LINCS logo: Community, Courses, and Resources for Adult Education

Supporting the Use of ESL Pro Resources

in States and Programs

Preparing English Learners

for Work and Career Pathways

Study Circle Facilitator’s Guide

# Background

The professional development resources in the U.S. Department of Education Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education’s ESL Pro[[1]](#footnote-1) professional development resources were designed based on current knowledge of how to effectively accelerate learning to support English language learners (ELLs)[[2]](#footnote-2) to achieve their goals. These materials are timely given the expectations outlined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA), which was signed into law in 2014.

The three thematic suites of ESL Pro were designed to help programs serving English learners to:

1. increase the rigor of English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction;
2. integrate digital literacy into ESL instruction; and
3. contextualize instruction to prepare English learners for work and support learners onto career pathways.

The following resources are available for each of the three ESL Pro thematic suites. This study circle supports the implementation of the Preparing English Learners for Work and Career Pathways thematic suite of materials.

| **Themes** | **Research Brief**  **For All** | **Companion Learning Resource**  **(digital magazine)**  **For Teachers** | **Online Module**  **For Teachers and Administrators** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Meeting the Language Needs of Today’s Adult English Language Learner**  **(increasing rigor)** | Presents an overview of the need for increased rigor | Provides examples of instructional models, strategies, tools, and tasks for increasing the rigor | Explores how to integrate academic language, reading and listening strategies, and critical thinking at all levels |
| **Integrating Digital Literacy into English Language Instruction** | Overview of digital literacy for ELLs | Offers numerous examples of instructional models, strategies, tools, and tasks for integrating digital literacy into English Language Acquisition (ELA) programs[[3]](#footnote-3) | Discusses how and why to incorporate digital literacy skills in all types of programming for adult ELLs |
| **Preparing English Learners for Work and Career Pathways** | Overview of how to connect English language acquisition to career pathways | Explains and demonstrates key concepts in contextualizing instruction to support and prepare English learners at all levels for work and career pathways | Addresses programmatic issues as well as examples that speak to curriculum development and classroom teaching |

Here you will find more detailed descriptions about the materials included in this thematic suite.

* [Issue Brief: Preparing English Learners for Work and Career Pathways](https://lincs.ed.gov/sites/default/files/ELL_Context_Instruction_508.pdf)  
  This issue brief presents a broad overview of considerations for connecting English language acquisition to career pathways. It is intended to serve as an introduction to the topic of career-focused contextualized instruction that teachers and administrators can use as a springboard to additional in-depth resources. The brief includes descriptions of program models designed to strengthen the alignment of adult education, employment, and skills training, such as bridge programs and programs offering concurrent enrollment, as well as models that integrate technical skills and related language and literacy skills through team teaching. The brief offers ideas for engaging employers and highlights a collaborative national effort between employers and adult education providers. The section on instructional strategies outlines the skills that ELLs need to succeed at work and in postsecondary education and offers ideas for adapting language teaching strategies to foster the skills needed for success in career pathways.
* [Companion Learning Resource: Preparing English Learners for Work and Career Pathways](https://lincs.ed.gov/sites/default/files/LINCS_CLR-1_508_0.pdf)This is a practical, comprehensive, instructional resource written specifically for teachers that examines the language demands of the workforce and successful postsecondary transitions for adult ELLs. It illustrates current, effective models of integrating vocational training with academic instruction and demonstrates key concepts in integrating academic skill development across many ELL levels. The Companion Learning Resource synthesizes the main concepts put forth in the Issue Brief and other seminal works and connects these ideas to concrete classroom examples across a range of levels and teaching contexts. Highlights of key concepts include:
* preparing adult learners effectively for career training and postsecondary education, including related language demands;
* providing effective instructional models of integrating technical training with academic instruction; and
* integrating academic skill development across many ELL levels to assist with learners’ transition to postsecondary education, in preparation for work.
* [Professional Development Module: Preparing English Learners for Work and Career Pathways](https://courses.lincs.ed.gov/1/)This online self-access module provides an overview of models that link language and literacy instruction with workforce preparation and career pathways. It introduces models such as occupation-focused instruction (Bridge programs), co-enrollment in a technical course and an ELA support class (concurrent instruction), and team teaching by an ELA teacher and a technical instructor (integrated instruction). The module addresses programmatic issues such as building partnerships beyond adult education, as well as offering insights and examples that speak to curriculum development and classroom teaching. It includes evidence-based strategies that build students’ background knowledge in the skills needed for an occupation or a career while at the same time increasing their English proficiency.

The module offers a set of steps to follow so that material developers can identify the language demands in technical classes and build curricula that prepare students for training. Frameworks for curriculum development and instruction allow teachers to build a coherent teaching-learning approach out of a wide variety of activities and strategies showcased in the units. The module also shows decision makers, administrators, and teachers how to build a contextualized ESL program that is part of a larger effort to move English learners toward jobs that can sustain a family.

