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# Beyond the Classroom: Teaching ESL to Adult Indochinese Refugees via Experiential Activities

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BEYOND THE CLASSROOM:  
TEACHING ESL TO ADULT INDOCHINESE REFUGEES  
VIA EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Master of Arts in Teaching degree at the School for International  
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This project by Andres Ray Reyes is accepted in its present form.

Date May 9, 1986 Principal Advisor Michael Gerald  
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Abstract:

This paper deals with the use of beyond-the-classroom experiential activities to teach ESL and aspects of U.S. culture to adult Indochinese refugees in the U.S. The paper begins with a discussion of the needs of refugees as they come face to face with their new setting, the U.S. The following section discusses the importance of experiential activities as a tool to address the needs of refugees. The next section contains an experiential activities guide based on six major topics: supermarket, post office, transportation, telephone, hospital and employment. The guide presents activities that can be used with adult Indochinese refugees to bring them in touch with the English language and U.S. culture. Finally, the author shares some of his thoughts about the use of experiential activities with refugees.

ERIC Descriptors: English (Second Language), Second Language Instruction, Teaching Methods

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I. ADULT INDOCHINESE REFUGEES IN THE UNITED STATES:  
A LOOK AT THEIR NEEDS AS NEW AMERICANS

Adult Indochinese refugees from Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos comprise a large segment of today's ESL (English as a Second Language) students. They are, along with other refugee and immigrant groups, called "New Americans" in that they are in the U.S. to stay, to live, and to start a new life. They have come to this country to resettle and start their lives all over again as they are unable to go back to their home countries. America has now become their new home and, as such, is the setting that they will have to learn to function within. Indochinese refugees are now faced with a new world--a new language, new people, new lifestyles, and a new material and technological environment.

Resettling in a new country entails, in more ways than one, breaking away from what is common, known and familiar in one's native land, and facing up to the uncommon, unknown and unfamiliar in a completely new setting. For adult Indochinese refugees, resettling in America not only involves entering a new physical environment; it also involves entering a new system of symbols, that is, a system which has a new language with which to convey thoughts, feelings and knowledge to others. A major episode in the resettlement process is learning English, the language that is necessary to be able to participate fully in U.S. society. English is the single most important survival

tool that adult Indochinese refugees must have in order to communicate in their new English-speaking world, where, as in all other human societies, the exchange of knowledge, insights, experiences and feelings among people is an essential feature of everyday living.

As members of U.S. society, adult Indochinese refugees will inevitably find themselves in situations such as shopping in supermarkets and department stores, mailing letters or packages at the post office, ordering food in a restaurant, using various transportation services, and a host of other situations interwoven into the fabric of everyday human life. Adult Indochinese refugees need to acquire a fairly broad spectrum of skills if they are to be able to carry out day-to-day roles and responsibilities in their new community. As wage earners and providers for their families, they must have English language skills to successfully tackle tasks that are germane to the survival of their families. English language ability is necessary for them to gain entry into the job market, obtain gainful employment, and ultimately achieve self-sufficiency. Only with adequate English skills will they be able to move about in the English-speaking world, as they look for jobs, enroll their children in school, obtain housing for their families, report problems to the police, take their children to a doctor, and so on. English is essential to adjustment to their new country, the U.S.

Adult learning theory teaches language teachers that adults' orientation to learning is experience-centered; therefore, adults do not begin by studying "subjects" which may prove useful in the distant future. They begin by learning for and from the situations in which they find themselves. Since adult Indochinese refugees are in the U.S. to stay, the major goal in teaching them should be to prepare them for basic survival contexts that they must deal with in their everyday lives. ESL training must focus on the development of communication skills that will be readily applicable and useful to refugees' immediate life circumstances (as opposed to some vague or merely possible future situation or event). The focus of instruction should lay more on topics that are related to students' life experiences, rather than on language structures. This is in direct opposition to studying Victorian literature, poetry reading, expository writing, and other more academic areas of the English language which do not relate to the immediate, "here and now" needs of adult Indochinese refugees. As New Americans, adult Indochinese refugees initially need speaking and listening skills in order to fulfill their basic survival needs. They need "hands on" language training that will get them started in their resettlement process without delay, that is, English skills that they can use in their day-to-day interactions with their new world.

