

An Instructors' Toolkit for Building Bridges Across Communities

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WELCOMING
AMERICA



INTRODUCTION

Dear Colleague,

This toolkit is designed for adult educators who are interested in building more inclusive classrooms and communities. As educators, advocates, and community navigators, adult educators are often the most important champions in building welcoming communities. Our hope is that these activities offer a practical resource to strengthen your efforts and to help you make sure that learners feel a sense of belonging and connection.

These activities, designed to be used during Welcoming Week, focus on fostering deeper connections and appreciation for the rich diversity of adult learners and community members, including immigrants. By using these activities during Welcoming Week, you are joining a movement of people across the country who recognize that our communities are strongest when everyone who lives in them is valued.

Welcoming Week is a time to demonstrate how in communities from coast to coast—large and small, rural and urban—people of all backgrounds are coming together to create stronger communities. National Welcoming Week is a time to celebrate the values that unite us as neighbors, parents and colleagues, and to make our communities more welcoming to new Americans, and to everyone who calls our community home.

This toolkit has been developed by World Education, Welcoming America, and significant input from adult educators through an interactive session conducted in the spring of 2015. We are especially grateful to the authors, Andy Nash and Heather Ritchie, as well as to all of the instructors and program staff who helped us strengthen these activities.

In addition to using these activities, we hope you will take the time to officially join Welcoming Week by visiting www.welcomingweek.org and registering your activity as an event.

Every day, communities around the country and across the globe are recognizing that being welcoming makes them more vibrant, prosperous places for all residents. Together, we can make every community in America the kind of place where diverse people from around the world feel valued and want to put down roots. Together, we can build a nation of neighbors.

Thank you for joining us, and please don't hesitate to reach out to us for help making your Welcoming Week efforts a success!

Rachel Peric

Deputy Director, Welcoming America

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This toolkit is a set of activities that can be done in an ESOL/ABE classroom and with the broader community to help foster dialogue among individuals, share ideas across cultures, find commonalities, and create spaces for building lasting connections. In celebration of Welcoming Week, the toolkit supports interaction among immigrant adults and various other groups (local residents, health care providers, library patrons, parents, employers). It is built on the premise that through increased communication and dialogue, we can build stronger communities.

The activities presented here are a starting point designed to engage people in communication, both written and spoken, in order to broaden our awareness of one another and celebrate similarities and differences. They also develop language skills and cross-cultural knowledge by engaging language learners in authentic interactions with native speakers. They call upon skills that adults need in their everyday lives (small talk and conversation) and for college and career readiness (summarizing, categorizing, brainstorming). In this way, the lesson activities in the guide address student learning goals and complement the language practice that instructors are already providing in the classroom

The target level for these activities is low-intermediate and above because bringing together native speakers and beginning English speakers takes additional preparation and a greater commitment of time than most instructors have available. However, educators are skilled at adapting activities in many ways, and these activities can be adjusted for lower-level learners. In some places, we have made suggestions for this.

“Through increased communication and dialogue, we can build stronger communities.”

We know that time is valuable and that instructors need to plan it carefully, so we've noted the anticipated time commitment for each activity. They vary in the time needed for set-up and also the instructional time required - some will take a single class lesson while others can be multi-week projects that take a portion of multiple classes. In some cases, the activity relies on relationships with community partners that an instructor or the program already has in place (e.g., the instructor has a relationship with the local librarian, or the program has previously invited the health clinic to do a health fair on-site, or the program has started talking with employers about developing career ladders). These partnerships provide valuable support to immigrant adults and can be advanced by activities that bring them together to exchange thoughts and experiences, to play, and to learn from each other.

Finally, the instructions we've written for each activity aim for a balance between clear guidance and openness to local adaptation by the instructor for the context you are in. Using a standard format, we introduce the activity's purpose, logistical needs, and timeframe. Then we describe the steps for preparing, supporting, and extending activities that bridge classroom and community. We hope they are only the starting point, during Welcoming Week, for creative, year-round collaborations that help us all understand and appreciate one another better!

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WELCOMING WEEK ACTIVITIES

CROSS-CLASS

Description: This is an activity that involves an ESOL class and an ABE or ASE class. ESOL and ABE students often attend classes in the same building 2 or 3 times a week, yet may have few interactions. They are two groups that may have a lot of contact outside the classroom – possibly in their neighborhoods or in the workplace - and they potentially have a lot in common. But it's also possible that they don't interact much, and low-skilled residents may feel the most threatened by newcomers who need jobs. This activity gives these two groups a mechanism for getting to know one another and learning about each others' experiences.

In this activity, dialogue journals (either paper or digital) are exchanged between ABE and ESL students. This gives students a chance to read and write authentic text and to practice thinking about audience when they compose. The two groups also learn about each other by engaging in this extended dialogue.

Purpose: To build understanding across communities and discover their commonalities.

Audience: English language learners and ABE/ASE learners.

Logistics: The collaborating teachers need to figure out:

- Whether the journals will be done on paper or online
- The timeframe (a month of weekly correspondence, for example)
- How paper journals would get exchanged
- How to match writing partners across classes

Time: A half hour/week for reading and writing in the journals; another half hour/week for talking about what students are discovering and addressing language/writing questions.

Materials: Paper journals or access to computers for online correspondence.

CROSS-CLASS DIALOGUES

Classroom Steps

1. Prepare the class for this activity by explaining how their literacy skills can develop by corresponding with someone they don't know. They will have to:
 - Decide which topics they want to write about
 - Express themselves clearly
 - Use an informal but respectful tone
 - Consider and respond to their audience
 - Provide and ask for clarification

Make sure that students understand how this activity supports their learning goals, especially its relevance to work readiness.

2. In their respective classes, both teachers need to prepare their students for the task, thinking about:
 - How to write for this audience (e.g., someone who may not know much about your culture).
 - What they want their writing partner to know. And what do they want to ask them?
 - You might brainstorm some topics to talk about (as well as what's off limits, such as asking your partner for a date, personal questions, etc.). Clarify that you will be looking at the journals, periodically.
 - Ask what they would like to learn by corresponding with a partner. What might the whole class learn?
3. Have students each begin by writing an introduction of themselves. If they are not sure what else to write about, they can pick from a list of writing prompts to get started, such as:
 - Something you would like your partner to know about your culture.
 - A question you have about your partner's culture or the community.
 - What you are studying and why.
 - One thing you like about living in this community.
 - One thing that would make the community better or more welcoming.
 - Things you like to do or places you like to go.

CROSS-CLASS DIALOGUES

4. During the period of correspondence, ESL instructors can work with students on understanding and using new vocabulary or language structures; ABE instructors can work with students to write in ways that will be clear to non-native English speakers. Both instructors should be:
 - Debriefing regularly with students about what they are learning through the dialogue.
 - Supporting comprehension by working on reading strategies.
 - Using the opportunity to talk about generalizations – how to consider cultural differences without assuming that every difference is cultural.
5. Close the project by, for example:
 - Coming together to meet each other over a potluck meal.
 - Making a class gift (such as a thank you video) for the other class.
 - Writing a class letter about what you have learned from the other class.

