus of these programs is developing language and vocational skills for the workplace.

Certificate and Degree Programs

Certificate and degree programs follow semester schedules and usually require at least three semesters for a certificate and four semesters for an associate degree. Students are often required to have a high school diploma before entering or completing
the program. These programs usually have higher ESL and Adult Basic Education (ABE) skill requirements for entrance and completion than do noncredit programs.

The programs can be implemented using any of the components or strategies discussed in this section, but unlike the short-term job training programs, whose primary focus is the workplace and job placement, these certificate and degree programs have the additional goal of increasing students' English language and academic skills for further vocational and technical education.

Degree vocational programs are certainly geared toward preparing students for employment and often include internships or cooperative education options where students study and work in alternative periods, as well as job placement services. These programs may also present the clear option of continuing the student's education in the same field at a four-year institution to receive a bachelor's degree before seeking employment. This can be promoted by coordinating a transfer program or through more formal articulation arrangements.

Cooperative education and internships are particularly valuable to LEP students. The work setting allows LEP students to test their language skills in a real-world environment and potentially to identify areas for improvement that were not as evident in the classroom setting. Employers also have the opportunity to evaluate possible future employees and strengthen the relationship between employers and college staff.
**Language Instruction Components**

LEP student needs and program strategies may require a variety of language instruction components, each of which is appropriate in different circumstances. The following figure describes types of vocational ESL and language instruction that are taken either in preparation for or concurrent with vocational instruction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
<th>USE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VESL</td>
<td>ESL emphasizing vocabulary, language, and communications skills relating to a specific vocational area and/or workplace</td>
<td>Used in many forms to assist LEP students in entering and completing vocational programs, and in gaining employment and succeeding on the job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Employment VESL</td>
<td>General VESL with content based on the workplace and how to get a job</td>
<td>A preliminary course before or after job training programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Adult Basic Education (VABE)</td>
<td>Adult Basic Education (ABE) for LEP students who lack basic skills, with emphasis on math,</td>
<td>As a preparation course before job training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Type</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster VESL</td>
<td>VESL relating to a group of vocations rather than one, such as health care professions or office occupations</td>
<td>Taught before or with a vocational program as an introduction to related vocabulary and to develop vocation-related communication skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional VESL</td>
<td>VESL, which is usually vocation-specific, taught as an introduction to the vocation and using vocation-related language</td>
<td>Taught before the vocational program, often followed by VESL support center services during the program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge Course</td>
<td>A course taught as an introduction and orientation to a vocational field</td>
<td>Taught before the vocational program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English for Special Purpose(ESP)</td>
<td>ESL related to a vocational area, either as vocation-specific VESL, or content-based ESL with the vocational area as the vocational area</td>
<td>Taught either as preparation for a vocational program or simultaneous but not day-to-day concurrently with the vocational training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>Content Studied</td>
<td>Taught Just After or Before the Vocational Class on a Daily Basis, Dependent on Close Coordination for Maximum Effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concurrent VESL</td>
<td>Vocation-specific VESL accompanying vocational training with very close coordination between the VESL and vocational classes to facilitate reinforcement of vocation-related language skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual Instruction</td>
<td>The use of students’ native language along with English (or sometimes instead of) as the medium of instruction</td>
<td>Essential to the bilingual vocational training model, where content courses are taught in a native language initially with progressively increased use of English; in some bilingual education models, the native language use and skills are maintained and developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Program Strategies

This section describes four basic program strategies currently being used at community colleges:

* ESL followed by a mainstream vocational program
* Pre-vocational ESL (Pre-VESL) followed by a vocational program with VESL support
* ESL/Pre-VESL followed by a vocational program with concurrent VESL
* Bilingual Vocational Training (BVT)

In the above strategies Pre-VESL refers to VESL courses, such as pre-employment VESL and cluster VESL, that are offered to LEP students before they begin a vocational program, to prepare them for it. All of these program strategies can be used with both noncredit and credit vocational programs.

ESL Followed by a Mainstream Vocational Program

This program strategy is the most common and the simplest to implement. Colleges usually offer general grammar-based or academic ESL in three to seven levels, which LEP students must complete before entering a vocational or academic program. ESL preceding short-term programs may have a basic skills focus. In credit programs, the ESL classes at each level may also be divided by language skill area (i.e., reading, writing, listening, speaking, and grammar). This strategy is based on the premise that
LEP students must attain a high level of the English language skills before they can benefit from vocational or academic programs. LEP students in these programs use adapted mainstream academic and support services. This program strategy requires little institutional adaptation other than the development of an ESL program that assists students in developing their English skills to an advanced level.