## Study Circle Model

This study circle reflects current research on effective professional development. High quality professional learning:

* engages educators actively in learning;
* involves a series of connected learning opportunities over an extended period of time;
* supports educators in deepening and enhancing their skills and content knowledge;
* challenges educators’ assumptions;
* involves educators in interacting with one another; and
* receives administrative support.

This study circle was designed to align with these aspects of high quality professional development. To learn more about leading a study circle, explore the study circle facilitator’s guide developed by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy <http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/adult_reading_scg_tips.pdf>.

## References

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# Preparing English Learners for Work and Career Pathways

## Purpose

This study circle is intended to be a resource for instructional leaders, program leaders, and professional development specialists who are interested in supporting the teachers of English learners though the implementation of ESL Pro. The study circle is designed to be used in tandem with the ESL Pro materials available on the LINCS website (<https://lincs.ed.gov/programs/eslpro>). These materials are designed to provide facilitators with guidance, content, and delivery suggestions to enable them to deliver a high-quality professional development experience on the topic of preparing English learners for work and career pathways.

### Opportunities for Teachers

Teachers are the primary audience for this study circle. Participating teachers will learn about a variety of ways to contextualize instruction to support adult English learners in reaching their important work-related goals. Any teacher, regardless of the level of experience, can benefit from this study circle.

### Opportunities for Administrators

Administrators may also be interested in participating in this study circle to increase their understanding of various career pathways models and what is required to design a career pathways program. Administrators will consider how to support teachers as they endeavor to contextualize instruction around learners’ work-related goals.

## Description

Through this study circle, participants will discuss what career pathways and contextualized instruction are and why it is important to offer classes oriented toward learners’ work and career-related goals. Participants will have the opportunity to dig into the ESL Pro content and explore program practices and instructional strategies that are immediately relevant to their context. Participants will be able to choose activities to apply in their classroom, reflect on their implementation, and collaborate with colleagues to discuss the content and effective ways to contextualize teaching related to work and careers.

Participating administrators will consider the rationale for why designing programs that contextualize instruction and address career pathways is important. They will have the opportunity to consider various possibilities for implementing a career pathways program and plan how to support instructors who are working with learners at all levels on career-related goals.

This study circle is designed to be flexible. Study circle facilitators can tailor the study circle for online, face-to-face, or blended environments.

**EXPECTATIONS OF FACILITATORS**

As a study circle facilitator, you should start by becoming familiar with the ESL Pro contextualized instruction and career pathways materials and the study circle facilitation materials. As facilitator, you will plan the study circle and communicate with participants about logistics. You will offer guidance on how to access materials and provide support to participants as needed. Facilitators will thoughtfully guide discussions and encourage participants to reflect deeply on their learning. Facilitators provide feedback to participants and should be prepared to direct participants to relevant research as well as to additional instructional resources.

**EXPECTATIONS OF STUDY CIRCLE PARTICIPANTS**

Participants are expected to participate in all the study circle sessions. They should bring an open mind to the endeavor and be prepared to share their knowledge and experiences in implementing discussed strategies as well as their questions. Completion of all assignments in a timely manner and respectful dialogue with colleagues are expected.

**TIME COMMITMENT**

Study circle participants should expect to spend at least an hour of pre-work for each session. Sessions are either 90 or 120 minutes, depending on whether the session is held online or face-to-face. Follow-up for each session varies in planning time, but participants should plan to devote at least one hour to assignments.

**COHORT SELECTION**

A cohort of study circle participants can be constituted in many ways. For example:

* **A state team led by the state adult education professional development lead that includes teachers from across the state who will take what they learned back to their programs.** Statewide teams could form a community of practice in which the state lead might use the resources as the basis for discussion about what works, to help teachers with planning and problem solving. The focus of the state teams’ work is implementation of new practices, reflection, and then refinement of practice.
* **A program team led by the local adult education program’s administrator that includes teachers from within the program.** Local teams would form professional learning communities or participate in a study circle to discuss how using the materials might lead to new practices.

## Study Circle Learning Objectives

**Teacher participants will be able to:**

* Explain what contextualization means in a work-related context and elaborate on why it is important;
* Describe evidence-based instructional models for infusing or integrating occupational training with English language instruction;
* Appraise the value of lessons, tasks, and strategies that support English learners’ transition to postsecondary training and education as part of a career pathway;
* Choose instructional strategies drawn from the ESL Pro resources to apply in practice and then reflect on the implementation; and
* Collaborate with colleagues to discuss skills and strategies for contextualizing instruction to prepare learners for work and/or training.

