Extending TESOL Research Findings to Community-Based Language Classrooms: New Directions for Indiana ABE (Adult Basic Education) Programs, Instructors, and Policy

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Community-based ESL programs typically offer free or low-cost English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction to adult language learners in contexts such as libraries, churches, or schools. These programs may include government-funded Adult Basic Education (ABE) courses for language learners, courses funded by private grants, or programs organized by community volunteers. However, though ESL programs at the community level offer language instruction to learners who could not access it elsewhere, such as immigrants and refugees with limited resources, community-based ESL programs remain inadequately staffed, underfunded, and under-represented in TESOL research. This article argues that TESOL professionals across a variety of contexts (K-12, university, and community) need to reexamine approaches to community-based ESL instruction in order to extend the gains of TESOL research to some of the field's most disenfranchised learners.

Community-based ESL programs are under-examined and under-served areas of TESOL for a variety of reasons. First, most researchers work in university contexts and therefore have greater access to university-level language learners, which leads a more robust body of literature on language learning at the post-secondary level. Funding is also an issue. Learners in community-based ESL programs are often not able to sustain the programs economically, like tuition-paying students in university and business-English settings are able to. Therefore, even securing funding for curriculum and instructors, let alone for research, proves strenuous in community-based contexts. Moreover, graduate programs provide funding for teaching assistantships in university English departments and English as a

Second Language departments, while teaching at the community-level remains an unfunded endeavor for busy graduate students.

Finally, there are limited job opportunities for TESOL professionals wishing to work with adults at the community level. In Indiana, ABE (Adult Basic Education) programs include government-funded courses offered to adult language learners as well as native speakers of English. ABE programs in Indiana are supported through the Indiana Department of Workplace Development (DWD) and "provide math, reading, and writing instruction free of charge to help [learners] acquire the skills needed to earn a GED, go to college, or enter an entry-level occupational certification program" (Indiana Department of Workforce Development, 2013). However, though at least six Indiana universities offer robust graduate-level TESOL degree and certification programs that prepare graduates to work with ESL learners, ABE programs in Indiana systematically do not hire professionals with TESOL certification to work in these programs unless they also have a K-12 Indiana Teaching license. So in sum, highly qualified instructors of ESL are not being hired to work in government-funded adult ESL programs and may only find paid teaching positions in community-based ESL programs supported by private grants.

As a result of these circumstances, TESOL professionals trained to work with adults are often only able to reach professionally into their own community on a volunteer basis, which prevents adult language learners from reaping the full benefits of best practices in language teaching and learning. Despite the paucity of community-based ESL funding and research, the demand for language instruction in these contexts persists, particularly for immigrant and refugee learners who lack access to high-cost language courses. It is time for TESOL professionals in Indiana to dialogue seriously about how to more effectively address the needs of the field's most disenfranchised language learners.

In this article, I argue that university-level TESOL professors, community-based ESL instructors, and policy-makers must reexamine approaches to community-based ESL instruction in order to more effectively extend the gains in TESOL research to the (often immigrant and refugee) adult language learning community. I aim to begin a dialogue between Indiana instructors, program administrators, policy-makers, and students. I begin by introducing the challenges

facing community-based language classrooms on systemic, community, and individual levels. Next, I present an example of an innovative community-based course resulting from a partnership between the Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library and IUPUI's graduate TESOL program. Finally, I propose questions for program developers at the community level to consider as well as next steps towards improving the context of community-based settings for teachers and learners in Indiana.

ISSUES IN COMMUNITY-BASED ADULT ESL

Local Need and Accessibility

There are tens of thousands of potential adult English as a Second Language (ESL) learners in Indiana. The population of Indiana ESL learners is especially concentrated in Indianapolis and Marion County. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2013b), 7.9% percent of Indiana's population and 11.7% of Marion County's population reported speaking a language other than English at home between 2007 and 2011. Although many of these individuals also speak English, 3.2% of the population of Indiana (nearly 200,000 individuals) and 6% of the population of Indianapolis (nearly 50,000 individuals) reported speaking English less than "very well" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013a). Many immigrants and community members perceive English as the much-desired key to economic mobility and access to opportunities and resources within the community (Parrish, 2004; Hayes, 1989); however, family and work obligations coupled with economic circumstances may lead many of them to seek instruction in a community-based setting, rather than a university.