Although this strategy is somewhat restrictive for LEP students' vocational aspirations if it is the only option, most lower-level LEP students do require some ESL before they are able to benefit from vocational programs. The preliminary ESL can be presented from a content or vocationally oriented perspective and provide a more relevant context for vocational student ESL study. In whatever type of ESL class is being taught, the instructor can still use materials, examples, and exercises with a workplace or vocational focus. The following figure presents advantages and considerations related to using this approach.

| Figure 3.2  ESL Followed by a Mainstream Vocational Program |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| ADVANTAGES                      | Simplicity of implementation; one program serves all LEP students. |
| CONSIDERATIONS                  | Vocational LEP students may have to go through semesters or even years of academically oriented ESL before entering a desired vocational program. Some will lose interest during this period and drop |
out, failing to see the relevance of the general ESL to their vocational interests. Also, this approach is more expensive for the college and students in the long run.

Pre-VESL Followed by a Vocational Program with VESL Support

Low-level LEP students may begin with general ESL and then take a pre-vocational ESL course. The pre-VESL course is either:

* Pre-employment workplace-oriented (for short-term programs), which emphasizes job interviewing and application writing skills, the United States workplace culture, on-the-job communication skills, etc.; or

* Cluster VESL (for degree programs), which is introductory VESL tied to a vocational area such as health professions or business occupations.

Students then enter the vocational program, which may or may not be adapted for LEP students, but is supported by a VESL lab and tutoring center, and by adapted program-specific support services. The premise for this strategy is that LEP students cannot wait years while improvement their ESL skills to enter a vocational program, and that with some preliminary VESL and on-going support, LEP students can succeed in vocational programs. The following figure presents advantages and considerations when using this pre-VESEL with VESL support approach.
| ADVANTAGES | LEP students enter vocationally relevant ESL early on and usually remain highly motivated. Students will complete this program sequence more quickly than a comparable ESL and mainstream vocational program sequence, making it more cost-effective and able to serve more students. This strategy works well with LEP students from a number of different language backgrounds who are in different vocational programs. The VESL approach is an optimal choice when there are not large numbers of LEP students in any one vocational program or of any one language group, but enough in one broad vocational area to make cluster VESL feasible. |
| CONSIDERATIONS | This approach requires staff capable of developing pre-VESL curriculum and materials, setting up and running a VESL |
ESL/Pre-VESL Followed by a Vocational Program with Concurrent VESL

This strategy is similar to the previous VESL strategy from a theoretical perspective, and begins with ESL and/or one type of pre-VESL. This strategy may also include VESL academic support and makes other support services available to LEP students. The key difference is the addition of an ongoing (concurrent) VESL class, which is usually taught day-to-day with the vocational classes, (one to three hours of VESL to two to five hours of vocational instruction including lab or shop).

The VESL class focuses on teaching and practicing the vocationally oriented language used in and needed for vocational instruction, but usually does not teach the vocational skills. The VESL class is vocation-specific, and the instructor is required to coordinate with the vocational instructor so that students learn the vocational language in the VESL class immediately prior to using it in the vocational class. This way, VESL vocabulary is reinforced in the vocational class. The following figure presents advantages and considerations of this approach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADVANTAGES</th>
<th>This strategy has all the advantages of the</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.4 ESL/Pre-VESL and a Vocational Program with Concurrent VESL</td>
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</table>

support center, and coordinating between the VESL instructors, center staff, and vocational instructors.
first VESL strategy, plus the added benefit of the concurrent VESL. This component allows students to get vocation-specific language as they need it for vocational training, with the two courses complementing and reinforcing one another. This feature also allows students with lower general ESL ability to successfully participate in a vocational program. The approach is optimal when there are large numbers of LEP students in one vocational program, whether they are from the same or different native language groups.

Close coordination between the VESL and vocational instructors is mandatory for this approach to be effective. Without day-to-day coordination, students will not get vocation-specific language instruction when they need it, and valuable opportunities for reinforcement during
VESL classes and practice of vocation-related language during hand-on training will be missed. If the LEP students all speak the same native language, this approach does not take advantage of that language as an additional medium of instruction, i.e., does not use bilingual instruction.

**Bilingual Vocational Training**

The Bilingual Vocational Training (BVT) model is also designed to assist LEP students in gaining vocational skills while learning related the English language skills. A major difference between BVT and the VESL models is that the students’ native language is used as a language of instruction. Usually, beginning vocational courses are taught in the native language while students also take VESL courses. As students’ English language proficiency improves, more instruction in the vocational classes is done in English, though the native language may still be used for explanation or clarification. By the end of the course sequence, all vocational instruction is conducted in English. The following figure presents advantages and considerations of BVT programs.
Figure 3.5 Bilingual Vocational Training

| ADVANTAGES | A major advantage to the BVT model is that LEP or even non-English-speaking students can take full-fledged technical and vocational courses in their native language while they develop their related English skills. The content will transfer to English usage later, and students do not have to wait to study their chosen vocational field. |
| CONSIDERATIONS | Unlike the VESL strategies, BVT takes advantage of the native language, but the program must be conducted with LEP students who all speak the same native language or else must have adequate staff and materials to operate the program in more than one native language. Instructors and support staff must be fully bilingual. |

