Instructional Implications for the College and Career Readiness Standards

Although the CCR Standards are relevant and necessary for native and non-native English-speaking alike, there are many aspects of the CCR Standards that adult ESOL students will need additional practice with. The following table highlights some of these considerations. For all four strands of the CCR Standards, the implicit *cultural behaviors and expectations* behind these academic and technical skills need to be made explicit to learners. The teaching of domain-specific vocabulary and the conventions of academic and technical texts may be fairly straightforward, given the many instructional materials available.

However, certain skills, concepts, and practices such as drawing conclusions, analyzing an author's point of view, reasoning of arguments, formatting of texts, authoritativeness, plagiarism, display of confidence in speech, turn-taking expectations in discussions, and respecting and incorporating diverse viewpoints are all *cultural behaviors* that may not exist or may differ in ESOL students' native cultures. For adult ESOL students in particular, the cultural "what" as well as the cultural "why" behind these aspects of the CCR Standards must be taught directly in order for students to be successful communicators in speech and print.

The chart that follows highlights some of the instructions implications that ESOL teachers—as well as the many ABE teachers who have ESOL students in their classes—will need to consider:

CCR Standards	**Instructional Implications** Adult ESOL students may need extra practice with:
Reading	• Making inferences and drawing conclusions from a text, especially when these implications are culturally based • Using graphic organizers • Tier 2[1] and other vocabulary within specific work or academic contexts (e.g., formulaic expressions/chunks, collocations, phrasal verbs, idioms, technical language) • Understanding and using various text features (e.g., headings, captions, graphics) and illustrations that convey meaning and textual organization • Language needed to analyze the structure of an author's point of view and claims • The language of reasoning (e.g., compare and contrast, cause and effect, analysis)
Writing	• Many models of different genres of written texts • Language that makes claims and presents relevant evidence • Function words that *link* and *create cohesion* among ideas, that *conclude* arguments, that *clarify* relationships, that *organize* discourse, and that *signal*

[1] For lists of Tier 2 words, see *Townsend Press Vocabulary Series,* http://www.townsendpress.com and *Wordly Wise 3000 Series,* http://eps.schoolspecialty.com/products/details.cfm?series=2818M, both available through the SABES Library. You can download a PDF of *The Academic Word List at* www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/resources/academicwordlist/

	tone • Domain-specific, precise vocabulary, including Tier 2 words • Using technology to produce written texts, to check grammar and spelling, and to publish and share written work
Speaking and Listening	• Language needed to initiate, respond to, elaborate on, extend, agree or disagree with other people's ideas in a discussion • "Group speak" for facilitating discussion, building consensus, keeping a task moving • Asking questions to clarify meaning and check understanding • Vocabulary and concepts related to stance, word choice, emphasis, tone • Making their pronunciation and overall flow of speech more comprehensible • Strategic use of technology during formal presentations
Language	• High-frequency sight words, affixes, root words, derivations, spelling patterns, word families, syllable patterns, compounds • Building more complex language structures using various clause and phrase structures • Nominalizations (e.g., verbs that have a derived noun form and are often abstract, such as evaporate → evaporation). • Using technology and non-technological resources to check conventions of standard capitalization, punctuation, spelling • Finding a word's meaning through context • Shades of meaning among verbs of manner (e.g., run vs. sprint), adjectives of intensity (e.g., pretty vs. gorgeous), states of mind (knew vs. believed vs. wondered), and degrees of certainty • Syllable patterns in reading unfamiliar, multisyllabic words

What ESOL Teaching Strategies Support the CCR Standards?

There is no prescribed order or method as to how the CCR Standards should be taught; this flexibility allows teachers to make instructional designs based on the unique needs and characteristics of their learners when implementing the standards within the context of the local program's curriculum. Given the limited amount of time that adult ESOL students generally have to attend class, the need to maximize available instructional time to prepare them to meet their college or career goals is even more urgent. Developing language and literacy skills in an additional language is a lengthy process, and the CCR Standards help us to break down the components of this process so that we can plan for it and implement it systematically. At this point, college and career readiness standards are a well-established framework for K-12 education, but we are just now beginning to articulate how to interpret and implement these for adult education and ESOL instruction. The following overall strategies or approaches to teaching within a college and career readiness framework are appropriate (with modifications) for all levels of ESOL.