Although Indiana's population of non-native speakers of English is growing, community-based language courses available to adults with limited English proficiency are limited in the area. In Indianapolis, for example, refugee resettlement agencies offer survival English classes to their clients during their first months after arrival, and IndyReads, a non-profit literacy organization, trains volunteers to provide free "basic literacy tutoring to illiterate and semi-literate adults," including language learners, but long waiting lists limit the numbers served. A few local churches, schools, and libraries in Indianapolis and surrounding counties offer ESL courses, usually staffed by volunteers. However, these volunteer-run programs often

close prematurely when the demands of program administration and teaching are no longer sustainable by volunteers or when attendance is low. And these volunteers, while well-intentioned, often have little to no training in ESL. A list of ABE classes across Indiana can be found at the Indiana Department of Workforce Development (2013) website, though the course information often changes before the website is updated.

Learners who are willing and able to pay to learn English have more options than learners who are economically disadvantaged. There are a variety of for-profit English centers in Indianapolis, including ELS (English Language Services) and the Indy Foreign Language Academy, which cater mainly to university students, businesspeople, and travelers, charging a prohibitive $250 to $1700 for a six-week session ("Indy Foreign Language," n.d.; ELS, n.d.). Even some community-based programs require proof of residency, upfront costs for placement testing, or materials to be purchased by the student. Some of these requirements are necessary to satisfy funding sources, such as federal grants, even though requiring identification could deter undocumented language learners from ever entering class.

Marginalization of ABE Programs, Instructors, and Students

Community-based adult ESL programs tend to have a lower status than their counterparts at the university or K-12 level, which impacts staff and funding (Sticht, 2000; Cristoph, 2009; Ross, 1995). First, funding for a full-time staff is not often available for community-based programs; these programs cannot even promise job security and instead remain "[d]ependent on external funding sources, such as 'soft money' grants by government agencies, and thus condemned to uncertain long-range prospects" (Ross, 1995). Furthermore, "[s]alaries are seldom high enough to attract teachers to make a professional commitment to the program; instead, full-time professionals tend to congregate in the materials development and assessment end of the field. Thus, on the instructional side, turnover is high, reliance on adjuncts excessive and morale low" (Ross, 1995). The lack of program funding and prestige for adult ESL practitioners "permeates all aspects of adult literacy instruction, from staffing of programs to record keeping and curriculum development" (Cristoph, 2009, p. 82). In sum, community based ESL programs struggle with low funding and prestige on a systemic level.

Recognizing that the need for adult instruction does not disappear when funding is low, communities accommodate their adult language learners by relying on tutoring programs and classes taught by volunteers. On one hand, learners who have access to a tutor benefit because, in addition to easing financial concerns, scheduling is more flexible and curricular materials can be catered to the needs of each individual learner (Cristoph, 2009, p. 104). Volunteers also provide valuable classroom assistance that reduces the student-teacher ratio. However, many volunteers and tutors organizing and teaching in adult programs have little or no training in SLA (second language acquisition) theory and methods. This is unfortunate because successful teaching acts are informed by principled theories (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, pp. 17-18), not simply native teachers of English. In addition, scheduling classes requires finding time, space, and teaching materials suitable for the diverse group of adults that will be taking them. Volunteers (whether TESOL professionals or civic-minded community members) are rarely able to commit the time needed to fulfill needs related to administration, intake, and childcare, let alone teaching classes of different levels. Finally, TESOL programs often train graduates to adapt a critical stance towards language teaching, so curriculum priorities shift when instructors are not trained in TESOL. Instead of simply teaching learners in a workplace English course to fill out job applications and follow verbal safety directions, for instance, an instructor employing a critical stance may ask learners to reflect on reasons a worker may be pressured to do something unsafe or compromising on the job, and discuss ways they can help transform unsafe working conditions. In sum, volunteer-taught ESL programs address funding barriers but also run the risk of omitting the stability and high-quality instruction that facilitate language acquisition.

