Abstract

In order to accommodate an increasingly diverse population, community ESL programs which address the particular needs of adult immigrants are vital to the successful integration of these new residents. Immigrants who wish to become a part of the fabric of American society are often limited by their lack of language skills. The inability to communicate in English is a concern that is common to educators, health care providers and institutions, employers, law enforcement personnel, the court system, and other providers of vital services. Cultural enclaves, although they serve the purpose of providing a place of emotional security for new residents, do not effectively address integration into the larger community. This project demonstrates the value of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classes in providing part of the framework for successful employment of adult immigrant learners. The input of employers, educators, and learners is vital to the development of effective classroom materials. Discussion will include needs assessment, principles of adult learning, especially in the areas of speaking and listening, materials development in English for Specific Purposes, and the use of culturally familiar music in the classroom as an andragogical teaching tool. Discussion will also include reducing barriers to participation in the classroom, and address the issues of language anxiety and reticence.
Keywords: Adult ESL, English for Specific Purposes, Reticence, Reducing Anxiety, Culturally Familiar Music in the ESL Classroom, English for Adult Spanish Speakers.