1) Identify and incorporate your learners' areas of academic and career interest into instructional materials.

Many of us already make use of various needs assessments tools that allow us to get to know our ESOL students' backgrounds and learning goals. For example, we may use pictures, short questionnaires, checklists, language use inventories, or small group brainstorming to gauge students' interests and learning needs at the beginning of a course of instruction. In a communicatively-oriented ESOL context, this information helps identify thematic life skills-related units to teach – focusing, for example, on vocabulary for food shopping, completing a job application, or getting involved in community activities. To address college and career readiness, these needs assessments can be tweaked to identify discipline-specific content areas (beyond life skills) that they are interested in and would need to know more about for enhancing their prospects. The following chart highlights some of the academic- or career-related topics that can be intriguing for adults to explore. These areas represent the types of community or technical college degree programs that beginning ESOL students may not be prepared for yet; however, information about and exposure to these topics can be integrated into most life skills units.

Content Areas Relevant to College and Career Readiness	
• Accounting • Automotive • Business/Financial Services • Child Development • Communication • Information Technology • Construction • Criminal Justice • Culinary Arts • Education	• Green Energy/Clean Technology • Health Care • Hospitality • HVAC • Manufacturing and Advanced Manufacturing • Music • STEM • Real Estate • Robotics

ESOL students may not be aware of the variety of options in education and training programs in their local area. They may also need assistance in translating their personal interests and skills into potential career paths. In Massachusetts ABE programs, the Advisor plays a key role in working with teachers and students to explore and set realistic goals and plan the steps necessary to meet them. For example, a student who is active in a neighborhood watch group may find that she is interested in learning more about options in the criminal justice field. On the other hand, if a student enjoys watching reality TV shows about house hunting, a career with a real estate company might be fulfilling, but would it be financially viable?

A major advantage that all ESOL students have (and should regularly be reminded of!) on the job market is their developing bilingual skills, which is considered to be an asset by most employers. By working together with learners to frame their future goals in ways that are realistic, attainable, and maximize their personal interests, skills, and language proficiencies, the advisor and teacher can increase a student's motivation to pursue educational opportunities and to make the most of their ESOL instruction.

One way to tap into these interests is to use or modify the "Things I Like," "Things I'm Good At," and "Things I Have Done" worksheets available in a useful Massachusetts resource, the *Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE & ESOL Classroom* (ICA) Curriculum Guide.

2) Create and help students use or access a library of content-based nonfiction texts.

The results of needs assessments that tap into the discipline-specific content areas, such as the ones listed in the chart above, will guide you in choosing the types of informational, nonfiction texts that are prioritized in the CCR Standards – and are most relevant to your learners' interests. These texts will expose them to the domain-specific vocabulary and genres that go beyond the manufactured readings and basic narrative paragraphs that are so common in adult ESOL textbooks. Although not meant to replace adult ESOL textbooks, content-specific nonfiction texts (oral and written) that represent different genres and that appeal to your learners' personal, academic, and career-related interests, should supplement traditional ESOL materials.

Book titles from ReadingA-Z.com that could supplement adult ESOL "life skills" curriculum:

Food Unit: "All About Chocolate" (Level O, 678 words); "Where Plants Grow" (Level D, 64 words)

Work Unit: "All Kinds of Factories" (Level E, 120 words)

Housing Unit: "All Kinds of Homes" (Level G, 161 words); "Machines at Home" (Level C, 48 words)

Health Unit: "Asthma" (Level N, 547 words)

Transportation Unit: "Garrett Morgan and the Traffic Signal" (Level J, 232

Research shows that sustained, silent reading can improve vocabulary, motivation, and self-confidence in reading. ESOL instruction should help learners build language that is elaborated, detailed, rich, and precise. An accessible library with content-based nonfiction – from domains such as science, social studies, history, technology, mathematics, and the arts – will familiarize students with the topics, genres, conventions, and formats beyond the adult ESOL textbook. Grammar, vocabulary, and linguistic patterns tend to be genre-specific, and these elements of language need to be taught explicitly to all learners within thematic contexts. Vocabulary words from the Academic Word List (Coxhead, 2011), technical words, root words with related affixes, and derivations are more likely to be found in nonfiction texts than instructional texts that were created for language learners. Reading logs help students track their reading, new vocabulary words, and match content with linguistic structures that they can then use for their own writing in the future. The organization and overall structures of these types of texts can serve as models for writing academic texts.