**Administrator participants will be able to:**

* Explain what contextualization means in a work-related context and elaborate on why it is important;
* Describe evidence-based instructional models for infusing or integrating occupational training with English language instruction;
* Appraise the value of lessons, tasks, and strategies that support English learners’ transition to postsecondary training and education as part of a career pathway;
* Plan ways to provide program support for instructors.

## Outline for Study Circle Sessions

The information below is intended to provide a consolidated view of the work that participants should conduct prior to each session.

**Study Circle Session One: What are career pathways for English learners all about?**

**Prior to Session One, participants should:**

* Complete Assignments #1: Self-Assessment and Assignment #2: Issue Brief Questions.
* Reflect on what contextualization related to work means—before reading the brief.
* Read the issue brief.
* Identify the research-based models discussed in the brief.
* Jot notes and/or questions.
* Prepare to share thoughts during the study circle session.

**Study Circle Session Two: Exploring ESL Pro resources and planning a contextualized lesson**

**Prior to Session Two, participants should:**

* Review the content of the online module and/or the companion learning resource.
* Choose to explore one specific area of interest from either the online module or the companion learning resource.
* Use the handout provided to develop a plan to implement a contextualized lesson on a work-related theme. Highlight the skills and/or language strategies that will be the target of instruction.
* Prepare to share a brief summary of the content area explored and the implementation plan during session two.

**Study Circle Session Three: Implementing and reflecting on a work-related contextualized lesson**

**Prior to Session Three, participants should:**

* Implement the chosen instructional strategy in the classroom.
* Reflect in writing on what happened. Use the handout provided. How did it go? How did learners respond? How did you assess learning? Did anything surprising happen? What might you change if you apply this strategy again?
* Identify next steps?
* Plan to share how the implementation went during Session Three.

## Preparation for Session One

Facilitators will want to ensure participants have the basic information they need to participate in the study circle. The email provided below is one way you can customize and communicate the necessary information.

**Email to Participants**

Dear Study Circle Participant,

I want to welcome you to the ESL Pro study circle on Preparing English Learners for Work and Career Pathways. As the facilitator for our study circle, I am writing to provide you with some details to help you to prepare.

If you are not already registered on LINCS, please register. LINCS houses all the ESL Pro materials that will be discussed and used in this study circle. Go to lincs.ed.gov and click on Register, or click here: <https://auth.lincs.ed.gov/nter-user-mgmt-webapp/signup?referer=community.lincs.ed.gov&modal=false>

If you are already registered, please sign in to access the online module and engage in community discussions on career pathways.

Here are the session dates and times for our study circle:

| **Session** | **Date** | **Time** | **Topic** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 |  |  | What does contextualized instruction mean and what are career pathways for English learners all about? |
| 2 |  |  | Exploring ESL Pro resources and planning a contextualized lesson |
| 3 |  |  | Implementing and reflecting on a contextualized lesson |

To prepare for our first session:

* 1. Complete Assignment #1: Self-Assessment. The purpose of this activity is to get you thinking about what you already know about career pathways and contextualized instruction and what you may want to learn more about.
  2. Read the issue brief on Preparing English Learners for Work and Career Pathways: <https://lincs.ed.gov/sites/default/files/ELL_Context_Instruction_508.pdf>
  3. Use the Assignment #2: Issue Brief Questions worksheet to write a few notes in which you identify the key ideas highlighted in the issue brief about career pathways and contextualized instruction. Reflect on how well your initial thinking about rigor aligns with the ideas in the brief.
  4. Based on the `content of the brief and your own ideas, write a brief statement about why career pathways in adult ESL is important.
  5. Please bring your notes and a copy of the issue brief to our first study circle session and be prepared to share your thoughts.

I’m looking forward to a great time of learning and sharing together. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Name

Phone number

Email address

ATTACHED: Assignment #1: Self-Assessment and Assignment #2: Issue Brief Questions

## Session One

*Materials[[4]](#footnote-4)*

* Name tags (for face-to-face)
* Flip chart paper and markers (for face-to-face)
* ESL Pro Issue Brief
* Assignment #1: Self-Assessment
* Assignment #2: Issue Brief Questions

*Objectives:*

* Explain what contextualization related to work looks like in adult ESL classes at all levels.
* Provide a rationale for why contextualizing instruction related to learners’ work/career goals is important.
* Describe the content covered in the ESL Pro online module and the companion learning resource.
* Engage with colleagues on the rationale for contextualizing instruction and what this looks like in an adult ESL class.