Adult Indochinese refugees need language training that is



relevant, effective, efficient and flexible. They need to be taught how to use English for their communicative purposes. Since they will be in constant contact with the English-speaking world once they have settled in the U.S., it is important that, in the classroom situation, they be engaged in a wide variety of activities where they can have abundant practice in using English to express themselves. In the classroom it is important to address topics that have practical significance to these New Americans. Refugees should be taught the English skills necessary to cash a check, call the police department, request household repairs, buy clothing, open a bank account, read job advertisements, follow directions, and function in many other situations that are integral to their resettlement process. Language is the most important instrument for successful participation in the new country and obtaining the rewards that accompany such participation. For adult Indochinese refugees, English is the vehicle for real and meaningful communication with other members of U.S. society.

## II. GOING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM: USING EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES TO TEACH ESL TO ADULT INDOCHINESE REFUGEES

As adult Indochinese refugees move about in their new world, they inevitably, and frequently, come into contact with subways and buses, public phones, post offices, supermarkets, hospitals, and other community resources. In almost every situation in their lives, they may have to interact with their physical and social environment by means of the English language. For example, in their need to call someone via a public phone, they are confronted with a number of discrete tasks, all related to the success or failure of making the telephone call: reading instructions written on a public phone, coming up with the correct change, and asking the operator for assistance if necessary. In traveling on the subways of major cities, they are faced with the tasks of reading maps, following instructions, and asking for help and clarification. Many of the everyday activities that adult Indochinese refugees have to do demand the use of English on their part in one way or another.

In the classroom teaching situation, we, as teachers, try to prepare students for the real world by teaching them the language skills that they can actually use in situations that they are likely to encounter. We bring the real world into the classroom through simulations of supermarkets, post offices, hospitals and employment offices. Dialogues and roleplays about doctor-patient, landlord-tenant, bus driver-passenger and

service person-customer interactions are quite popular. We constantly engage our students in conversations, with ourselves and with one another, in the hope and expectation that they will develop communicative competence in English. We typically teach our students vocabulary items, grammatical structures and idiomatic expressions that they can theoretically use in supermarkets, post offices, hospitals, banks and employment offices. For example, we teach them vocabulary words and phrases, and grammatical structures that they might need to understand or utter in a job interview situation. We teach them the vocabulary for different parts of the body, and also teach them how to explain symptoms of illness to a doctor. We teach them to recognize and understand an abundance of signs and symbols that they may see in train stations, airports, streets and offices, so that they will be able to function adequately in these contexts.

Yet, does traditional classroom training of this sort adequately prepare refugees for the outside world? This question springs from what we often see and hear about refugees in the conduct of their everyday lives. We hear about refugees being cheated in stores because of their inability to recognize that they have been cheated--their inability to read prices and count money. We encounter refugees unable to make an appointment with the doctor for themselves or their sick children, despite their demonstrated ability in the classroom to repeat

dialogues dealing with that very situation. Many do quite well in classroom roleplays, yet cannot buy stamps from a postal clerk in a "real" post office. We see refugees unable to find their way around their own neighborhood, much less a new area of town, or a new city, because of their inability to ask for and understand information or follow directions. Many refugees who have been in this country as much as five years or longer are still not able to function effectively in a supermarket, bank or hospital. Many still do not know how to use the telephone, have very little or no experience with the transportation system, are not aware of important places in the community, and so on. We watch them and get the sense that they simply cannot seem to move forward with their lives in America. Problems such as these result from a lack of language skills and a corresponding lack of familiarity with the immediate community.

In thinking about the problems that beset the Indochinese refugees we ask ourselves these questions: Is classroom work alone actually enough to prepare our students for the world of supermarkets, post offices, banks, and other settings that they will surely find themselves in today, tomorrow or next week? What are some ways we can get them "on their feet" with English so that they can utilize their environment more fully, that is, use the transportation system with confidence, shop without fear of making the wrong purchase, use public phones with ease, mail a package at the post office without being terrified of

forms, and so on? How can we make the learning experiences of our students as real and meaningful as possible?

Experiential activities are a tool to get refugees more actively involved in their new world. We might be able to better prepare them for the outside world by engaging them in realistic and meaningful "episodes" with their immediate community, as this is the setting they will have to be able to deal with ultimately. In teaching a foreign language, it is important to provide learners with opportunities where they can use or apply knowledge or skills they have learned in real life situations. We can go beyond bookwork in the classroom into the community (the real world) to try out newly obtained knowledge, to explore and to discover. Our students can go on subway trips in the city, go to the post office to buy stamps, learn to use public phones, interview with employers, buy food in the supermarket, and perform a host of other activities.