In Indiana, systemic marginalization of community-based instructors is rooted in unexamined policy regarding hiring eligibility for teaching positions in Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs. Until 2011, ABE programs funded by the Indiana Department of Education were required by state law to hire teachers with a K-12 teaching license, regardless of whether they were trained to work with adults. The sole explanation for this policy was that other teachers hired to work in government-funded programs (i.e., K-12 school teachers) were required to have a valid K-12 license, and the requirement was not changed for ABE programs. After 2011, when the Department

of Workforce Development (DWD) took over administration of ABE programs, they lifted this requirement at the state level, but allowed programs to impose teacher licensing restrictions at the local level. Unfortunately, ABE programs in central Indiana have persisted in enforcing the K-12 licensure requirement. As a result, graduates of TESOL MA or certification programs, who are trained to work with adult language learners, are excluded from teaching in Indiana ABE programs, even though the degree is widely recognized by institutions of higher education in the United States and abroad. This is unfortunate because marginalizing highly qualified ESL teachers by denying them the opportunity to teach in such programs marginalizes adult learners by extension.

Community-based language learners are often inadvertently marginalized by their instructors, volunteer assistants, and program directors. At times, they are blamed (or even blame themselves) for high drop-out rates (Quigley, 1997), when in reality, the drop-out rates are complex and may result from low self-confidence (Hayes, 1989), lack of time (Gallo, 1971), transportation (ibid), gender norms of their home cultures (Brod, 1999), and domestic violence (Frye, 1999), to name a few. Instead of assuming learners' lack of attendance reveals a lack of interest, program developers can avoid marginalizing learners by adopting a self-reflective stance and considering how to target the specific needs of individual groups of immigrants through location, childcare, neighborhood and workplace ESL programs, and a non-school format (Hayes, 1989). Moreover, instructors can unintentionally marginalize learners by focusing on "survival" themes while "fail[ing] to address a deeper need of adult ESL students: the need to be engaged on the level of their intellect and humanity, rather than on the level of their limited second language (L2) proficiency" (Carr & Snell, 2012, p. 67). Instead, a skilled instructor can promote language development through themes such as poetry or current events, allowing students to feel "acknowledged, respected, and empowered" (Carr & Snell, 2012, p. 68).

Course Evaluation and Accountability

Community-based language programs face an absence of accountability and assessment tools connected to instruction. The lack of useful assessment tools exists in part because funding streams are not influenced by TESOL best practices. Funders, therefore, often privilege quantitative outcome data on numbers served over relevant

evaluations of quality. As a result, assessment has been painted in some adult ESL literature as a necessary inconvenience, "something the students [have] to endure for the sake of funding" (Balliro, 1989, p. 1). To make the inconvenience less painful, programs frequently turn to standardized tests because they are "easy to administer to groups" (Center for Adult, 2002, para. 4) and "satisfy demands for accountability" (Auerbach, 1990, p. 203). However, some of the most important impacts of ESL instruction on adults may not be directly or neatly measurable and include affective gains, use of the language outside the classroom, personal growth, increased effectiveness at work, or the ability to make changes in their lives (Lytle, Marmor, & Penner, 1986). Measuring affective variables requires a wealth of time and resources to which community-based programs may lack access. These resources may include funding, a researcher trained in qualitative/ quantitative research methods, extended access to the learners, and significant time. In addition, standardized testing can be "stressful and anxiety-provoking;" it judges learners "on the basis of what they can't do rather than what they can do" (Auerbach, 1990, p. 207). Along with test anxiety, many adult students may not have had much schooling in their home countries, and psychometric assessments do not showcase their vast achievements.

Mandated assessment may also consume precious instructional time. Language learning is time-consuming, and it takes extensive, broad instruction in order for learners to "demonstrate gain on a standardized test" (Center for Adult English Language Acquisition, 2002). Burt and Saccomano (1995) argue that even 40-60 hours of ESL instruction is an insufficient amount of time to "accomplish substantial progress in English language proficiency" (Issues section, para. 1). In a course developed by Auerbach (1990), for example, assessment activities "became an extended instructional unit in itself, sometimes taking weeks" (p. 212). But adults may only have a couple of hours per week to devote to language learning due to external (program offerings, location, cost) and internal (work and family obligations) factors.

Despite the drawbacks of assessment, teachers and community stakeholders should be genuinely concerned with how "students are progressing" (Balliro, 1989, p. 1), but understanding progress may require changing the object and means of assessment. Auerbach (1990) recommends that programs should broaden their definition of

assessment to include teachers, program design, course materials, and community impact, as well as student progress (p. 204). She further recommends a variety of measurements, such as oral interviews, observation, collections of student work, and self-reporting to allow for the documentation of "subjective, intangible changes which aren't amenable to quantification" (p. 210). Community-based language teachers must therefore find creative ways to assess learning and integrate assessment into the curriculum. Deliberate assessment is critical; the choice to rely on shallow pre- and post-tests or number of hours students attend class will impact curriculum, instructional priorities, and accessibility for students.