*Agenda*

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Study circle goals
3. Activity 1: Discussion of Assignment #1: Self-Assessment
4. Activity 2: Discussion of Issue Brief, Assignment #2: Issue Brief Questions – What do career pathways mean for English learners? What do we mean by contextualized instruction? Why is this important?
5. Activity 3: Presentation: Overview of the content of the online module

* Include examples of practical applications

1. Activity 4: Presentation: Overview of the content of the companion learning resource

* Include examples of practical applications

1. Assignment for next study circle session
2. Wrap up, summary, and evaluation

### Study Circle Session One: Facilitator Agenda and Talking Points

The chart below describes each activity, talking points, suggested grouping for face-to-face delivery, and suggested time allocations for both face-to-face and online delivery.[[5]](#footnote-5)

| **Activities** | **Grouping**  **(for face-to-face)** | **120 Minutes (for face-to-face)** | **90 Minutes**  **(for online)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Welcome and Introductions   * Welcome the group and thank everyone for coming. * Introduce yourself and ask participants to briefly introduce themselves – Name, place and position at work, how long they have been working with English learners, what they hope to get out of the study circle. * Share the plan and the learning objectives for the study circle overall. * Share the agenda and the learning objectives for session one. | Whole group | 15 minutes | 10 minutes |
| Activity 1: Discussion of Assignment #1: Self-Assessment (Appendix A).   * Go over each item and invite questions. | Whole group | 5 min | 5 min |
| Activity 2: Discussion of the Issue Brief – Assignment #2: Issue Brief Questions (Appendix A)   * Invite participants to draw from their notes to identify the key ideas about career pathways and contextualized instruction highlighted in the issue brief. (In a face-to-face session, participants can work in a small group to discuss their ideas before discussing with the whole group.) * Summarize the key ideas for the whole group. * While participants are likely familiar with the concept of career pathways, review the WIOA definition: a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that: * (A) aligns with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the State or regional economy involved; * (B) prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options, including apprenticeships; * (C) includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual’s education and career goals; * (D) includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster; * (E) organizes education, training, and other services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable; * (F) enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and at least 1 recognized postsecondary credential; and * (G) helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster. * Pose the question: Why is contextualized instruction related to learners’ career goals in ESL important? Summarize the group’s contributions. * Pose the question: What questions, if any, are raised for you about contextualized instruction and career pathways? As time allows, address participants’ questions and invite comments from the group. Tell participants that their questions will be addressed throughout the study circle.   OPTION: Invite participants to post their questions to an online Community of Practice and engage in discussing the questions together in the community before the next study circle session. | Small groups  Whole group | 30  minutes | 20 minutes |
| Activity 3: Present an Overview of the ESL Pro Module   * Provide an overview of the content of the ESL Pro module * Engage participants in an interactive activity that is included in the online module, e.g., the problem-based work scenario, “A Long Lunch,” which features a story with a number of interactive teaching activities, including listening to the story and responding to comprehension questions with answer cards, creating a story map, and considering options for solving the problem as well as possible consequences. Invite participants to identify the language skills and strategies that are the outcome of the instruction and discuss how the lesson builds work-related language and skills. | Whole group  Small groups  Whole group | 30 minutes | 20 minutes |
| Activity 4: Present an overview of the ESL Pro companion learning resource   * Provide an overview of the content of the ESL Pro companion learning resource * Engage participants in an interactive activity that is included in the companion learning resource, e.g., lesson on page 14 on note-taking from a worker safety video; lessons incorporating Do/Say charts focused on listening – pages 23-24. | Whole group  Small groups  Whole group | 30 minutes | 20 minutes |
| Assignment for Session Two  Explain that participants will:   * + Review the content of the online module and/or the companion learning resource.   + Choose to explore one specific area of interest from either the online module or the companion learning resource.   + Use Assignment #3: Exploration to develop a plan to implement an instructional strategy in the classroom. Highlight the work-related language and skills that will be the target of instruction.   + Prepare to share a brief summary of the content area explored and the implementation plan during Session Two. | Whole group | 5 minutes | 5 minutes |
| Wrap up, Summary and Evaluation  Summarize what was covered in the study circle; revisit the goals for the session and inquire how well the goals were achieved; invite participants to complete an evaluation. | Whole group | 5 minutes | 5 minutes |

## Preparation for Session Two

Communicate the information in the email below to participants. An email template is provided for your use and customization.

**Email to Participants**

Dear Study Circle Participants,

Our study circle got off to a great start. Thank you for being part of this learning community and contributing to our wonderfully rich discussion. [Insert brief reflection or recap of Session One.]

To prepare for our second study circle session on [DATE] at [TIME], each of you will choose to explore either the ESL Pro online module or the companion learning resource. You can certainly explore both if you have the time and the inclination. You should feel free to pick and choose aspects of the online course and/or the companion learning resource that seem particularly relevant to your work at this time. The goal will be for you to select something specific from the ESL Pro resources to implement in your practice.

Please use the attached Assignment #3: Exploration worksheet to plan your implementation. Each of you will have [X] minutes to share your plan during the next study circle session. Please feel free to display any teacher-made handouts you intend to use as part of your implementation. We will also be keenly interested to hear how you plan to contextualize language and work-related content in the lesson.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. I’m looking forward to our continuing work together! [Insert line about where the next session is being held, e.g., location, online link.]