No one program strategy, language instruction component, or even program option is always the best choice for the LEP student or the instruction. Colleges must
select and adapt programs to meet the specific needs and goals of particular LEP students, as well as those of the college, in relation to specific vocational training and available jobs. The aim for a college serving LEP students in vocational education is to develop and adapt programs and courses that will provide LEP students with the maximum access to, participation in, and completion of vocational programs as quickly and effectively as possible.
Section 4

Instructional Staff Development

Staff development is needed for all instructors. The purposes of this section are to focus on two key groups of instructors who work with LEP vocational students: ESL instructors and vocational instructors.

ESL Instructors

Many ESL instructors have an orientation towards teaching ESL in an academic context as a sequence of grammatical structures. Some instructors have also worked with ESL students in the context of survival skills and basic ESL competencies. A few are more experienced with the workplace and have taught job-readiness ESL or some type of VESL.

Most ESL instructors are experienced in cross-cultural awareness and related classroom activities, and in techniques and strategies for working with LEP students. However, LEP vocational students may be of different language backgrounds and with different needs than those of foreign students. For example, a typical foreign student would be from a developed country, or from the upper classes of a developing country, and would have a high level of education, though not necessarily English skills. Foreign
students usually begin in an academic ESL program in preparation for an academic college program. LEP vocational students are more likely to be immigrants, often with little formal education, lacking oral English and/or literacy skills. These LEP students need vocationally-oriented ESL, basic skills, and vocational training to get a job.

Staff development activities for ESL instructors should focus on understanding the United States workplace and facilitating LEP students' adjustment to it, as well as the language and literacy needed for specific vocational areas. Activities could include:

* Reviewing how to get a job
* Familiarizing themselves with ESL workplace and VESL texts
* Visiting vocational classes to observe the functional context of language use, to be used in developing appropriate VESL materials
* Meeting and discussing concerns with vocational instructors
* Sharing teaching strategies with vocational instructors
* Analyzing vocational texts and materials for language, literacy, and vocabulary that can be taught in a more general workplace/vocational context in an ESL class
* Adapting vocational materials for use in an ESL class
* Developing awareness of the cultural, educational, and social backgrounds of LEP vocational students
Vocational Instructors

For vocational instructors, staff development needs to include strategies for working with LEP students, and cross cultural awareness and sensitivity. Vocational instructors need to focus on some of the same areas as ESL teachers, including working with other teachers—in this case ESL teachers—and adapting vocational materials for LEP students.

Strategies and techniques that have worked well for vocational instructors include focusing on cultural and language needs such as:

* Understanding the process of second language acquisition
* Respecting and understanding students' cultural backgrounds
* Presenting and discussing the culture of the United States workplace
* Arranging for bilingual assistance if necessary
* Giving LEP students the time they need to finish speaking and writing
* Allowing time for listening and checking comprehension
* Adapting teaching and presentation styles to be more comprehensible to LEP students by:
  -- using gestures and visual aids
  -- repeating and reinforcing key terms
  -- using simple, clear speech
-- explaining new terms and idioms of the workplace

* Using adapted texts or adapting reading for appropriate ESL levels by:
  -- simplifying idiomatic and culturally specific expressions
  -- reducing the number of long complex sentences
  -- turning procedural sections into logically ordered lists
  -- explaining and highlighting key points and terms
  -- omitting unnecessary details
  -- adding examples and illustrations
  -- including practice exercises

Other strategies and techniques often used by vocational instructors and reported as being effective with LEP students promote effective teaching in general, such as:

* Having high expectations of students
* Giving students tasks where they will succeed and build self-esteem
* Getting feedback from students and giving it to them
* Using pictures, demonstrations, and props
* Developing worksheets and vocabulary practice exercises to accompany vocational texts
* Giving students overviews, study guides, and content summaries
* Making office hours less intimidating
To effectively serve LEP student groups, community colleges need to reassess and adapt materials, teaching strategies, and institutional policies. These adjustments should not be seen as peripheral or optional, but are central to the college’s mission of serving its community.
Section 5

Program Evaluation

Community college efforts to support LEP student participation in vocational education range from offering different types of ESL classes, to offering specialized support services, to offering an entire program that provides a full range of services directed toward LEP vocational students. This section is particularly addressed to the latter, but the strategies included may be used to evaluate a course or a curriculum or the work of a bilingual student services counselor.