These experiential activities are invaluable in bringing our students directly in touch with the English language and with U.S. culture. After teaching vocabulary items, dialogues and grammatical structures relevant to ordering food in a restaurant, we might, for example, actually take them to a McDonald's in the neighborhood, and have them practice ordering and paying for food. Refugees could practice expressions that they have learned in the classroom (e.g. French fries, hamburger,

May I have a hamburger?), and at the same time experience interacting with restaurant service people, reading receipts, handling U.S. currency, and tasting, if not enjoying, American fast food. This experience might also allow refugees to acquire relevant cultural information, such as getting in line and waiting for one's turn when ordering food and the social ideas of self-service and cleaning up after eating. Students are not restricted to bits and pieces of English, but learn aspects of U.S. culture as well.

Language and culture are intertwined; neither of them can be treated as an isolated system. For adult Indochinese refugees to function competently in the U.S., exposure to and experience with the English language should be provided both in and beyond the classroom. The community is the perfect language learning center for refugees to apply skills learned from classroom training to real life situations. The world out there is quite simply good material for language learning-- it can be a laboratory for experimentation and practice, and an avenue for learning skills essential to survival in the new environment.

### III.

### EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES GUIDE

#### Orientation to the Guide

This section consists of experiential activities based on six major topics: supermarket, post office, transportation, telephone, hospital and employment. Under each major topic (e.g., SUPERMARKET) are a number of experiential activities (marked A, B, C, etc.). Under each experiential activity are TARGET SKILLS/SAMPLE LANGUAGE and CULTURAL ORIENTATION sections. The former consists of skills that Indochinese refugees might learn, develop, practice or reinforce as a result of the experiential activity. For example, the experiential activity on comparison shopping (page 13, Activity B) wherein students are instructed to obtain prices of a prepared list of supermarket products from a number of stores, might provide students with experience in reading brand names of products and determining (computing) price differences between brands. Additionally, a sample of language is included to give the teacher an idea of the core language that refugees can learn and practice while doing the activity. The latter section contains cultural information that students might learn or gain insight into from the experiential activity.

There are various ways to convey the information in the CULTURAL ORIENTATION section. For example, the teacher can stimulate a discussion on a topic, e.g., comparison shopping. Students might be asked to compare the prices of popular brand

names with less popular ones. This could lead the students to discover cultural information relevant to shopping. The teacher might also ask the students to make observations of certain aspects of U.S. culture as they carry out the experiential activities, for example, how products are organized in U.S. supermarkets, how employers behave in a job interview situation, and how the subway system is set up. The students then can have a discussion about the observations or generalizations they have made, and relate their findings to their own cultures.

All activities included in the guide are geared towards adult Indochinese refugees, regardless of their English level and length of stay in the U.S. ESL teachers will encounter many refugees who may have lived in this country for five years and though fluent inside the classroom, are still not able to function in the real world of supermarkets, post offices, hospitals and subways. These experiential activities are useful in getting adult Indochinese refugees to apply what they have learned in the English-speaking world beyond the classroom.

The activities are applicable to adult Indochinese refugees all over the United States. However, it is the teacher's job to take general concepts and ideas, and translate them into activities suitable to his particular teaching situation. For instance, some of the activities, such as the ones on transportation, are geared more towards students in the New York City



area. The teacher can use the basic ideas to create experiential activities applicable to his community's transportation system.

There is no one way to carry out the activities. Depending on one's class, students' English level, needs and interests, community set-up, and availability of resources, the teacher can make the necessary adjustments and modifications. What is important is that the activities allow the students to experience their environment and U.S. culture directly. Hence, the activities should be done outside the classroom. Simulations inside the classroom are insufficient in bringing the students in touch with the language and culture, though they might be encouraged as preludes to the actual execution of activities in the community.

Since adult Indochinese refugees need survival skills, it is important that teachers go beyond traditional classroom work into the real world for students to "get a handle" on what is being taught in the classroom. Experiential activities are invaluable as a tool to reinforce and embellish classroom language training in that they allow refugees to actively experiment, explore and discover their new world as they perform a variety of activities using the English language. Experiential activities are "reality checks" that give refugees "proof" of what they read and see in ESL textbooks and what they hear and say in ESL classrooms.