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Description: The Community Survey activity is about finding out where the best places are in the community. And who knows this better than the long-term residents? People generally like sharing their wisdom, so this is potentially a way to have a very positive interaction across communities. It's also a way to practice superlatives! In this activity, language learners go outside the classroom to survey English speakers about community resources.

Purpose: To give language learners and the receiving community a positive interaction by having residence share their local knowledge. It also builds important communication skills and garners important information that newcomers need.

Audience: English language learners and English-speaking residents

Logistics: The teacher should prepare students for a situation that's challenging but not overwhelming. Ideally, you want student to get out into the community – to survey their neighbors and co-workers. But if students feel unsafe or unready for that, you can also stay within the program walls, conducting the surveys with program staff and other students. If the broader community is celebrating Welcoming Week, they may be particularly open to participating in this activity with English learners.

Some options:

- During class time, go together to a nearby shopping area where there are people to survey.
- Meet outside of class time (on a Saturday, for example) to go where people gather – the school soccer game, for example – to conduct the survey.
- If students have enough confidence, they can bring the survey to work or other places they cross paths with English speakers.
- If your program has ABE classes, visit those classes to conduct the survey.

Time: 1-2 hours to develop the survey and practice, 1-2 hours to conduct the survey, 1-2 hours to compile the results and organize them to share with others in the program.

Materials: The survey. A sample survey can be found on page 22.

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Classroom Steps

1. Prepare the class for the activity by asking them what they already know about good places to find various things in the community. Make a list of the kinds of “best places” they’d like to learn about from people who have lived here for a long time, such as the best playground, the grocery stores that sell various ethnic foods, the closest laundromat, the best mechanic, the cheapest gas, the best place to picnic, etc.
2. Prioritize the list to come up with 4-6 questions they’d like to ask in order to learn about local resources. You’re aiming for short questions and short answers so that they’re manageable for students to ask.
3. Give students time to rehearse and role-play asking each other the questions and writing down answers. Have them practice ways to introduce themselves to strangers and explain what they’re doing. Review how to ask for repetition, clarification, and spelling. It would be best for students to conduct the survey in pairs, with one person asking the questions and the other writing the answers, but some students may want to conduct the survey on their own at their workplaces.
4. Once the students have conducted their surveys, compile the information as a class. You can do this by typing up the survey responses as the students read them aloud. Or you can have the students type up their own survey data, using a tool such as [TodaysMeet.org](https://www.todaysmeet.com) to project the compiled responses on a screen.
5. To complete the project, the class can write up a summary of what they learned as a “Best of” guide to share with their peers on the program’s website, wiki, or other sharing site.
6. Finally, a great expansion activity, if you can do it, would be to visit the recommended places and evaluate the recommendations.

READING PARTNERS

Description: In this activity, language learners and members of receiving communities read one or two selected articles from *The Change Agent* magazine and then use the writing prompts to engage in an exchange of ideas, experiences, and perspectives about the article topic. There are eight articles to choose from – articles about moving to a new community, work, health, schooling, and parenting.

Purpose: The aim of this activity is to use text as a way to get people from different communities talking (through writing) about topics of common interest.

Audience: Language learners and partners from the receiving community. These “reading partners” could be local residents, health care providers who want to connect with immigrants about health, employers who are interested in hiring immigrants, or parents who share common interests and concerns.

Logistics: This activity is a little more elaborate in its set-up because it involves the recruitment of the community partners. It relies on using the existing connections and partnerships between adult education programs and community organizations (such as the health clinic or the PTA) for this recruitment (Programs might also use Welcoming Week as an inspiration for building some new partnerships!). The community partners could also be your regular program volunteers.

The request to the community partner is to provide 2-3 volunteers who would be willing to read an article (or two) and correspond about it with 4-5 students on an agreed upon schedule. The partner is only being asked to write twice: first in response to the article and its related writing prompt, and then a second time in response to the students’ letters. The students would be writing individually about the same prompt, and the community partner could write back to them as a group.

Time: 2 hours to read, discuss articles in class, and write to community partners; 2 hours to read and discuss in class what the community partners have written and then respond; additional time if a face-to-face meeting follows.

Materials: Selected articles from *The Change Agent* magazine. These articles can be found on pages 30-38.

READING PARTNERS

Classroom Steps

1. Based on student reading level and the community partner you are working with, select the one or two articles that you'll be using as shared reading. Send these, along with their related writing prompts, to the community reading partners.
2. If the article you want to use is too difficult for your students, consider using selected paragraphs or pulling out an evocative excerpt that students would be motivated to work through, even though it's challenging (excerpt recommendations are noted below; a teacher of lower level readers could pick out just one key sentence to focus on). Using text that is compelling but challenging for students addresses the College and Career Readiness Standards' emphasis on using increasingly complex non-fiction text.
3. Do all the reading support activities that you always do so that your students understand the text. Identify which aspects of text complexity will be challenging for your students: consider vocabulary, language structure, text structure and supports (subheads, graphics, etc.), and background knowledge. Do some explicit instruction in the areas that students need support. Work with the text until students understand the author's perspective and main points.
4. Then have students use the text-based writing prompts to write letters (via email) to their reading partners about the text and their own experiences and opinions. The reading partners will be doing the same.
5. When the letters from the community partners have been received and read, spend time in class discussing what the reading partners have said about the articles, and how it compares to students' own thoughts or experiences. Give students time and support in drafting their responses. For example, have them brainstorm three things they would like to say or ask in their responses and then elaborate, or have them free write a draft response and then conference with a partner to review their drafts for clarity, tone, and grammar.
6. This second letter ends the correspondence unless there is some interest on both sides to continue. However, these letters have laid a groundwork that can lead to further discussion face to face. Health care practitioners, for example, may be interested in visiting the class to continue talking about healthy living in a new culture; employers may offer to do mock interviews with students for practice; local residents, as part of Welcoming Week, might offer to host a potluck where immigrants and the receiving community can share a meal and conversation. Involve your program in thinking of ways to build upon the connections you have built.

READING PARTNERS

Articles and Writing Prompts

Immigration in My Community by Carl Barnes

Reading level: 6/7

(to shorten, use paragraphs 1 and 2, the last sentence of paragraph 3, and paragraph 5)

Prompts:

- In this article, Carl Barnes explains how he thinks immigrants strengthen his community. He said, “I have seen this with my own eyes.” What do you see in your community?
- Carl writes that he has, “worked with immigrants, played with immigrants, and gone to church with immigrants.” Where do immigrants and other residents mix in your community? Where do they not mix? Where would you like to see more mixing?

Advice to New Immigrants by Immigrants at Leon County Schools in Florida

Reading level: 4/5

(to shorten, select a subset of the 6 quotes)

Prompts:

- From your perspective, which is the best advice?
- What advice to new immigrants would you add?
- What advice would you give to a community that is receiving new immigrants?