Summary of Challenges and Concerns

As the literature cited above indicates, Adult ESL and community-based education programs face unique challenges. They are often neither well-funded nor compulsory nor credit-bearing; learners come and go as time commitments and life circumstances allow, bringing with them different expectations and experiences that practitioners may not anticipate. Literature also indicates that learner needs are rarely consulted in curriculum design or assessment. Because community-based literacy programs are under-researched and underfunded, there is a scarcity of models that are meaningful to learners, sustainable, and grounded in research. Instead, courses are often facilitated by well-intentioned volunteers. In the next section, I describe how a community-based organization partnered with a university TESOL program to address these challenges and more effectively reach learners in community-based contexts.

LEVERAGING TESOL PROGRAMS AND GRADUATE STUDENTS: "ENGLISH FOR…" AT THE INDIANAPOLIS-MARION COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

In 2011, IUPUI English department addressed the need for free, pedagogically sound ESL classes for adult language learners in the community by collaborating with the Indianapolis Marion-County Public Library (IMCPL), whose mission in part is to "foster reading and learning and promote the social, economic, recreational and lifelong learning interests of its diverse population" (Mission Statement, 2008). Jessica Moore, the library's immigrant outreach

specialist, approached the IUPUI English department and expressed that she felt ESL courses were a missing link in the library's mission to promote the learning interests of its large population of language minority patrons. In 2011, the library received numerous inquiries about ESL classes, but did not offer any language instruction. Moore believed access to English classes taught by TESOL professionals (or professionals-in-training) would empower adult English learners in the Indianapolis community to approach the demands of their daily lives with more confidence, comfort, and critical reflection.

Moore envisioned a series of month-long ESL course modules that addressed topics of interest identified by patrons whose native language is not English, such as "English for Family Literacy," "English for Medicine," and "English for the Workplace." She wanted these courses to be taught at any of the library's twenty-three branches across the county, targeting immigrant populations in their own communities, with the library providing classrooms, handling registration, and funding materials and an instructor salary. She hoped to draw instructors from the IUPUI English Department. At the time, there were thirty-eight active MA students and nine students enrolled in the TESOL MA and Certificate programs at IUPUI. The "English for…" courses proposed by IMCPL provided (and continue to provide) an opportunity for these graduate student teachers-in-training to gain meaningful experience designing and teaching community-based ESL courses.

Needs Assessment

Literature (Hayes, 1989; Buchinger Bodwell, 2004) indicates that adults attend ESL classes for a wide range of reasons, from finding better job opportunities to building a stronger social network with other immigrants. When planning for a community-based ESL class, one will not always know where the learners will come from, what their proficiency levels will be, what their needs are, or their age, gender, and family status. The learner needs assessment is indispensable because, as much as possible, instruction should be well-planned according to learners' specific needs and goals (Shanahan, 1995, p. 588). I conducted a pre-course needs assessment in the form of five spoken interviews before the course was offered. A total of thirty-one adults participated in the interviews. The adults came from a beginning ESL class at the Esperanza Center in Greenwood, Indiana, an intermediate and advanced class from an established community-based ESL program at

the Lafayette Adult Resource Academy in Lafayette, Indiana, and two sections of a basic computer skills class taught in Spanish at Central Library in Indianapolis. All of these settings were community-based and offered courses free-of-charge to learners. Respondents ranged in age from nineteen to fifty-nine with an average age of thirty-nine. They had been in the United States anywhere from one month to thirty years and had completed four to twenty-two total years of education in their home countries. Learners responded to questions about their educational and life background, goals, and experiences. However, as Nation and Macalister (2010) point out, needs are "not always clear and are always changing" (p. 30). Therefore, an ongoing needs analysis is critical throughout a course. As a result, the "English for…" program works with an evolving curriculum which is adapted each time the course is offered after assessing the needs of the participants consistently and through a variety of means, including interviews with learners and stakeholders, surveys, and studying the demographics of the target community.