### Basic Elements of an Experiential Technique

1. Isolate an aspect of a classroom lesson that students find interesting, confusing or abstract. The lesson on using stamp machines in the U.S. might be quite alien to hill-tribe refugees so that a trip to the U.S. Post Office might be used to provide students with experience in using stamp machines.
2. Prepare students for the outside world by way of orientation. Tell students about the setting they will be in (a busy and crowded supermarket, the doctor's office, a dangerous subway station) and what they will be expected to do (buy subway tokens, shop for food). It is important to adequately orient them to the real world so that they know what to expect and also how to deal with their individual experiences.
3. Use roleplays or simulations in the classroom, when necessary. Approximate reality in the classroom if there is a felt need to do so. The classroom might be set up to look like a supermarket, with students rehearsing roles as customers, cashiers and store clerks. The better equipped students are for the real world, the better able they will function in it.
4. Bring outside experiences of students back into the classroom. Discuss how the activities worked, problems encountered, and students' successes and anxieties. Talk!

I. S U P E R M A R K E T

- A. STUDENTS GO TO A SUPERMARKET AND COPY NAMES AND PRICES OF SUPERMARKET ITEMS THAT THEY NEED.

Target Skills/Sample Language

1. Read and copy names of supermarket products.

detergent	tomato sauce	cheese	apples
sardines	rice	sugar	eggs

2. Read and recognize prices written in different ways.

\$1.25	\$1.00	.78	.05
1.25	1.00	78¢	5¢
	\$1	\$.78	

3. Read and recognize quantity terms, abbreviations and symbols.

pound/s = lb./s	ounce/s = oz./s	dozen = doz.
quart/s = qt./s	gallon = gal.	each = ea.

Cultural Orientation

1. Most fresh foods have labels written in three parts: 1) price per unit (e.g., price per pound), 2) the total weight of the package, and 3) the total price of the package.

- 
- B. STUDENTS ARE INSTRUCTED TO OBTAIN THE PRICES OF A PREPARED LIST OF SUPERMARKET PRODUCTS. THEY GO TO A NUMBER OF STORES IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD TO MAKE A SURVEY OF PRICES. FINDINGS ARE TO BE BROUGHT BACK TO CLASS FOR DISCUSSION.

Target Skills/Sample Language

1. Read brand names of products.

Dannon	Irish Spring	Sanka	Prell
Breyer's	Ivory	Nescafe	Agree

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### Target Skills/Sample Language

1. Read brand names of products.

Dannon	Irish Spring	Sanka	Prell
Breyer's	Ivory	Nescafe	Agree

2. Determine price differences between brands.

#### Cultural Orientation

1. Comparison shopping is important in the U.S. Knowing where to go for better buys can save money. Newspapers often have information in advertisements.
2. There is usually a variety of brand names for a particular item. The famous brands are usually more expensive than the less popular brands. Just because a particular brand is famous does not mean it is good. Generic brands (which are cheaper) are often as good as the popular brands.
3. To compare the price of an item from one store to another, read the price per unit label (e.g., price per pound or ounce), not the total price label. The total price depends on the size and weight of the item.

- C. STUDENTS ARE DIVIDED INTO GROUPS. EACH GROUP IS ASSIGNED TO COPY NAMES OF ITEMS IN THE DIFFERENT SECTIONS OF THE SUPERMARKET.

#### Target Skills/Sample Language

1. Ask for information or help, when necessary.

Excuse me, where are the vegetables?  
Can you tell me where the dairy section is?

2. Read and copy names of products in specific sections of the supermarket.

<u>DAIRY</u>	<u>FRUITS</u>	<u>VEGETABLES</u>	<u>BAKERY</u>	<u>MEAT</u>
milk	pears	broccoli	cake	bacon
cheese	apples	spinach	bagels	sausage

#### Cultural Orientation

1. In U.S. supermarkets, products are organized in shelves

in categories. Meat products go in one section, fruits and vegetables go in another, and so on.

2. It is always okay to ask a clerk where an item is located, rather than look all day for it.

- D. STUDENTS COPY SIGNS THAT THEY SEE IN THE SUPERMARKET AND BRING THEM TO CLASS FOR DISCUSSION.

Target Skills/Sample Language

1. Read and recognize common supermarket signs.

EXPRESS LANE	ON SALE TODAY	50% OFF
NO SMOKING	NO PETS	REDUCED

Cultural Orientation

1. It is important to adhere to signs that state a regulation or law, such as NO SMOKING, NO SHOPLIFTING, NO PETS ALLOWED, etc.
2. It is important to understand signs in the supermarket so as not to spend too much time looking for what you need.