Junk Food Easy to Find: Healthy Food, Not So Much by Gabby Martinez

Reading level: 6/7

(to shorten, use paragraphs 1, 3, and 4)

Prompts:

- In this article, Gabby Martinez says that her family doesn’t have easy access to healthy food. Her neighborhood has convenience stores but no supermarket or farm stand. Where is the healthy food in your community?
- How has your diet changed over the past five years (or since you came to the United States)? Do you think the diet in the U.S. is healthier or less healthy than your home country?

READING PARTNERS

Stay Healthy by Working Hard by Hawo Mhando

Reading level: 5/6

(to shorten, use paragraphs 1, 2, and the last sentence of paragraph 3)

Prompts:

- In this article, Hawo Mhando describes how the physical work she did in her home country made her healthy and strong. In the United States, she does not carry wood and water or walk long distances. She does not feel as healthy. How has your physical activity changed since you came to this country?
- What do you think of Hawo's advice? What are some other low-cost ways that people get exercise in this country?

Technology Connects and Disconnects by Marleny Salguero

Reading level: 4

(to shorten, use paragraph 1, the first half of paragraph 2, and paragraphs 3 and 5)

Prompt:

- In this article, Marleny Salguero says that she doesn't like the way "technology disconnects me from my family." She describes some good ideas for limiting her children's use of technology, but it is still a struggle. What else do you think parents can do to keep their families connected?

Uniforms? Dress Codes? Or Free Choice? by Adult Students from Massachusetts, Arkansas, and Missouri

Reading level: 7

(to shorten, select a subset of the 7 quotes)

Prompts:

- In your country, do children in public schools wear uniforms? Do you think this is a good idea? Explain your opinion.
- From the opinions of the authors, quote the one sentence you most agree with.
- In this country, who makes decisions about whether school children will wear uniforms? How can parents talk to these decision-makers?

What Inspires Me to Become an Architect by David Colon

Reading level: 6/7

Prompts:

- David Colon writes, "Once they saw that I was a good laborer, they started to teach me other things . . .". How are good workers given opportunities to learn where you work?
- What opportunities would you like there to be?

READING PARTNERS

Articles and Writing Prompts cont.

How Times Have Changed by Robert Berroa

Reading level: 8/9

(to shorten, drop the first and last paragraphs)

Prompt:

- In this article, Robert Berroa writes, “I have witnessed first hand how manufacturing has changed, and I know I must continue to adapt to this change.” What kinds of changes are happening where you work? What education and training is available to help workers adapt to these changes?

Note: The student-written articles in *The Change Agent* are a valuable way to support welcoming communities year-round because they allow adult education students to hear from people that they might, initially, think are quite different from themselves but discover, by reading about people’s experiences and perspectives, that they share much in common. Twice a year, the website, changeagent.nelrc.org, announces a call for articles from adult education students on whatever is the next issue’s topic. Students who are published receive a \$50 stipend, and many report that the experience transforms their sense of themselves as writers and as people with something to say that’s worth hearing. Go to the website for many free resources, and see how your students can participate.

SHARING OUR STORIES

Description: Record and share people telling their stories.

Purpose: To listen to one another's personal experiences and reflect on how those experiences are similar or different to one's own.

Audience: ESOL learners low-intermediate to advanced; English program staff members with friends, family, and invited guests; an ABE class; or any group that meets regularly (Kiwanis Club, Veteran's Group etc.).

Logistics: This project will need at least two rooms. One room should be set as the recording room and another to be the meeting room. The instructor will need to be a timekeeper and facilitate pairs entering and exiting the recording room. In the recording room, there should be a phone or recording device and two chairs. In the meeting room, there should be materials for preparing to record a story and for creating visuals.

Materials:

- Cell Phone or recording device
- Chairs for interviewers
- List of questions
- 1 item brought from each person's home for his or her story (optional)
- Cardstock (cut each page in half)
- Markers, pastels, or crayons
- Magazines (To be cut up)
- Tape or glue
- Scrapbook paper and materials
- Scissors

Classroom Steps

The role of the instructor for Sharing Our Stories is to recruit adult ESOL students to participate and prepare them to feel comfortable sharing personal information. The in-class activity is designed to promote confidence in the learners. The purpose is to review the information with the learners before the Sharing Our Stories night, discuss expectations the learners may have about the evening, and build excitement for the learners.

1. When preparing for this day, ask students to bring in one item from their home that is connected to an important moment in their life.
2. Brainstorm feelings and descriptive storytelling words and phrases.
3. Have students talk about the item that they brought in small groups.
4. Using the stories that were told, have students create a timeline of their life that includes their favorite moments, their most memorable moments, and their most challenging moments. Start with concrete and positive experiences such as graduating from school, birth or a child etc. and then move to more abstract moments such as the day I decided to move to a new country. Then have students add a few ideas for the future: buying a house, going to college, owning my own business.

SHARING OUR STORIES

5. Have students partner with one another and share their timeline. Have students switch partners one or two more times and talk about their timelines.
6. As a full group, have those who are willing to share their best and most challenging moments. Create a chart on the board with two columns and write the experiences under best or most challenging. Ask students why these moments were the best or most challenging moments in their lives. Have students turn to a partner and ask about the best and most challenging moments.
7. Choose about 10 to 15 questions from the list available at StoryCorps: <http://storycorps.org/great-questions/> or create some of your own that connect with the idea of Welcoming Week. For instance,
 - What are your hopes for our community?
 - When in life have you felt most alone and most connected?
 - Can you tell me about your religious/spiritual beliefs?
 - What traditions have been passed down in your family?

Present this list of the questions to the students. Have students walk around the room asking one another these questions. Using a conversation grid with the questions in a column on the left and blank spaces for names on the right, have students fill in a name next to the question they asked that person. The idea here is to have students become familiar with the questions and comfortable asking and answering them. The instructor should walk around, listen to the answers and help students if they get stuck.

8. Then, working in pairs, have students record a response to one of the questions – use the directions from the Community Connection section or have everyone record at the same time by moving people to different corners of the room. Tell students that the important part is to listen and respond as well as tell their story.
9. As an optional practice, have students choose a question and write a response to one of the questions. Then, have the instructor read over and edit the story as needed. This response can be used for the Sharing Our Stories night.

SHARING OUR STORIES

Community Connection

An adult educator should partner with another leader of a group that meets regularly in the community. Examples of some groups include a Kiwanis Club, a book club, a Veteran's group, or an ABE class. The other leader should prepare their group ahead of time by sharing the list of 10-15 questions that have been chosen for the Sharing Our Stories night and discussing the language level of the students they meeting.

Schedule an evening at the class site or at a location convenient to both groups. The space must have two rooms (see logistics notes). Students should bring their timeline to the Sharing Our Stories night and both groups can be asked to bring one item from home that is connected to an important moment in their life.

Have everyone meet in the waiting room. Conduct an icebreaker with all attendees that have arrived by the designated time. Create an environment that feels fun and safe. Then, share with participants the plan for the evening. Let everyone know that the recordings do not need to be edited or perfect – the idea is that others hear an honest dialogue about people, culture and community.