The initial needs assessment informed course goals and objectives. Goals encompass the "main purposes and intended outcomes of [a] course," while objectives involve "statements about how the goals will be achieved" (Graves, 2000, pp. 75-76). Porter, Cuban, and Comings (2005) report that the average adult education student spends 70 hours a year in class, a humble time frame compared to the 100 to 150 hours typically needed to raise literacy skills by one grade level (p. 1). Therefore, it is unrealistic to expect dramatic gains during the short-term (four week, 8-16 hour) "English for…" course. Additionally, ESL programs have reported that 20% of students drop out of programs before completing twelve hours of instruction (Schalge & Soga, 2008, p. 152; Quigley, 1997, as cited in Comings, p. 234). Therefore, learners' experiences in this course, such as whether they feel respected and whether they feel the program meets their personal educational goals, are critical and could determine whether they pursue further instruction.

I divided the goals and objectives into three categories: content/navigation, language awareness, and personal growth. Context navigation describes how learners will use the language to navigate the specific context on which the course focuses. Goals under this category describe how learners perceive and accomplish specific functional tasks related to the topic at hand. In "English for the Workplace," these

navigational tasks include increasing workplace writing skills for the purpose of constructing a résumé or emails to the boss, but also how to respond to a racist interlocutor who claims a coworker's accent is evidence of incompetence. The second category, language awareness, embodies both general language awareness, defined by Kumaravadivelu (2003) as "an awareness of linguistic and sociolinguistic features governing language usage" (p. 156) and critical language awareness, defined as "an awareness of social and political factors governing language use (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, p. 156). In the "English for the Workplace course," for example, the first category of language awareness embodies the pragmatics of making (and rejecting) requests politely, while the second category includes discussion on workplace injustices and discrimination. Personal growth goals are drawn largely from the affective domain of Bloom's taxonomy (1956) and describe how learners recognize and capitalize on their strengths. This category promotes learner confidence in the status as non-native speakers of English and exposes them to community resources. Together, these three goals are important and will help adults not just communicate in the workplace, but also become more reflective and confident employees, community members, and learners.

DISCUSSION: COURSE IMPLEMENTATION

The pilot "English for the Workplace" was taught at two branches of the Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library. One class was offered Saturday afternoons from noon to two at Central Library in downtown Indianapolis. The other section was taught Monday evenings at the Haughville branch, located in a primarily Hispanic community on the Westside of Indianapolis. Most learners were native speakers of Spanish, but other native languages, including Ukranian and French, were represented. Learners ranged in age from thirty to sixty.

Lesson Plans

Lesson plans were targeted for learners at a high beginning proficiency level. The course provided picture dictionaries to each learner but did not incorporate a textbook, which resulted in several hours of preparation time for each hour of instruction. Lessons were designed to fulfill the objectives above and allowed adults to maximize learning opportunities by generating their own output and "chang[ing]

the course of their teacher's agenda" (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, p. 46) according to their own needs. In addition, all lesson plans were designed according to principles of second language acquisition (Hinkel, 2005; Mitchell & Myles, 2004; Brown, 2007; Kumaravadivelu, 2003). The course was designed to promote learner interaction, dialogue, and reflection. The curriculum offered abundant opportunities for small group work and reflection on learner goals. Furthermore, lessons encouraged learners to dialogue about critical and relevant issues, such as workplace discrimination and documentation, and introduced learners to pragmatic issues such as modal verbs and small talk customs. Lesson plans were revised frequently between and after "English for the Workplace" class meetings according to learners' needs.

Building Trust through Community

Community is one of the language classroom's greatest affordances to learners. In one "English for the Workplace" class meeting, students included Tina[1], who taught business at a university in her home country; Sandra, an employee at a local hospital who struggled with how to write e-mails to her boss or pronounce patients' names; Lucía, who worked in housekeeping and had only attended a few years of school in her home country; and Pedro, an older man who had a career as a judge in Venezuela but currently works in a warehouse. There was Claudia, who arrived in the States six months ago, Eduardo, who had raised his family in the US, and Guadalupe, a young mom who had been waiting for citizenship for ten years. In the pilot English for the Workplace Class, instructors built community by getting to know learners, allowing them to get to know each other by working in small groups, dialoguing about topics of interest to learners (such as maternity leave policies for new mothers) and constantly assessing learners' needs and what was going on in their lives outside of class.

