

Outreach Plan: ESL Group

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LIS 4005: Privilege & Equity

Targeted Community:

Orange County California is a large, diverse county in southern California with a population greater than several states in the US. Recent census data states that the racial demographics within the county show that white continues to be the majority race at 61%, with minorities breaking out to be Asian: 20.5%, “Other race:” 11.9%, Black or African American: 1.8%, American Indian and Alaska Native: 0.5%, and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander: 0.3%. Hispanics make up about 34%, overlapping with the other races (United States Census, 2020).

With such a broad range of cultures and races in a relatively small area, it’s natural that there is a wide variety of languages. The majority (54.4%) speak English only, but other common languages are: Spanish: 25%, Asian and Pacific Islander languages: 15%, and other Indo-European languages: 4.3%. Among all of these groups that speak a language other than English at home 19% claim they speak English less than “very well,” or over 500,000 of the population over 5 years old (United States Census, 2020).

Our program will be aimed at the group of non-academic adults who wish to improve their English in a non-academic environment.

Needs Assessment

Despite English not being the official language of the United States, having fluency and literacy in the majority language still correlates with higher information literacy skills (Macdonald, 2008). Second language students also suffer from higher library anxiety than native English speakers (Lombard, 2016). The needs assessment would be the first step in the project since its results will influence the objectives, the plan, and the marketing tactics.

Continued analysis of the census data will cross-tabulate the connections between English fluency, education level, and income cut by native language and town. Results will be able to tell us if this program is even necessary. If education levels and income are on par with native English speakers then the focus of the program would shift priorities and either identify other issues non-English fluent adults have in our community, or identify another targeted community to work with.

If the results line up with the hypothesis and previous literature then we will analyze which languages are the most popular in our county. Census data suggests the most common is Spanish, but if they are less affected by these differences as Vietnamese or Korean speakers then it would be more advantageous to focus our efforts on that group instead. Lastly we would identify a city or township in the county where this program would benefit the most patrons.

Once we finalize a location we can conduct further analysis on that specific group. For the purposes of this plan I will use Spanish speakers in Santa Ana (a central location in Orange County) as the key demographic for this specific program, although all will be welcome. We will conduct a brief online survey among library users in English and Spanish to assess their information needs. We would include questions such as “what are your goals for improving your english?” “what resources do you engage in at the library?” “where do you get your information (news, updates, personal communication) outside of the library?” along with interest in participating. This data would not be used to recruit participants, but to design the program.

Objective & Goals

By the end of the program participants will:

- Feel more comfortable speaking, reading, and listening to English.

- Reduce library anxiety among this group
- Understand how to utilize more library resources
- Know where to go to further their English skills even further if they desire

Plan

The library will be the primary location for the instruction, but will partner with local ESL professionals who specialize in Spanish to English ESL. The library will be liaison between the targeted community, understanding their specific language needs and working with the ESL team to create a lesson plan that can achieve the goals built from the secondary study. Topics covered could include: financial literacy, shopping, information literacy, basic conversation, and employment assistance. Based on the survey these topics would be covered to various degrees. Participants and the instructor would meet twice a week in a location at the library for 8-12 weeks. Each class would be made available for walk-ins, and while each lesson would build upon the previous, participants can freely enter/exit the program at no cost.

Some of the lessons would focus on library specific terminology and what it actually means in context of information seeking. For example, how “accessing the library” does not only refer to the physical location of the library grounds, but the virtual spaces it occupies and can be reached remotely (Teague, 2019).

Marketing

Marketing locations will be picked based on the initial needs assessment of where this group goes for its information. There will be flyers posted at the library, community college, recreation centers, and parks as well. The library’s website, newsletter, and social media presence will be updated to inform the community of the program a month before it begins. If budget allows and the needs assessment shows that local publications are commonly read by this

group we will advertise there as well. All marketing will be primarily in Spanish with key phrases and information in English.

Assessment

All participants will be emailed a link to an anonymous online survey at the conclusion of the program. Questions would include:

- Do you feel your English has improved since starting the program?
 - Yes, greatly,
 - Yes, somewhat
 - No
- How comfortable do you feel speaking English in the following settings? (5 point scale)
 - With friends/family
 - While shopping
 - At the bank
 - In a classroom
 - In a job interview
- How likely are you to return to the library to meet your future information needs?
 - Definitely will
 - Probably will
 - May or may not
 - Probably will not
 - Definitely will

The program will be determined a success if the majority (51%) of participants feel that the program somewhat or greatly improved their English, and that most feel comfortable in the settings we focused on.

References

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