1. Pair Up
2. Review Questions
3. Work on Visual
4. Record Story

All participants should pair up based on numbers. There will be a Group A (ESOL Learners) and each person will have a paper that says A1, A2, A3 etc. There will be a Group B (ABE class, Kiwanis Club, etc.) and each person will have a paper that says B1, B2, B3 etc. Participants should find their partner – the person with the matching number (A1 pairs with B1).

Have two people (potentially the instructor and a student) model what will happen in the recording room. Have a student ask the instructor a question. The instructor then thinks and responds. Have the instructor ask the student a question. Have the student then respond. Responses should be a few minutes long.

Each pair should then find a seat and get to know one another for a few minutes and decide on a question. Explain that both people do not need to be asked the same question. Pairs can look at the student's timeline to help decide on a question or use the item they brought from home. Once a question is decided, pairs should think on their question and talk but not tell their whole story.

While participants are waiting, they can create a visual representation of their story. Using the basic art materials provided have people draw their story – this can be in the form of a chalk talk with stick figures or an abstract piece or collage that captures the emotion of the moment. This activity should be set up as an amusing and fun time for the pairs to share their artistic talents. Encourage all to participate.

While others are working on their art pieces or choosing a question, have pairs go to the recording room. Each pair should each take a seat in chairs facing one another. The person speaking should hold the recording device. The person from group A should ask a question to the person from group B. Items people brought can be used. Person B responds. Person A thanks B for sharing his/her story and can share a reflective comment or positive thought about the story. Participants can stop and restart if they get nervous. Remind everyone that the important part is to listen and respond as well as tell his or her own story.

Then, repeat with the roles reversed. Have person B ask the question of person A. Person A responds. Person B thanks A for sharing his/her story and may share a reflective comment or positive thought about the story.

SHARING OUR STORIES

If this process seems scary to students, students can come with the recording they made in the classroom as a backup and share this with their partner. Then, have the partner record their story on Sharing Our Stories night or have the partner record a story ahead of time. Adjust directions above as necessary.

After pairs record their stories, have them go back to working on their visuals and continuing to reflect on the conversation. The instructor and group leader should always be walking around listening and encouraging conversation.

Once the recordings are completed, have everyone take their art pieces and put them together on a table or the floor to look at them as a collage. If possible, ask everyone if they would leave their art pieces for the week or month. Put the collage of pieces up in the school or a community space along with a write up of what occurred.

Additionally, another way to broaden the experience would be to have a local radio show broadcast some of the stories in celebration of Welcoming Week. Have people sign release forms beforehand if this might be an option.

GAME NIGHT

Description: Participants will use two games, a board game and a scavenger hunt, designed to explore common ground between individuals and promote learning about different ideas across cultures.

Purpose: To increase dialogue across communities through fun and play.

Audience: Low Intermediate to Advanced ESOL learners and Library Patrons/Staff.

Logistics: This event will utilize the library as a hub for the community. The event should be promoted at the library through flyers and posters and via email and social media across the library system's network. A room will be needed for people to initially meet. Materials (game boards and scavenger hunts) will need to be printed and other items collected.

Time: Promotion and logistics (2-10 hours), in Class preparation (1-2 hours) Printing and collection of materials (1 hour), Set up of room and materials (1 hour), game night activity (1-2 hours).

Materials:

- Ball
- Welcoming Week Board Game (found on page 24)
- Game tokens (coins, pieces of paper etc.)
- Library Scavenger Hunt Print Out (found on page 23)
- Notecards
- Pens
- Colored markers for writing
- Coins to flip

Classroom Steps

The role of the instructor for Game Night is to recruit adult ESOL students for game night and prepare them to feel comfortable participating in a library community night. This in-class activity is designed to promote confidence in the learners. The purpose is to review the information with the learners before the Game Night, discuss expectations the learners may have about the evening, and build excitement for the learners.

1. Start by discussing with the learners the idea of a community game night. Did students participate in community events in their own country? What types of events?
2. Students should then brainstorm who they think might attend. This part of the activity can be used to help students make inferences. (i.e. If the event is going to be held at the library, who usually goes to a library.) For some students, the idea of a library may be new for them culturally as not all countries have libraries. Discuss the benefits of a library and have students who go to the library talk about their experiences. Discuss the perspectives library patrons in the community may have toward Welcoming Week and Immigration.
3. Review vocabulary and phrases students will need to answer the questions on the game board: feeling words, sensory words, descriptive phrases.
4. Create stations around the room (anywhere from 10 – 20 depending on time and the number of

GAME NIGHT

students). Set up each station with one question from the game board written on a notecard. (e.g. Name three things you do for fun. Describe your family.)

5. Have pairs of students ask each other the questions. While one person is talking, have the partner write down the answer on a blank notecard. Have students put notecards facedown on the table and then move to the next station. Give students about 5 minutes per station, so both partners can answer the question.
6. This part of the activity can be done with the same partner all the way through or one partner can be “A” and the other “B”. Each time the teacher ends the session, Partner A moves clockwise and Partner B moves counterclockwise to a new station. Using this pattern, students will have a different question and partner each time. The instructor should walk around and listen to ensure that students understand the questions and are successfully answering them.
6. The instructor should collect all the responses as students are talking. The instructor should read all the answers and lead a discussion with questions that seem to be the most difficult for the students – including vocabulary needed to answer questions, verb tenses for clarity etc.
7. To end the in-class part of the activity, ask student if they feel ready for the community Game Night. Encourage them to be excited and talk about what a great opportunity this will be for practicing English outside of the classroom.

Community Connection

The Game Night activity requires a lead within the library (a staff member) and a lead from an English program (a teacher).

The librarian’s role is to connect with the library’s community and register people for Game Night. The librarian should publicize the event through flyers at the library and online social media outlets. To ensure that people will attend Game Night, it is suggested that the event be an RSVP event that is also welcoming to walk-ins. Library staff should be encouraged to attend and bring friends and family to participate in the evening as well as promote it to the wider community.

The common ground to focus on for recruitment is the idea that library staff and patrons love books and are life-long learners, and adult English students are learning to read in English, some will be reading for the first time. Connect people to the joy of reading and sharing the reading experience with one another. Promote the idea that books take us to new lands and introduce us to new cultures. These new ideas and cultures may be represented in the neighborhoods around the community and this would be a great opportunity to learn even more from people around the world.

The librarian should also be responsible for locating a space at the library for people to meet and play the board game. The room should ideally be set up with chairs in groups around a table or chairs in a circle. Depending on the number of people suggested numbers per group would be 4-6 people.

The instructor’s role will be to help set up the room, print and collect the materials needed for the evening and work with the students. The students may be nervous and the instructor should go around encouraging the students and facilitate people introducing themselves to one another.

As people come into the room, give them each a letter that corresponds to a group (e.g. If you have 5 groups, then groups would be A, B, C, D, E). Have each person sit in the group with their letter. As the groups build, check to make sure there is a mix of people from the various communities.