Sincerely,

Name

Email

Phone

ATTACHED: Assignment #3: Exploration

## Session Two

*Materials*

* Name tags (for face-to-face)
* Flip chart paper and markers (for face-to-face)
* Assignment #3: Exploration

*Objectives:*

* Identify several instructional strategies and teaching resources from the ESL Pro materials that are designed to support learners toward achieving their work-related goals. (Participants will get better acquainted with the range of ESL Pro materials.)
* Explain which aspect of ESL Pro they plan to focus on, why they selected it, and what the contextualized lesson will look like.
* Prepare and present an implementation plan.
* Receive feedback from and provide feedback to peers on the implementation plans.

*Agenda*

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Revisit study circle goals
3. Activity – Participant sharing:

* Content area:
* What content area did you explore?
* Why did you decide to focus on that content area?
* In what ways does the contextualized lesson deepen learners’ work-related language and skills?
* Implementation plan:
* What do you plan to implement in your classroom?
* What are the specific work-related skills and language strategies that will be the target of instruction?
* How will you assess student learning?

1. Time for questions and comments from colleagues
2. Assignment for next study circle session
3. Wrap up, summary, and evaluation

### Study Circle Session Two: Facilitator Agenda and Talking Points

The chart below describes each activity, talking points, suggested grouping for face-to-face delivery, and suggested time allocations for both face-to-face and online delivery.

| **Activities** | **Grouping**  **(for face-to-face)** | **120 Minutes (for face-to-face)** | **90 Minutes**  **(for online)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Welcome and Introductions   * Welcome the group and thank everyone for coming. * Ask participants to briefly reintroduce themselves. * Revisit the overall study circle plan and learning objectives. * Share the agenda and learning objectives for Session Two. | Whole group | 10 minutes | 10 minutes |
| Activity 1: Participant Sharing   * Invite participants to present Assignment #3: Exploration. (Decide ahead of time the order for the presentations. Determine how much time participants will have for sharing and alert presenters when they have two minutes remaining) * After each presentation, invite questions and comments – again keep an eye on the clock to ensure everyone has the same amount of time to present. * At the conclusion of the presentations, summarize the highlights by focusing on contextualization related to work and what specific language skills and strategies were increased; also note any pertinent questions that arose during the discussion.   OPTION: Questions that arise could be posted to the online LINCS Community and participants could be encouraged to continue the discussion there. | Whole group | 100  minutes | 70 minutes |
| Assignment for Session Three  Explain that participants will:   * Implement the chosen instructional strategy in their classroom/program * Reflect in writing on the implementation. Use the Assignment #4: Implementation worksheet provided. What was the focus of the contextualized lesson? How did it go? How did learners respond? How was learning assessed? Did anything surprising happen? What might you change if you implement this activity again? * Identify next steps? * Plan to share how the implementation went during Session Three. | Whole group | 5 minutes | 5 minutes |
| Wrap up, Summary, and Evaluation  Summarize what was covered in the study circle; revisit the goals for the session and inquire how well the goals were achieved; invite participants to complete an evaluation. | Whole group | 5 minutes | 5 minutes |

## Preparation for Session Three

Communicate the information in the email below to participants. An email template is provided for your use and customization.

**Email to Participants**

Dear Study Circle Participants,

It was wonderful to hear so many great ideas for how you plan to apply what you are learning from the ESL Pro materials in your practice. Between now and our next study circle session on [DATE] and [TIME], each participant will implement their chosen activity.

Please use the attached Assignment #4: Implementation worksheet to reflect on your implementation and to plan your presentation. Each of you will have [X] minutes to share during the next study circle session. I want to encourage you to provide some kind of visual when you present. This could be a teacher-made handout, a photo, a webpage, examples of student work (be sure to remove students’ names), etc. We will all be keenly interested to hear how you contextualized instruction around meaningful work-related content and skills. Most importantly, tell us how students responded to the activity.

I’m available to support you, so please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. I’m looking forward to hearing about everyone’s implementation!

[If needed, insert information about the location/log in of the third session.]

Sincerely,

Name

Email

Phone

ATTACHED: Assignment #4: Implementation

## Session Three

*Materials*

* Name tags (for face-to-face)
* Flip chart paper and markers (for face-to-face)
* Assignment #4: Implementation
* Post Reflection Assignment #5

*Objectives:*

* Identify several instructional strategies and teaching resources from the ESL Pro materials that are designed to support learners toward achieving their work-related goals. (Participants will get better acquainted with the range of ESL Pro materials.)
* Design, implement, analyze and reflect on a contextualized work-related lesson.
* Present an overview of the contextualized activity and highlight what was learned through the implementation process.
* Receive feedback from and provide feedback to peers on their implementation.