When learners heard each other's stories, they built trust and revealed their unique needs and expectations. During an activity that involved defining and discussing benefits, learners in the pilot "English for the Workplace" course brought to the fore repercussions of immigration status on employment. One learner explained that she had worked a job under a false social security number for seven years. When she applied for amnesty and got documents to work, she presented them to her employer, who fired her. Her classmates responded by explaining that there is a way to appeal to the IRS for

the lost pension/social security taken from her paycheck. During another exercise, a learner shared that she once bought a car without realizing she needed to insure it immediately. Before she even got the title, someone totaled her car, and she took a significant financial hit. She shared the story to remind her peers that they needed to insure their cars right away. This output was not contrived; it was real, meaningful advice, shared learner-to-learner, in English. They were speaking to each other, not to the teacher, and giving each other advice the instructor never could have offered.

Furthermore, learners can serve as resources for each other inside and outside of class. Students in the pilot "English for the Workplace" exchanged contact information and agreed to meet for weekly conversation groups after the course ended. They also encouraged each other inside the classroom. "Practice in the classroom," an older man advised a woman who had recently arrived in the United States, "because the Americans are nice and will not laugh if you make a mistake." As learners dialogued, they affirmed the often invisible realities adult language learners face in their daily lives in ways a teacher could not.

Learner dialogue can also reveal valuable feedback about needs and goals. During the activity on politely declining requests, for example, a student raised his hand and said, "Sometimes, we get to a point where we know enough of the language to get by so we stop studying, and don't learn more vocabulary." This was an explanation of fossilization, defined by Brown (2000) as the "relatively permanent incorporation of incorrect linguistic forms into a person's second language competence" (p. 231). He continued, "And then when we want to use nice words to say "no," we don't know how, so we just end up shutting the person down. So this is very useful lesson to me. Thank you." These comments serve as valuable comprehension checks in classes that are almost always by nature characterized by students of varying levels. As Parrish (1999) writes, "[T]eaching multilevel classes does not mean preparing multiple lesson plans each day, rather, it's a question of providing multiple options within the same lesson plan" (p. 194). Listening to learners talk informally about what they are learning allows instructors to quickly assess progress of individual learners.

Since the pilot course in Fall 2011, the library has partnered with IUPUI to offer two "English for…" courses each semester in three communities in Indianapolis (including downtown, Southport,

and Haughville). Though the partnership did not address systemic issues, such as the ability for graduates to find a full-time position in an ABE program after graduation, the collaboration allowed TESOL graduate students and professionals to bring the gains of the field into the classroom.

NEXT STEPS: MODEL FOR FUTURE "ENGLISH FOR…" COURSES

It takes more than a community need and an enthusiastic volunteer to make an ESL course successful. A successful course will involve collaboration between the instructors, stakeholders, and community, productive policies related to hiring eligibility, and a commitment to critical language awareness, not just a curriculum of survival English. Without this collaboration, learners' needs will not be met. The instructor should be trained specifically in principles of second language teaching and be able to articulate how he/she will facilitate language acquisition through planned activities. The stakeholders must provide more than just funding or space; they must also be attuned to the community and the instructor's needs and willing to offer support. Finally, the most successful adult ESL courses are those in which learners—rather than funders or mass-produced textbooks—have the loudest say in determining course content and objectives. Below, I outline a list of considerations for community-based language course developers.

Know your own strengths and weaknesses.

Questions to ask before planning for the course:
- Who is my support system? How willing are the stakeholders to work with me to address the needs of the target population? Do I have other instructors with which I can discuss the course?
- How much time do I have to devote to this course? How much time will it take to make this course successful?
- What am I willing to do as a teacher? Am I willing to develop materials? Create advertising? Recruit learners? Read peer-reviewed journals?
- What do I believe about language learning and language learners? How will the way I structure this course reflect those beliefs?

- Do I know enough about second language acquisition to teach this course?
- What do I need from other people involved in this project? (i.e. Do I need to meet with them? Do I need clearly articulated expectations? Independence? Ideas? Moral support?)
- How will I ask for the things I need?
- How do I respond to challenges?

Communicate with the stakeholders.

Questions to ask stakeholders before planning for the course:
About course context:
- How many learners will there be? What is the proficiency level of the learners?
- How do learners intend to use the language?
- When are learners available? How will we recruit our target group of learners?
- Can we expect to have the same group of learners at each course meeting?
- Can you tell us about the room we will be using (can we hang things on walls, etc)
- Will childcare be available?