One source of nonfiction texts is Reading A-Z (www.readinga-z.com), which has hundreds of downloadable nonfiction texts representing a wide variety of proficiency levels for an annual fee. Although these books were written with a K-12 audience in mind and were carefully designed to serve as leveled and graded readers, they often contain many of the same features as the academic and technical texts that are represented in the CCR Standards: Table of contents, headings and subheadings, bolded words found in a glossary, informational texts (not narratives) with facts and figures, topic index, illustrations (with captions or labels), and multi-paragraph-length section. Adult ESOL learners need to know and be able to use these textual features to build their reading skills for future academic or technical work.

In addition to providing these features that are foundational in academic and technical texts, nonfiction graded readers such as those found on Reading A-Z.com are appropriate for adult

ESOL instruction in other ways. The discipline-specific content is often relatable to life skills content (such as work, transportation, and food), making these books natural supplements to the adult ESOL curriculum by extending learners' knowledge of and exposure to level-appropriate texts. The organized structure of these leveled readers, with short sections separated by clear headings and subheadings, scaffolds adult ESOL learners' reading experiences by helping them practice reading strategies such as scanning and predicting. The books contain carefully selected illustrations and graphics that aid comprehension. Despite the academic and technical nature of the texts, they contain relatively simple language that increases in complexity (and word count) with each level of text. Most importantly, these leveled texts are designed to help readers be successful; although some of the content is not appropriate for adults, the majority of selections could be used with adult ESOL learners. The same types of texts could be found for free in a public library, but the carefully designed features of this ready-made and easily downloadable resource make it much easier to create your own renewable classroom library, for a relatively low cost.

A free text resource that is available to adult education practitioners in Massachusetts is *The Change Agent*, a biannual magazine for adult educators and learners published by the New England Literacy Resource Center (NELRC) at World Education, written by and for adult education teachers and learners. The topics of each issue are well-researched and oriented to academic and technical perspectives, with a framework of social justice in mind. Recent issues addressed topics of immigration, technology, employment, and resilience. The articles themselves include vocabulary, grammatical structures, and textual features that are appropriate for building college and career readiness. The articles can be separated and organized into level-appropriate files to create another type of reading library for your students.

In May, The Change Agent launched its new website, http://changeagent.nelrc.org/. There you will find PDFs of all the issues, many articles in audio, leveled texts, and much more. If you are in New England, you may qualify for free online access.
Contact changeagent@worlded.org to find out more.

10 Tips for CCR Standards-Friendly ESOL Instruction

1. Teach English using thematic units (e.g., an extended series of classes on health, shopping, employment, or transportation).

2. Engage students in tasks that require critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

3. Use a process approach to teach writing (e.g., brainstorm, draft, peer review, revise, provide feedback, incorporate feedback, publish).

4. Teach Tier 2 and academic vocabulary that goes beyond basic life skills.

5. Address college and career goals explicitly with your students.

6. Specify American cultural expectations about classroom behavior, interpersonal skills, personal responsibility.

7. Push students to try to use more detailed, more elaborated, or more precise language.

8. Give students texts to read or listen to that are outside of the ESOL textbook, particularly non-fiction texts.

9. Teach vocabulary-building skills (e.g., word families, prefixes, suffixes, word derivations).

10. Teach grammar in a contextualized way (e.g., how grammatical structures are used in real communication, not just the rules

3) Incorporate project-based learning using supplementary nonfiction texts (written and oral).
One of the best approaches to engage learners in developing the skills emphasized throughout the CCR Standards (e.g., critical thinking, analytical skills, academic vocabulary across disciplines, revisiting and revising content, and working with a variety of genres, etc.) is project-based learning within contextualized thematic units. Gaining considerable support in K-12 education that is aligned with the Common Core State Standards, project-based language learning is collaborative and content-based, but requires careful planning prior to implementation. By structuring your curriculum within units that result in long-term projects, students are allowed to delve into and really engage with both language and content.