GAME NIGHT

Once you are ready to start, have the instructor lead everyone in an icebreaker. One option is a ball toss. Have everyone come out of the individual groups and create a large circle. Have each person say their name, where they are from and one thing they like to do (Luisa, Maryland or United States, I like to watch TV). Then, toss the ball to someone in the group. Note: If the group is larger than 25 people, you may want to create two circles and have them going simultaneously. Also, if there are lower level English learners present, you may need to act out the thing you like to do. The purpose of this activity is to let everyone know who is in the room, build community and trust, and get to know one another. Usually someone will drop the ball or there will be someone who is a great pitcher and this makes people laugh and relax. As a second round, have people try to say their information and then toss the ball to someone and say their information (e.g. Jan, Maryland, I like to play soccer and Jose, El Salvador, I like to watch TV).

After the icebreaker, have everyone sit back down in the groups. Introduce the board game. Read the instructions and explain how to play by reading the directions on the game board. Let people know the game can take 15 minutes or 45 depending on the conversation they are having. Tell everyone that the goal is not to get through the game as fast as they can. Encourage them to ask additional questions if an answer is very interesting. Facilitators should walk around and monitor groups to make sure the dialog is flowing well. If some groups finish faster than others, mix groups of people and have them start a new game or have people move on to the scavenger hunt.

Once people finish the board game, have people pair off in 2's or 3's and give them each a scavenger hunt worksheet. Ask them to read the questions on their papers and go to the locations described. Suggest that partners write down some of the ideas/answers they talk about for each question (this is optional). Set pairs off on their journey around the library. As people come back, ask if you can copy their scavenger hunt page, so that some of the comments can be recorded for a bulletin board. If they agree, make a copy.

At the end of the time, have everyone take out a notecard and draw or write down one thing they learned about during game night. These comments could include surprise at having shared similar experiences in life or interest in having learned something new about a different culture. Put these out on a table and have participants read them as they leave or read them out loud as a group. Thank everyone for coming.

As a follow up to the evening, use the collected cards to create a bulleting board. Post them and some of the comments from the scavenger hunt pages on a bulletin board in the library and/or at the school to celebrate Welcoming Week throughout the month.

PTA NIGHT: WHAT'S

Description: Conversation Card Game

Purpose: To share experiences about education, learn about school practices in the U.S. and other countries and discuss concepts of parent involvement in education. Building knowledge and sharing perspectives about schools

Audience: Low-Intermediate to Advanced ESOL Learners, ABE Learners, PTA Members, School Staff and Instructors

Logistics: Set up space for people to meet in groups of 3-5 that is preferably at the K-12 school.

Materials:

- Name Tags
- Cards (found on pages 25-29)
- Chairs
- Tables (optional)
- Other school flyers (optional)

Classroom Steps

The role of the instructor for What's education? is to recruit adult ESOL students for the meeting and prepare them to feel comfortable participating in a conversation with school personnel and other parents. This in-class activity is designed to promote confidence in the learners. The purpose is to review the information with the learners before the meeting, discuss expectations the learners may have about it, and build excitement for the learners.

1. In pairs, have students brainstorm the word "education" and "school". Then, have groups share out their lists. Write words on a white board or large piece of paper for everyone to see. Build vocabulary as words come up. After the initial brainstorm, encourage students to share positive, negative and neutral words. Have students think of education from their own perspective and that of their children. (Examples: difficult, important, teachers, books, semester)
2. Have learners talk about their own personal experiences with school – did they like school? What did they like or not like? How long do students go to school? What type of classes do they take?
3. In small groups, have students categorize the positive, neutral and negative words. Use a Venn Diagram or chart to compare and contrast the words.
4. Use the vocabulary brought up to create a chart to discuss the similarities and differences between the different education systems in the U.S. (K-12, Community Colleges, Universities etc.). Discuss who attends and at what age, length of time in the system, schedules, purpose etc.
5. Discuss the different columns/areas of the chart as a full group.

PTA NIGHT

6. Create a new chart and in small groups have learners talk about the similarities and differences between the K-12 system in the United States and in their country (or for an ABE class the difference between the school they attended and the school their child is attending). The instructor should walk around, monitor discussions and add to the conversation. If students need prompts, the instructor can look at the cards and mention some of the ideas discussed (How long do students go to school?, How many classes do they take? etc.)
7. Have groups then split up and regroup, so one person from each of the first groups is now in a new group. Have each person share what the people in his or her group talked about and discuss.
8. Have everyone come back together to talk about the meeting at the school. Discuss what to expect. Ask students who they expect will attend. Ask if anyone has questions.
9. As a group, think about some questions that the students might want to know about from going to the meeting. After a few questions have been generated, have students work in small group to create more questions. Questions can be about the meeting, school, teachers, or the parents' role in school. Add the questions to the question cards for the meeting.

Community Connection

The “What’s Education?” meeting requires an ESOL or ABE teacher to pair up with a leader from the PTA or the school (principal, teacher etc.). The adult education teacher should contact the school PTA or principal a few months before school starts to ask about creating a meeting or integrating this activity into an existing meeting or back-to-school night. The leader from the school or PTA is responsible for encouraging staff, instructors and parents to attend and share experiences on education to create a stronger community for all the children in the school. The adult education teacher is responsible for encouraging adult education students to come to the school for the meeting. The hope is that the interaction will result in new knowledge for all participants and help foster community among the parents and school personnel.

The idea behind this game is that many adult ESOL students/parents may not know about the U.S. education system and some K-12 parents, school staff and teachers do not know how different expectations for parents in other countries are. For instance, the education system of the United States is run mainly at the local county levels with school boards vs. the national level as in many other countries.

Additionally, the expectations of a parent’s role in the school system may be different than a parent’s role in their own country. In some countries, it is preferred that parents not interfere with a student’s education once the child crosses the school’s threshold. The game allows teachers and parents to discuss these assumptions and expectations. Lastly, the game highlights local information and provides a space to dialogue about the child’s role in their education. Both leaders should read through the questions ahead of time and make sure they can answer all of them (i.e. create a cheat sheet for your community and for the countries represented in the ESOL population).

On the night of the event, participants should meet in a room. As each person enters, have them create a nametag. Once people have arrived, conduct a fun ice-breaker. For instance, have people walk around and introduce themselves, state where they are from and talk about their happiest school memory (e.g. best class, participation in sports, graduation). Create a safe and fun environment where people feel comfortable talking.

After the icebreaker, thank everyone for coming and talk about the plan for the meeting. Put people together in small groups. A teacher, a parent and an ESOL student (parent) or two should be grouped together. Groups of three or four are ideal. Mention the purpose of the game as well as how to play.

PTA NIGHT

State that the activity can take from 10 minutes to 60 minutes and encourage participants to ask each other follow up questions as people answer the questions on the cards.

Let people know ahead of time that if a question is posed and no one in the group knows the answer, a group member can raise their hand and one of the leaders will come over to answer the question. Also, let participants know that some cards are about school information/practices and there will be a right answer. Some cards are about personal experiences and all or one person can answer the question. Then there are a few that are about school cultures that draw out different perspectives, and a conversation can occur around these. Tell everyone that the purpose of the game is to take the time to exchange ideas and information. Also let them know that these are starter questions and that everyone in the group should feel free to add their own questions to the conversation.