About resources and support:
- Is there any funding available? If so, how much? If funding comes from a grant, what percent will go directly to the program (i.e., salary, student materials, etc.) and what percent will be kept as overhead?
- What resources (whiteboard, projector, copier, etc.) are available for instructor use?
- How much time do you plan to devote to this course on a weekly basis?
- Will you be present during the course? What will your role be?
- What do you believe about language learning and language learners?
- Will someone be available during the course to help if technological issues arise?
- What do you know about the specific learners in this class?
- What do you need from me? Do you need lesson plans? Evaluations? Specific outcomes? What are the deadlines for the things you need from me?

Analyze needs.
   Develop a needs assessment tool to understand who your learners are, what they need from the course, and how you can provide it. Be realistic in your development of the needs assessment instrument, and remember that you may not be able to answer all the questions you would like to ask or communicate with your students before they enter the classroom. It would be ideal if learners always had good textbooks, if classrooms were equipped with technology, and if learners knew how to use the technology. However, this is not always the case, and teacher must take this into consideration when developing lesson plans. Turn to as many sources as possible, including experienced teachers, stakeholders, and published research from peer-reviewed academic journals. Give learners a voice in the needs assessment.

Write goals and objectives.
   Use what you know about learners' needs, stakeholders' requests, and the resources available to create an explicit list of accomplishable goals and objective for the sake of accountability. Share this list with learners so they will understand (and be part of constructing and revising) the classroom objectives and curriculum. Aim for objectives that are critically reflective, not just instrumental.

Consider theory and principles of language teaching.
   Language teachers understand that it takes more than just speaking a language natively to be able to teach it. A productive language classroom must be the "product of a teacher's experience and intuition grounded in reasonably sound theoretical principles of learning and teaching" (Brown, 2007, p. 8). As a teacher, it is crucial to remain a student of language teaching.

Connect to learners; let learners connect to each other.
   Adults enter the classroom voluntarily, with different backgrounds, and with a variety of goals. Express interest in them; make a concentrated effort to know their names, where they are from, and what they need to use English to accomplish. Then, find ways to let them connect with each other and share what is on their minds, even if it is not directly related to the task.

Never stop reflecting.

The language classroom is dynamic. No classroom will have the same learners; no group of learners will have the exact same goals; no good lesson plan will be executed the same twice. Zeichner and Liston (1996) warn that "not all thinking about teaching constitutes reflective teaching" (p. 1). Reflective teachers should be attentive to the social contexts in which they teach, be aware of the values they bring to the classroom, creatively solve classroom dilemmas, and collaborate with other professionals to address issues and solve problems (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, pp. 11-12).

Advocate for Learners and Instructors.

As long as instructors without TESOL training are teaching language learners in ABE programs, the gains in SLA (Second Language Acquisition) research will not reach the students in community-based settings. Furthermore, the positive results of programs such as the "English for…" partnership will be limited if the graduate students will not be able to seek employment in community-based settings after graduation. Language instructors must advocate for themselves and their students by urging policy-makers to address systemic issues, such as hiring eligibility, by permitting instructors with MA degrees or certification in TESOL to accept full-time teaching positions in ABE programs.

CONCLUSIONS

Teaching adults can be particularly rewarding for instructors. Adults have immediate needs, and when their needs are addressed, their achievement is visible and encouraging to learner and teacher alike, such as when the student in the "English for the Workplace" course noticed that their coworkers responded more positively when they began using modal verbs at work. Adults come to class by choice, and they make sacrifices to do so; as a result, they participate enthusiastically in class and express gratitude to the instructor. The instructor, in turn, can stretch learners to focus not just on their instrumental goals as language learners, such as writing a resume, but to reflect on more complex, less visible issues in language use, such as the reality of discrimination. Though modest in scope, the "English for…" program at the IMCPL, and others like it, has the

potential to impact some of Indianapolis' thousands of immigrants' lives in significant ways: By providing free access to quality English instruction, the program is offering adult learners greater access to the community, to other immigrants, to opportunities which require English, to participation in their children's and grandchildren's lives, and to confidence that they have much to offer the community. However, as this article reveals, TESOL practitioners in Indiana have progress to make in community-based language programs. In order to serve more adult learners more effectively, taken-for-granted approaches to community-based language instruction, including policy and hiring eligibility, need to be reexamined, and university-level TESOL programs need to invest research energy into these contexts. For these reasons, TESOL practitioners at all levels across Indiana need to begin the dialogue about how to more effectively extend the gains in TESOL research to this under-examined and often marginalized context of language learning.

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ENDNOTES

1   All student names are pseudonyms.

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