*Agenda*

1. Welcome
2. Revisit study circle goals
3. Participant Sharing:

* The specific ESL Pro content explored and why they decided to focus on that content area
* The implementation plan: What was implemented in their classroom/program? What work-related content was the focus of the contextualized lesson? How did it go? What were the specific skills and language strategies that were the target of instruction? How was learning assessed? How did students respond? Was there anything surprising? What might the teacher change, if anything? What questions remain? What might be the next steps?

1. A brief summary of what was learned and next steps
2. Time for questions and comments from colleagues
3. Wrap up and summary of what was learned in this session and the study circle overall and evaluation

### Study Circle Session Three: Facilitator Agenda and Talking Points

The chart below describes each activity, talking points, suggested grouping for face-to-face delivery, and suggested time allocations for both face-to-face and online delivery.

| **Activities** | **Grouping**  **(for face-to-face)** | **120 Minutes (for face-to-face)** | **90 Minutes**  **(for online)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Welcome and Introductions   * Welcome the group and thank everyone for coming. * Ask participants to briefly reintroduce themselves * Revisit the plan and the learning objectives for the study circle overall. * Share the agenda and learning objectives for Session Three. | Whole group | 10 minutes | 10 minutes |
| Activity 1: Participant Sharing   * Invite participants to present Assignment #4: Implementation. (Decide ahead of time the order for the presentations. Determine the amount of time for sharing and alert presenters when they have two minutes remaining) * After each presentation, invite questions and comments – again keep an eye on the clock to ensure everyone has the same amount of time to present * At the conclusion of the presentations, summarize the highlights by emphasizing what participants learned about implementing contextualized lessons; also highlight what specific language skills and strategies were increased; note any pertinent questions that arose during the discussion   OPTION: Questions that arise could be posted to the online community and participants could be encouraged to continue the discussion there. | Whole group | 100  minutes | 70 minutes |
| Wrap up, Summary, and Evaluation   * Invite participants to complete the Post Reflection Assignment #5 and highlight what they learned * Invite participants to indicate what questions remain for them. * Invite participants to make a commitment to their next steps with ESL Pro. * Summarize what was covered in the study circle; revisit the goals for the session and the study circle overall and inquire how well the goals were achieved; invite participants to complete an evaluation. * Note that there are opportunities to continue engaging with teachers across the country who are using ESL Pro Career Pathways materials. Use the dedicated thread in the LINCS Community to continue to ask questions and share your experiences with others: https://community.lincs.ed.gov/discussion/new-lincs-course-career-pathways | Whole group | 15 minutes | 15 minutes |

# Appendix A. Assignment #1 – Facilitator’s Version

**LINCS ESL Pro Study Circle  
Preparing English Learners for Work and Career Pathways  
Facilitator’s Version**

**Assignment #1: Pre Study Circle Self-Assessment**

*When leading the discussion about the Assignment #1 Self-Assessment during Session One, facilitators can draw upon the following text taken from Unit 1 of the ESL Pro online module.*

1. **Teaching life skills is one example of contextualized instruction.**

**True.** Any effort can be contextualized as long as you use authentic materials and link what’s taught to the language and literacy demands outside of the classroom. However, when we talk about connecting ESL to career pathways, contextualization refers to teaching students the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in training and preparing for jobs that pay a family-sustaining wage.

1. **Students need to be at an advanced level before they can participate in work or career preparation classes.**

**False.** A number of programs have infused knowledge about careers into the lower English Language Acquisition levels and are teaching language associated with a specific career path, such as health, information technologies, or basic manufacturing, to high beginners. These programs start with learner experiences and use visual materials to illustrate ideas and show examples. Students often work in pairs or small groups and help one another while the teacher circulates and offers English vocabulary on an as-needed basis.

1. **Most immigrants and refugees not yet proficient in English are working.**

**True**. Most immigrants and refugees are working, but most work in low-wage jobs. And a majority of these jobs are not tied to a career ladder. In many cases, individuals work two or three jobs to make ends meet. Helping students build the skills necessary for them to access occupational training and earn a certificate is one way to help families move out of poverty.

1. **Instructional strategies for teaching ELA in the context of work and training are totally different from other ELA strategies.**

**False.** Many of the strategies effective in teaching language and literacy can be adapted to classes contextualized for career pathways. The context for instruction and the skills emphasis shifts, but the teaching approach per se does not. In both cases increasing rigor can help prepare students for the demands of the modern world. For more information on increasing rigor in teaching ELLs, see Module 1.

1. **One of the most effective models for integrating ELA with occupational skills is co-teaching, involving both an ELA and a technical instructor.**

**True.** Models that integrate language and literacy skills instruction through co-teaching are an effective way to help students get the skills they need for good jobs. The I-BEST model in Washington State has research to that effect. However, other approaches such as contextualizing ELA for career pathways, providing ELA at the worksite, and offering concurrent enrollment in a technical class and an ELA class also help students to prepare for the future.