Have people begin playing the game. One person flips over a card. Have that person answer the question. Then, he or she asks another person in the group the same question. The next person then takes a card from the pile and follows the same directions.

There are three types of cards: big picture/broad education concepts, personal questions and local questions. If the question is a factual one such as “What is a PTA?” and the correct answer is provided, then the next person takes a card from the deck.

If the question is a personal question such as “Who was your favorite teacher in school? Why?”, then others can also share their thoughts on the question.

If the question is a local one that asks for opinions, then a short conversation can occur about the topic. For instance, “What support services and after-school activities are offered to children in this school? Should others be offered?”

Another way to play is to have each person draw three cards. A person plays a card and asks someone in the group to answer it. Person B answers the question and then plays his or her card. Each time a person plays a card, they also draw a card, so that everyone consistently has three cards in their hand.

Groups can continue to play until all the cards are used or the facilitator can set a time limit and have groups switch. If groups switch, have them shuffle the cards and restart the game.

Once game play is completed, have participants come together as a full group and share out some things they learned. As the meeting ends, have participants sign a poster and share one thing he or she learned about education during the meeting. Thank everyone for coming. If this game is part of a larger meeting, school information can be distributed, participants can continue to new topics or take a tour of the school etc.

Put up the poster in the lobby of the school to celebrate Welcoming Week and share the ideas with others.

MATERIALS

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Community Survey

Sample questions:

- Where is the best place to play _____?
- Where is the cheapest laundromat?
- Where is the best place to buy _____?
- Where is the best mechanic?

1. Where is _____?

Answer: _____

2. Where is _____?

Answer: _____

3. Where is _____?

Answer: _____

4. Where is _____?

Answer: _____

5. Where is _____?

Answer: _____

Scavenger Hunt

Working with a partner, find the following answers:

1. Go to the section where you can find books about travel or different countries? How many countries have you been to?
2. Find the place in the library where the magazines are located. Do you see a magazine that is in your home? Which magazines do you like to read?
3. Visit the section of the library where the books are full of pictures. Have seat, tell your partner, write down the name of the story. What was your favorite story as a child?
4. What letter does Partner A's name start with. Go to the fiction section for authors that start with that letter. Look around. Do you know an author whose name starts with that letter. If so, see if you can find a book(s) by that author. Say why you liked them. Repeat for Partner B.
5. Who is your favorite author? Find out if there any audiobooks by that author in the library? Discuss whether you like to listen to audio books.
6. Look up immigration for the video section of your library. What videos are available that highlight people immigrating? Go see if they are available. Have you watched them? Do they look interesting? Why or why not?



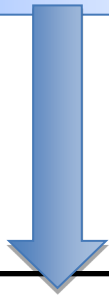
START	Describe your country's flag.	What smell reminds you most of home? Why?	Describe your family.	How did you come to live in this city?	What are 2 holidays you like to celebrate?
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What languages do you speak?	Where do you go to use a computer?	Skip Ahead	Describe a welcoming community?
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Directions: Players place their tokens on Start. Player 1 then flips a coin. Heads, move 1 space. Tails, move 2 spaces. Player then answers the question that

FINISH	What is your greatest strength or weakness?	Name three things you do for fun. Describe one.	What sound makes you think of your youth?	What is your dream?
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What is your favorite food?	What is your favorite family or community	What word makes you think of home ?	Skip Ahead	What is your favorite story, book, TV show or	Go Back Two Spaces
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How many grades (levels or years of school) are there in your country?



What do you call the different schools in the United States?
a. K – 5 b. 6 – 8 c. 9 – 12



What is a PTA?



How many hours do children go to school each day in your country?
In the U.S?



How many teachers does your child have each day?



Should parents come to school to talk to the teacher? If so, when?



What are field trips? Name some examples.



What does the PTA do?

<p>Where does money for schools come from – the County, State or Federal Government?</p>	<p>What was your favorite class or subject in school?</p>
<p>Who was your favorite teacher? Why?</p>	<p>What classes are taught at this school for each child?</p>
<p>What support services are offered to children in this school? Should others be offered?</p>	<p>Do you like to read? What is a favorite book?</p>
<p>Do you like math? How do you use math in daily life?</p>	<p>How do you help your child with his/her homework?</p>

<p>Why is education important?</p>	<p>Do you want your child to go to college? Does your child want to go to college?</p>
<p>How many school holidays are there this year?</p>	<p>Why do children go to school for half a day sometimes?</p>
<p>Can a parent volunteer in a classroom?</p>	<p>How many students were in your class at school? How many students are in your child's class now?</p>
<p>Can grandparents be a part of the PTA?</p>	<p>Does your child's school have after-school programs? What kind? Did your school have after-school programs?</p>

<p>What is the best part of school?</p>	<p>What is a report card? How do you read a report card?</p>
<p>Did you have computers in your school? Does your child now? Talk about computers</p>	<p>Is religion a part of school in the United States? Is religion a part of school in your country? Talk about the similarity or difference.</p>
<p>Is art or music a class your child takes? How are these classes important to a child? Did you study art or music as a child?</p>	<p>Does your child walk to school, take a bus or do you drive him/her? How did you get to school as a child?</p>
<p>Does your child play sports? What sports did you play as a child?</p>	<p>Do you use Facebook or Twitter? How can we talk after today – by phone, email or social media?</p>

<p>What is homework? Does your child have it every night? Did you have homework as a kid?</p>	<p>When you think of the word CLASSROOM, what do you see?</p>
<p>When you think of the word TEACHER, what do you feel?</p>	<p>Should I call or email my child's teacher? When should I do this?</p>
<p>When a teacher calls a parent is it bad news?</p>	<p>What is a question you have about this school, teacher, or parent?</p>
<p>Did you have parties in class? Does your child's classroom have parties?</p>	

Advice to New Immigrants

From Immigrants at Leon County Schools in Florida

Follow the Law!

Make sure your brake lights work! If your brake lights don't work, you could cause an accident or get a ticket. I got a ticket because my brake lights did not work. I went to court. The judge said that I had to choose to either do 10 hours of community service or pay \$150. I chose to do the community service. I picked up trash along the roads in Tallahassee from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm. This experience also helped me understand that it is important not to throw trash on the roads!

— Anayeli Santiago



Do Not Offer Bribes!

It is important for new immigrants to understand that they should not bribe police officers. In some countries, if the police stop you for speeding, they will ask you for money and then let you go. But in the U.S., you could get in trouble for offering a bribe.

— Priscila Leon

Learn English!

It can help you in many ways, including keeping you safe. Can you read this?

“CAUTION: Harmful if absorbed through the skin. Avoid contact with skin, eyes, or clothing. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling and before eating and drinking.”

If you cannot read the above, you could be in danger because you do not understand that the product is toxic.

