

TESOL AND HEALTH EDUCATION ALUMNI CONNECTIONS

OVERVIEW

Gail Weinstein, a professor in the MA TESOL Department at SFSU, and Roma Guy, a professor of Health Education at SFSU, facilitated a working group discussion designed to reach out to SFSU alumni who have graduated from the TESOL and health education programs and update them on emerging collaborations between language education and health at the university. About 10 attendees participated in this session.

SESSION DESCRIPTION

During introductions, participants mentioned that they were interested in finding out how collaborations with healthcare workers and ESL instructors might unfold.

Gail then described CIRCLE (Center for Immigrant & Refugee Community Literacy Education) as a new initiative under development at San Francisco State University that builds on over 10 years of project work. She explained that CIRCLE will have an array of activities under its scope. One such activity is community service learning endeavors such as Project SHINE (Students Helping in the Naturalization of Elders, www.shinesf.org), which places SFSU students in adult ESL classrooms throughout the Bay Area to tutor learners in English as well as help them pass the naturalization test.

Another CIRCLE component focuses on professional development for pre-service and in-service practitioners. This will entail offering training opportunities, such as online courses and workshops like the Health Literacy Forum, to healthcare practitioners in the field as well as current adult ESL practitioners. Students in pre-professional programs at SFSU will have the opportunity to take part in CIRCLE's Certificate program, which will bring together different disciplines to explore language and literacy in a specific social context. Project PILOT, which encourages adult ESL learners to be both leaders and agents of change in their own communities, also falls under CIRCLE's professional development component.

CIRCLE will also support the creation of adult ESL classroom materials and products in the MA TESOL field that provide innovative ways of addressing immigrant health concerns in the classroom.

Participants then broke into small groups to answer the following questions: *1) What excites you about CIRCLE? 2) What can CIRCLE do to support you and your colleagues in your work? 3) What can you do to support CIRCLE?*

Attendees worked with their groups and came up with the following thoughts and ideas about CIRCLE:

- 1) CIRCLE is a great way to exchange ideas from different perspectives. It is both a virtual and real network of people who can come together and talk about issues such as immigration.
- 2) Instructors who have had success with a certain topic can share their experiences with others by posting their stories on CIRCLE's website. Archives of immigrant stories on

healthcare can also be developed so that ESL instructors can access them for their classes and research.

- 3) A working group can be created through CIRCLE's leadership component that brings together ESL instructors as well as healthcare workers to talk about issues affecting immigrants.

At the end of the session, participants were thanked for their enthusiasm and willingness to get involved with CIRCLE in the future.

**WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE FOR THEIR HELP AND
SUPPORT WITH THIS SESSION**

Roma Guy, Professor of Health Education, SFSU (facilitator)

Gail Weinstein, Professor of English, SFSU (facilitator)

Thomas Mullaney, College Relations Office, Humanities, SFSU (notetaker)

Brandee Marckmann, College Relations Office, Health&Human Services (notetaker)

Lourdes Muguerza, ESL Director, Nuestra Casa / MATESOL Alumna (notetaker)

Janice Huang, MATESOL student (volunteer)