1. **One of the major long-term goals of workforce and career pathway preparation is to help adult learners get “good jobs at good wages.”**

**True.** A good job at good wages is another way of saying a “family sustaining” or “family supporting” wages. The term job that pays a living wage has a similar meaning. Students who get support in transitioning to technical training in a demand occupation have a good chance to realize their hope for a good job.

# Appendix B. Assignment #2: Issue Brief Questions – Facilitator’s Version

**LINCS ESL Pro Study Circle  
Issue Brief: Preparing English Learners for Work and Career Pathways  
Facilitator Handout for Assignment #2: Issue Brief Questions**

*When leading the discussion of Assignment #2: Issue Brief Questions during Session One, facilitators may want to draw upon the following text taken from the issue brief on Career Pathways.*

1. **Read the definition of a Career Pathway and fill the blanks with words that fit.**

**From Page 2:** “A series of **(a) connected** education and training strategies and support **(b) services** that enable individuals to secure industry-relevant **(c) certification** and obtain **(d) employment** in an occupational area and to advance to higher levels of future education and employment in that area.” (U.S. Departs of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services, 2012)

1. **Why is it important to bring contextualized instruction related to work and support for career pathways to adult education programs serving adult English learners?**

**From Page 3:** “The United States is home to more than 25.3 million individuals with limited English proficiency, including both foreign-born and U.S.-born individuals (Whatley & Batalova, 2013). The pressing need to move beyond life skills–oriented ESL instruction is felt quite keenly by ELA program2 2 An *English language acquisition program* is defined as “a program of instruction designed to help eligible individuals who are English language learners achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language; and that leads to attainment of the secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; and transition to postsecondary education and training; or employment” (Public Law 113–128, July 2014, Title II, Sec. 203[6]). This term replaces the formerly used phrase *English as a second language,* or adult ESL. administrators and instructors, who are aware that the majority of ELLs are far from earning the middle-class wages envisioned in the Ready to Work report (Biden, 2014); instead, many are employed in entry-level, low-wage jobs. This is true not only of low-skilled immigrants with little education but also for immigrants and refugees with professional degrees, who tend to be underemployed as well (Spence, 2010; Wilson, 2014). Both groups are employed at a higher rate than U.S.-born adults but are overrepresented in the low-wage workforce (Capps, Fix, & Lin, 2010).

Given the pressures to find work and support a family, few learners new to English have the time or resources to persist through a sequential ELA program that moves them from the beginning to the advanced levels of English proficiency required for certificate training in high-demand jobs in fields (McHugh, 2014; Wrigley, 2009). Concerned about these realities, President Obama’s administration (White House, 2015), working with key federal departments, has suggested alternative models to accelerate the transition to job skills training and to allow students with different experiences and backgrounds to participate effectively in a changing labor market.

A federal report jointly developed by the U.S. Departments of Labor, Commerce, Education, and Health and Human Services (2014) entitled *What Works in Job Training* also highlights models that build partnerships between education and workforce institutions. These models reflect a new skills paradigm designed to move youth and adults into good jobs that are ready to be filled.”

1. **What are some program models you are aware of that are designed to strengthen the connection between adult education, skills training and employment?**

**From Page 4:** Adult ELA programs serving students who are looking for work or looking to advance in their current jobs might consider shifting from general ELA to one or more contextualized ELA classes focused on workforce preparation. These classes often integrate a career awareness component to help students identify both the skills they have and the skills they need to qualify for jobs that pay family-sustaining wages.

Particularly important for immigrants and refugees are components that increase awareness of career ladders and the hourly wages associated with each step on the ladder. Students from poorer families can often benefit from gaining a broader perspective that illustrates how investing in longer-term opportunities might benefit a family financially in the long run. Other options include: **bridge courses** that prepare students for the next step in their careers, whether employment or skills training; the **concurrent enrollment model** (see Exhibit 1), which allows students to co-enroll in a technical class and an English support class; and the **I-BEST (Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training) model,** an approach, supported by research evidence (Zeidenberg & Jenkins, 2010), which uses team teaching. In the latter model, a technical instructor and an adult basic education or ELA instructor work side by side in the same classroom, interweaving basic skills and occupational skills. Many of these programs also provide advising and other supportive services to make it possible for students to persist and succeed in the long term.

*Contextualization for English language acquisition:* A process of providing language and literacy services contextualized to the skill demands of work or career and technical training. Instruction is offered in a supportive environment and uses authentic materials gathered from workplace and technical training.