— Ana Carolina Espitia

Find People You Can Trust!

Be careful about who advises you on legal matters. I found a “notary public” who said she could help me get political asylum. But instead I got a deportation letter. When I tried to find her, she had disappeared. Find someone you trust to help you with all of your applications.

—Julia Ruiz



**Enroll in English Classes
Sooner Rather than Later!**

Register for an English class as soon as you arrive in this country. For seven years, I let my children translate for me. I got comfortable with that, and I did not put pressure on myself to learn English. However, I felt like a child when they had to help me at the grocery store or at the mall. It was not a pleasant feeling. Now I am enrolled in English classes!

—Maria Luisa Olvera

Apply for Student Aid for College!

My advice to immigrant parents and their high school children is to learn about the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). It is part of the U.S. Department of Education. It helps students pay for college with grants or loans. It took us two weeks to complete the application. My son had to submit copies of documents, such as proof that he has been living in the U.S. for one year. We scanned the documents and sent them via email. My son received grants, which is money he doesn't have to pay back. He also received loans, which is money he does have to pay back after he graduates.

—Josefina Caraballo



How Times Have Changed

Robert Berroa

I was born in the Dominican Republic and came to the United States at a young age. The only technology I was brought up with was a wall phone, a phonograph that had to be cranked, and a black and white television that had three channels. Oh, how times have changed! Now I have a smart phone, a CD player, and a flat screen TV that offers over 75 channels. Technology has made my life more pleasant.

Technology Tracks Inventory

One of the earliest jobs I had was working in a grocery store. At that time we had to write all orders by hand. This was difficult and time-consuming for me due to my limited knowledge of English. Now, you merely scan a product's bar code, and you will immediately know if it needs to be re-ordered. This technology has made it easier for stores to keep track of their inventory.

Computers Speed Manufacturing

Another job that I had was being in charge of a machine that twisted thread. This machine used an antiquated and time-consuming process. While

I was fortunate to witness this change in production, and I was trained to work on a computer program that operated different machines.

I was at this job, it was sold to another company. This new company brought in new machinists along with new technology. I was fortunate to witness this change in production, and I was trained to work on a computer program that operated different machines. The time it took to finish this product went from four hours to half an hour, resulting in a better and more durable product.

I have witnessed first hand how manufacturing has changed, and I know I must continue to adapt to this change.

Education Helps Me Keep Pace with Changes

At this stage in my life, I am working towards my GED. I am also enrolled in a pre-manufacturing course at a local community college. This course has given me an opportunity to read blueprints, take accurate measurements, learn computer applications in manufacturing, safety in the workplace, math skills, and new concepts in the field of manufacturing.

By training workers in the science of new manufacturing technology, the United States will be better able to compete with European and Asian countries which at the present are ahead of the United States. It is about time for our country to make more goods that are stamped MADE IN AMERICA.

Robert Berroa is a student at Northwestern Connecticut Community College in Winsted, CT, in the Project Crossroads Program, and he is working towards a certificate in the pre-manufacturing course offered through the initiative of the Connecticut Manufacturing, Energy, and Transportation Grant.



More about Work

Read on! The articles on pp. 37-39 focus on similar themes: technology and work.

Looking for a good job? Check out the "Good Jobs..." issue (#36) of *The Change Agent* on our website.

Immigration in My Community

Carl Barnes

I am a 71-year old African American male, and I have been in Caldwell County, North Carolina, for some 60 years. I have seen this county change a lot with the Hispanics arriving in our community. And in my opinion, it's all for the better.

Immigrants contribute to our community by being good, hard-working people. They get jobs as landscapers, furniture workers, and construction workers. They help to make our community great by bringing good food, good

Immigrants are good neighbors.

ideas, and different languages and cultures. They are also good for the community because they pay taxes. Immigrants are good neighbors. They are interesting and wonderful people. They bring new forms of entertainment like soccer and cricket. They offer so much to the community. I have seen this with my own eyes. I have worked with immigrants, played with immigrants, and gone to church with immigrants since the 1960s.

It is a pleasure to see my nieces and nephews and grandchildren grow up with immigrants. I think Congress should pass a bill that would give immigrants the same opportunities that the rest of us enjoy.



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. got the ball rolling by bringing all of us together, black and white, to end segregation and fight for equality.



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., got the ball rolling by bringing all of us together, black and white, to end segregation and fight for equality. Now, whites and blacks understand each other better. I hope that we try to do our best to finish his work. We are all in this together. Together we stand, and divided we fall.

Carl Barnes attends the Caldwell County Family Literacy Program in Hudson, NC. Carl is made aware daily of the new opportunities that getting his GED credential will bring to his life.

Junk Food Easy to Find Healthy Food, Not So Much

Gabby Martinez

My family has more access to junk food than to healthy food! At this moment we have two convenience stores and one pizza place and a pharmacy near our home. A convenience store sells a lot of junk food and processed food. These foods are not nourishing for our bodies.

Another important problem is the price. It is cheaper to buy a cheeseburger than to buy an apple. We buy fast food because it is easy and

We are sitting in fast food restaurants ordering unhealthy meals, and the healthy meals are out of reach of our hands!

cheap rather than buy a fruit cocktail. We are sitting in fast food restaurants ordering unhealthy meals, and the healthy meals are out of reach of our hands!

The closest supermarket is five miles away from our home. I shop there once a week, and I look for special sales on fruits and vegetables. Also, I buy seasonal fruit at the nearest farm outside the city or at the closet community garden. There are some gardens in Fresno, like Al Radka



Fresno is in the middle of the Central Valley in California, one of the highest-producing agricultural regions in the country. Yet many people here lack access to healthy food. The U.S. Dept. of Agriculture calls Fresno a "food desert."



Park, but there are not enough. Our community needs a mobile fruit and vegetable stand that can sell healthy food in all parts of our neighborhoods.

We need healthy food in our neighborhood because it helps us teach our children about how to have a good diet. The best way for children to learn is to grow up with access to lots of fruits and vegetables. In Mexico, my family worked and lived near fresh produce. There was limited access to fast food. Children and their families ate fresh crops as they became ready. I remember my mother growing fresh papayas and selling them right near our family home.

In Fresno, we should have fresh produce within a safe walking distance of our neighborhoods. Then our families would have the chance to buy nutritious food, and parents could buy in quantities and at good prices.

Gabby Martinez is a GED student at Fresno Adult School in Fresno, CA. In 2014, she organized with her community and persuaded a local school to open its gates on the weekends so that children would have a safe place to play and get exercise.



This interactive "soundscape map" allows you to listen to the sounds of food being prepared and eaten in Fresno, CA. Go to <berkeley.news21.com/theration/soundscapes> and click on the various dots to listen.

Stay Healthy by Working Hard

Hawo Mhando

I remember when I was back home in Africa, in a refugee camp in Kenya. I used to work so hard. For example, I used to cook using firewood. I had to go to the forest to fetch firewood. I also walked a very long distance to fetch water because we did not have running water in our home. I carried the water and the firewood on my head. I walked home without using a car. I also chopped wood. That was hard work, but I got used to it because it was a daily job.