A good evaluation has the following characteristics:

* It is based on a careful plan developed by a qualified evaluator
* An advisory panel, college administration, and program faculty and staff are involved in specifying the evaluation questions and assisting in data collection
* The purpose and audience of the evaluation are clearly specified
* Data collection is done at appropriate times and in standardized ways
* Reports are written to provide practical information for program improvement and to inform college policy
Planning the Evaluation

Using an outside evaluator to conduct an evaluation improves the reliability of the process. Program staff, assured of anonymity, can discuss issues of concern, and the results are more likely to be unbiased. The program evaluator should meet with the advisory panel and other community college stakeholders to specify the audience for the evaluation. At this meeting they should also review the program goals and objectives, and specify the evaluation questions and the data to be collected in order to answer those questions.

**Evaluation Questions**

Evaluation results should provide answers to these general questions:

* Is the program fulfilling the purpose for which it was designed?
* Was the program implemented as designed or were adaptations made in the design?
* How is the program benefiting students? (the target group and other students)
* How is the program benefiting the college?
* What has contributed to program successes? Weaknesses?
* What changes should be made in the program to make it more effective?

Program stakeholders will be aware of issues of concern in relation to the various program components and be able to formulate specific evaluation questions regarding those issues. For example, if a program has been developed to meet the needs of Asian students and has recently had a number of European enrollments, the evaluation would
need to ask questions regarding the appropriateness of the curriculum, support services, and ESL levels for this new population. If the program has specific job placement goals and a change in the job market has occurred since the program was implemented, the evaluation should look at job placement data in the light of these changes.

Evaluation planners should:

* Specify evaluation objectives and questions
* Determine which program components fall within the scope of the evaluation
* Review the program goals and anticipated problem areas
* Identify data sources and appropriate data collection strategies
* Specify staff responsibilities and resources
* Set the evaluation schedule

Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives for the evaluation will vary depending on where the program is in its development process. New programs will want more of a formative evaluation focus to provide information about needed changes for program improvement. In such an evaluation, program components are studied in relation to goals and objectives, discrepancies and problems are identified, and recommendations for modifications are discussed with program developers and staff. A well-established program may be ready for a summative (outcome-focused) evaluation report on student and program outcomes and benefits to the college and community. It may wish to make
policy recommendations to the college concerning future programming or issues that the college as a whole needs to address.

*Collecting and Analyzing the Evaluation Data*

Clear, simple forms and data collection instruments should be developed either jointly or by the evaluator and then reviewed by the program staff responsible for collecting the data. Whenever possible existing forms such as attendance records, student test score reporting forms, and grade sheets should used.

Data regarding program implementation can be collected by:

* Observing program activities
* Interviewing or surveying administrators, instructors, and participants
* Examining program records, such as student enrollment, attendance, and grades

Data needed on program outcomes will depend on program goals, but may include student grades, test scores, instructor evaluations, interviews, and job placement data.

Program outcome data should be examined only after enough time has elapsed for goals to have been met. They will vary by the type of program, for example whether the program provides short-term vocational training or whether it provides preparation for and support during vocational training in pursuit of a certificate or degree.

The following figure highlights the kinds of program outcomes that may be tracked.
Figure 5.1 Student Outcome Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES</th>
<th>LATER FOLLOW-UP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Number of completers</td>
<td>* Number employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Achievement of vocational</td>
<td>* Salaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>competencies</td>
<td>* Number receiving higher wages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Improved English proficiency</td>
<td>or job promotion since</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Job placement data:</td>
<td>initial reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--number placed in field of</td>
<td>* Number still in certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vocational training</td>
<td>or degree programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--number placed in related field</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Number entering degree or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>certificate program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Student grade point averages,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attendance, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Evaluation Report

Data analysis must be done according to a plan compatible with the evaluation goals and audience. They should be analyzed to describe program:

* Environment

* Participants
* Activities and services

* Outcomes

* Plan and extent to which it was followed

* Goals and objectives met/not met

The evaluation report will describe the program accomplishments, identify the most effective elements of the program, discuss areas that were problematic and need modification, and describe the outcomes of the program’s services for students and for the college. It will also document how the college and the community environment, services, and activities contributed to the accomplishment of each of the program’s goals and objectives. Finally, it will provide recommendations for program improvement.

The following are key factors to program success:

* Serving LEP students is seen as important to meeting the mission of the community college.

* Administration, faculty, and staff are committed to meeting the challenges of serving LEP students.

* Qualified faculty and staff are identified or trained.

* Programs and services are carefully planned and congruent with goals and objectives.

* Programs are integrated into the vocational or technical divisions of the college or are well-coordinated with them to facilitate student transfer to certificate or degree programs.
* Appropriate student services such as career counseling, ongoing guidance, and job placement are available.

* Multicultural issues are addressed throughout the curriculum and by offering cross-cultural training for faculty, staff, and students.

* Committed leadership on campus advocates for and addresses the needs of LEP students.
References for Handbook