Blended learning models that combine online learning with face-to-face group instruction can help to accelerate learning at any level. However, while higher-skilled students may be able to learn independently using computer-mediated systems (with some guidance), lower-skilled students new to technology may need a great deal of support and assistance in using new media for learning.

1. **What can program managers do to support contextualized instruction and career pathways?**

**From Page 5:** “Employer engagement can significantly contribute to the success of a program’s career pathway efforts. For example, employers working in collaboration with ELA and training providers can be asked to identify the language and literacy demands of specific jobs, provide input on curriculum, and describe current and future work opportunities in their sectors. They may also help determine which industry-recognized certificates should be created for specific pathways. Some companies, including hotels, restaurants, and custodial staff in school districts, are collaborating with ELA programs to help design customized training programs with an eye toward employee advancement.

Employers can also be asked to coordinate their on-site training with opportunities afforded by local providers, and they can offer internships or other work-based learning opportunities. Many employers are willing to participate in career days and conduct mock interviews with students. Fully engaged employers may offer release time for classes or provide other incentives and supports to help workers persist and complete a course.”

1. **What are some of the language skills learners need to be employed in jobs that can sustain families?**

**From pages 5-6:** “Although general program models may look similar for all adult basic education students, the instructional opportunities offered to ELLs preparing for work and training must be quite different both in design and execution. New immigrants and refugees may be unfamiliar with the culture of the U.S. workplace or the culture of training. They may have little experience in learning technical skills in a classroom setting and might need information, support, and guidance in making career choices and selecting appropriate training opportunities. The following list outlines some of the key skills that a contextualized ELA program might address, along with strategies for strengthening these skills.

* **Speaking and Listening Skills:** Unlike native speakers, ELLs may not be familiar with the social and technical language used in modern workplaces and training. There is a great need for functional language associated with asking for information, making requests, providing explanations, discussing problems, or making amends when things go wrong.
* **Academic Listening Comprehension Skills:** The skills needed to understand and respond to lectures are particularly important in training, whether they are part of workplace training or part of an occupational skills course offered in a career and technical program. ELLs at all levels need experience listening to academic presentations. They must gain proficiency in both global listening—to get the main point of an explanation— and listening for important details that need to be remembered. Because the technology used in both work and training is rapidly evolving, the skills necessary for each increasingly include the use of software-based training modules that require “problem solving in technology-rich environments”
* **Written Communication:** The writing that ELLs must do at work and in training courses is quite different from the personal narratives that are common in many ESL programs, particularly at the beginning levels. ELLs preparing for careers are expected to become proficient in document and informational literacy (Parrish & Johnson, 2010). Expectations for work-related written communication now go far beyond simply filling out print forms or jotting down information in a note. Workers and trainees increasingly need to access information contained in company and training websites and are expected to use e-mail on a regular basis. Increasingly, they must request time off, check schedules, clock in and out, and report problems online. Communication regularly flows via e-mail, and in most training courses, students are expected to download readings and upload completed assignments.
* **Technical Language and Vocabulary.** The language used in job skills training tends to be quite different from the everyday language that ELLs hear and read in conventional ELA classes. Vocabulary may be a challenge as well. ELLs who want to succeed in training will need to acquire thousands of new words to understand lectures and textbooks, participate in discussions, and pass exams. The terminology used in technical classes may represent the academic language of a profession or industry, but it often includes *subtechnical vocabulary,* terminology that native speakers tend to know but that may be unfamiliar to ELLs
* **The Culture of Work and Training:** Immigrants and refugees who are still learning English and have been in the United States for only a relatively short time may need a great deal of guidance on how to navigate the U.S. workplace or how to succeed in a training course at an academic institution (Wrigley, Richter, Martinson, Kubo, & Strawn, 2003). Cultural knowledge may include the skills associated with high-performance workplaces and career and technical training, such as problem solving, decision making, and working in teams. ELLs may likewise be unfamiliar with the language used in social interactions, such as communicating with supervisors or instructors and collaborating with fellow workers and students. ELLs may also need to know about workers’ rights and learn more about social and legal issues related to sexual harassment and discrimination.”

1. ESL Pro materials were developed under Contract No. ED-VAE-13-C-0058 managed by the American Institutes for Research. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. WIOA defines English language learners to describe individuals who have limited ability in reading, writing, speaking, or comprehending the English language and whose native language is a language other than English or who lives in a family or community environment where a language other than English is the dominant language. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. WIOA defines English language acquisition programs as a program of instruction designed to help eligible individuals who are ELLs achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language and that leads to attainment of a secondary school diploma or its equivalent and transition to postsecondary education and training or employment. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Depending on whether this session is held face-to-face or virtually, different materials may be required. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Many different platforms and tools could be used to support the online-delivery of this study circle. If you have access to a webinar platform (e.g. WebEx, Adobe Connect), you can use that to support delivery. Other study circles could be held with live meetings via conference call. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)