All language learners need many opportunities to be exposed to language and content, with a rich amount of practice and personal connections being made to what is learned. Over the course of the unit, project-based learning sets the stage for students to engage in language and content in a variety of ways: seeing, saying, hearing, reading, and writing. More specifically, project-based learning should guide learners to conduct research and to contribute information to a given field. For example, students can survey people in their school, work, or community on the topic, compile the data, present the findings, and create something using the findings – perhaps even teaching the information to a peer. The recycling and enrichment of language and content is built-in for project-based learning, but it is an essential component of any kind of learning. (See the Resources section for more information.)

4). Raise awareness of college and career options, as well as cultural considerations and expectations of adult learning in the United States, often and early.
One of the easiest ways to address college and career readiness in the adult ESOL classroom is to work it into daily lessons and the environmental print surrounding students. In the warm-up activities you do with students, in the pictures that you use as writing or speaking prompts, and in the practice exercises that students complete, you can weave in appropriate references to college and career opportunities to keep these options at the forefront of students' minds. By choosing two or three regular activities that explicitly raise awareness of college and career readiness, you can establish this topic as an important one in your students' educational lives. For example, you can regularly start or end your classes by giving students an intriguing statement to think about: "Employees with a bachelor's degree make 54% more money (on average) than employees who attended college but did not finish. True or false?" When you elicit speech or written sentences from students to work on descriptive language and build vocabulary, you can use pictures of a community college campus, classroom, lecture hall, library, or laboratory to familiarize your students with these scenes. When you are modeling grammar or vocabulary exercises for your students, you can easily contextualize some of the sentences to a college and career readiness frame.

These types of awareness-raising activities can be extended beyond the classroom as well. Former ESOL students who are now enrolled in a career or postsecondary training program can visit classes as guest speakers. Students can brainstorm and share their ideas on posters about the advantages of being an older student when pursuing more education or training. As a class, you can create an "Academic Word Wall" on a bulletin board in your classroom or in a hallway where a new word, used in context, is posted weekly. Students can be assigned to ask other

teachers, students, and staff in the ESOL program (or co-workers and neighbors) to share their experiences about their college or technical training program. Some class time can be used on working with some of the extracurricular resources from the *Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE & ESOL Classroom* Curriculum Guide, such as the "College Awareness Assessment," the "Campus Scavenger Hunt," and the "Campus Map Checklist" handouts.

5) Provide clear modeling of what you want your students to achieve.

All adult learners, and especially non-native English speakers, need explicit modeling on how to use language appropriately and effectively to read, write, discuss, analyze, agree, disagree, and so on. Modeling early and often, with examples and expectations presented orally and in writing, helps to scaffold English language learners' classroom experiences. Learning language as adults is quite challenging; pairing language learning with academic and technical skills and content provides a much-needed context and motivation for tackling the challenge, but plenty of assistance is needed in order for ESOL students to be successful. It is also helpful to provide clear models of how student performance is being assessed, using rubrics or checklists. Rubrics and checklists provide several benefits for adult ESOL students:

- Give students a goal to work toward.
- Get students used to the idea that there are expectations and standards for performance.
- Help students self-assess and take more responsibility for their learning.
- Models the type of documentation found in work, training, or academic contexts.

Using rubrics will help you to plan your instruction so that students can meet the expectations of assignments. By familiarizing your students with the concept of rubrics or checklists, you begin to prepare them for similar types of expectations on the job or in an academic context.

Concluding thoughts

Despite the challenges of shifting your ESOL instruction to reflect the more rigorous requirements of the CCR Standards, I encourage you to consider the following question: Given the best educational opportunities and the necessary amount of time, where *could* these learners go in their lives? To me, "best opportunities" means providing a long-term focus on college and career readiness that goes beyond the ESOL program, from the first day learners step foot in class, regardless of where they are coming from. "Best opportunities" means modifying our current life skills focus in ESOL instruction to gradually incorporate more academically-oriented ways of teaching and learning. "Best opportunities" means using instructional resources that supplement the traditional ESOL textbook to address the instructional shifts of the CCR Standards: More *complexity* in texts and language, more *evidence* to support oral and written communication, and more *academic content knowledge* in diverse domains. It is a considerable undertaking, but we can start with some lessons learned and instructional resources from a variety of areas. We do not have to reinvent the wheel; however, we may need to replace a few of the spokes to help adult ESOL learners benefit from the opportunities that the CCR Standards provide.

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