When I came to America, I was very happy because I did not have to travel by foot. I did not have to cook using firewood. And I did not have to fetch water from outside. I got everything in my house by pressing a button or turning on the tap. I really appreciated the American government because it saved me from a difficult situation. But after three months, I became very fat and I was unable to walk for a long distance.

Therefore, when I compare my health in Africa and my health in America, I prefer how I felt in Africa. In Africa, I was stronger than I am here. I plan to start doing some activities like I did in Africa very soon; for example, walking long distances and carrying heavy things on my head. My advice is: if you want to be healthy, make sure you work hard, drive less, and walk more.



Hawo Mhando is studying English with Vermont Adult Learning in conjunction with the Community College of Vermont in Burlington. She lives in Winooski, VT, with her husband and two children.

Step Out! Here's where it will take you...



Brisk walking burns about 150 calories in 30 minutes.



Exercise helps you sleep better.



Exercise stimulates brain chemicals, which may leave you feeling happier and more relaxed.



You'll look better and feel better when you exercise regularly.

Technology Connects & Disconnects

Marleny Salguero

For me, technology can make our lives easier by bringing us closer to each other. And it also can become a weapon that hurts our family life.

Face Time with My Mom

For example, Skype helps connect people. Let me tell you, I love Skype because it allows me to talk with my relatives in Guatemala. I can even get "face time" with them. Every Sunday night I use this program to see my family. It is amazing! It makes me feel closer to them. The first time my mom and I saw each other on Skype, we couldn't stop crying. It was the first time we had seen each other in 10 years! I am so happy I can see other family members too. I have two nieces in Guatemala, ages 11 and 8. I get to see them grow up.

No Time with My Own Kids

Yet, technology also disconnects me from my family. I have constant debates with my children and husband about how much they use their tablets and the new Xbox. My husband is paying every month for Xbox Live. When he's not working, all he does is play. I call it "The Plague."

What can I say about my children? They are

either using the tablet or the Xbox. I spend all day yelling, "Please stop playing." My children don't get fresh air or play outside. They don't play with friends very much. I used to play games with them, but now they don't want to play with me.



Strategies for My Family

To get my sons to put down their technology, I make sure they sign up for sports and other activities. One of my sons plays soccer. My other son is a member of the Boy Scouts. We go to church every Sunday morning. I do not allow them to bring their technology to the dinner table. That means we get a chance to talk as a family. But they eat very fast, and then they run back to Xbox.

Marleny Salguero is an ABE student at Bristol Community College in Fall River, MA. Originally from Guatemala, she has been living in the U.S. for 12 years. She has two sons, ages 12 and 8. She plans to get her GED and go to college.

Strategies for Connecting

What does Marleny do to counteract the disconnecting effects of technology?

Interview your classmates. Find out what strategies they use to keep family members connected and to limit children's use of technology. Find out what works and what doesn't work. Write down some of the ideas here. Make a powerpoint and present it to the class.

Uniforms? Dress Codes? Or Free Choice?

Yes! Uniforms Stop Bullying

From my experience in life I do think children should wear uniforms to school. When I was growing up, I felt embarrassed at school because I didn't wear what other kids wore. I wasn't fashionable. I was mistreated and called names on a daily basis. My self esteem got to a low point because I didn't fit in with the crowd. I felt I wasn't learning in school. I let the criticism bother me when it never should have.

Lisa DeLeon, Project Hope, Boston, MA

Yes! Uniforms Stop Peer Pressure

There is every indication that wearing uniforms might reduce peer pressure and put the emphasis back on learning. Imagine for a moment the possibility of learning without all the distraction of fashion commercialism.

Maria Norried, Fort Smith, AR

Yes! Uniforms Stop Discrimination

Parents will save money if students wear uniforms because uniforms are not as expensive as regular clothing. Many students insist on wearing expensive clothing with brand names while other students must wear cheap clothing. This discriminates between poor and rich students.

Nhi Thu Tran, Fort Smith, AR

Yes! Dress Codes Support Safety, Respect, and Freedom

With the growing violence among young people, it is essential that schools have a dress code. Gang dress, such as bandanas and baggy clothing, spreads fear instead of focusing on learning. Oversized pants can easily conceal weapons or drugs. A dress code does not take away anyone’s individuality nor their free spirit or freedom. What it does support is self confidence and self respect.

Mike Fiorino, North Kansas City Public Schools, Kansas City, MO

Yes! Dress Codes Teach Our Children

Kids need to have a dress code in schools. Dressing in belly shirts or wearing short shorts is a distraction to other students. Dress codes can teach our kids how to dress professionally.

Amelia Hasten, N. Kansas City Public Schools, Kansas City, MO

Yes! Free Choice for the “Land of the Free”

The United States is the land of freedom, not the land of uniforms and dress codes. It is hard to be an individual when you look just like everyone else. You should be able to show your personality through your clothing. To stand out and shine seems impossible if you cannot express yourself through your clothing. The U.S. is the land of free choice; to have clothing mandated is wrong.

Shawn Zack, North Kansas City Public Schools, Kansas City, MO

Inappropriate attire

Spaghetti strap shirt; bra showing

Stomach showing

Shorts too short

Bandana on head

Inappropriate attire

Studded bracelet

Pant leg rolled up

Red shoe-laces

Dress code poster from Washoe County in Reno, NV.

Yes to Free Choice! Diverse Clothing for Diverse People

No one should dictate what we wear. One of the greatest opportunities about living in the U.S. is to have freedom of expression. Our country has many people from different places. People have different beliefs, religions, and backgrounds, and all that diversity is reflected in their clothing. If institutions and society begin to dictate our clothing there would be great chaos and rebellion.

Zokie Simien, North Kansas City Public Schools, Kansas City, MO

What Inspires Me to Become an Architect

David Colon

When I was 19 years old, I went to work in construction with my older brother. At first it seemed hard and exhausting, but when I got used to it and learned the basics, it became easy and exciting. When you are building something, it's hard to imagine what the finished product will look like. But once I started to see how beautiful the buildings turned out, I knew I wanted to become an architect.

At the beginning I was a laborer. I had to clean up behind more skilled workers, such as carpenters, welders, and painters. I carried steel doors and equipment up flights of stairs. Once they saw that I was a good laborer, they started to teach me other things, such as how to build cabinets, put

up sheet rock, paint professionally, and weld. As I learned more skills, I saw how beautifully my work came out. I said to myself, "I want to be an architect." Today I am working hard to reach that goal.



David Colon is a student at the Mid-Manhattan Adult Learning Center #5 in New York City. He is from the Upper West Side of Manhattan and is the proud father of a 16 year old daughter. He is a supervisor for a major clothing chain in New York City.

4. _____

2. _____

3. _____

1. _____

Career Ladder

What are the steps David Colon has taken, is taking, and probably will need to take if he wants to become an architect? Use information from the article, his biography, and what you know. Describe the steps on your own career ladder. See Resources on p. 33 for more direction.