- E. STUDENTS BUY ITEMS THAT THEY NEED IN THE SUPERMARKET AND GO THROUGH THE CHECKOUT COUNTER. THEY ALSO USE COUPONS, WHEN POSSIBLE, FROM MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS TO GET A PRICE REDUCTION ON STORE ITEMS.

Target Skills/Sample Language

1. Use coupons in a shopping situation.

Save 10¢ on Ivory. Offer expires March 1, 1986.  
55¢ off on Pert Shampoo 15 ml. Limited offer.

2. Make correct payment and verify correct change.

3. Estimate and/or compute sales tax.

Six-pack Budweiser 8 fl. oz. = \$3.60 + tax  
Giant size Tide = \$5.58 + tax

4. Ask for correct change when incorrect change is received.

Excuse me. I think you gave me the wrong change.  
I gave you \$10. You gave me change for \$5.  
This is wrong. I gave you \$20, not \$10.

#### Cultural Orientation

1. In the U.S., people stand in line and wait for their turn to pay for their merchandise. Cutting in line is extremely offensive. It will more than likely provoke anger in others.
  2. People pay sales tax on some things that they buy but not on others. This may vary from state to state, as will the percentage of sales taxes charged.
  3. It is wise to clip and save coupons, and use them when shopping in order to save money.
  4. It is wise to stock up on items that are on sale, especially non-perishable products (e.g., toothpaste, toilet paper, soap) as they can keep for a long time.
  5. Change must be counted immediately, before pocketing it and in front of the cashier.
- 
-

## II. P O S T O F F I C E

- A. STUDENTS BUY STAMPS AT THE POST OFFICE FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF LETTERS AND POST CARDS. To have a good amount of local and overseas mail, the teacher can collect mail and money for postage from friends, and have students buy stamps for them. The teacher should also collect letters of different weights and different classes (e.g., fourth class, airmail, book rate, registered mail), if possible.

### Target Skills/Sample Language

1. Ask for stamps at the post office.

Can I have four local stamps, please?  
I need seven postcard stamps, please.

2. Follow oral instructions given by a postal clerk.

Put two stamps on this.  
This letter needs one 22-cent stamp and two  
17-cent stamps.

### Cultural Orientation

1. In the post office, people get in line to buy stamps, to send mail, and to pick up packages or registered mail. Cutting in line is not acceptable behavior.
  2. The cost of postage varies with destination (local and overseas), class and weight.
- 

- B. STUDENTS SEND A PACKAGE AT THE POST OFFICE. THEY SEND THEIR OWN OR THE TEACHER'S.

### Target Skills/Sample Language

1. Ask for information on mailing rates on packages.

How much will it cost to send this to Utah first  
class?  
What's the cheapest way to send this?



2. Make correct payment and verify correct change.
3. Ask for correct change when incorrect change is received.

I gave you \$30. You gave me change for \$20.  
Excuse me. I gave you \$15, not \$10.

### Cultural Orientation

1. Packages must be addressed correctly and wrapped properly at all times according to post office rules. The post office sells boxes and pouches which it will accept. Certain packages may not exceed certain weights. Check before taking a package that is too heavy to the post office.
  2. The cost of postage varies with destination (domestic and overseas), class (first class, express, airmail, surface) and weight.
- 

## C. STUDENTS USE STAMP MACHINES IN THE POST OFFICE.

### Target Skills/Sample Language

1. Read and follow written instructions on a stamp machine.

QUARTERS ONLY    EXACT CHANGE ONLY    1 local = 25¢  
NO CHANGE RETURNED    USE QUARTERS, DIMES & NICKELS

2. Read prices (numbers and currency symbols) written in different ways.

25¢      \$.25      .25      25 cents

### Cultural Orientation

1. Stamp machines in post offices are convenient, cost nothing extra to use, and save people a lot of time. Stamp machines in other stores may charge higher prices for stamps.
2. Some machines only take exact change.
3. Stamp machines usually carry many kinds of stamps.

## D. STUDENTS BUY MONEY ORDERS AT THE POST OFFICE.

Target Skills/Sample Language

1. Ask for a money order by telling the postal clerk the value needed.

I need a money order for \$125.00.  
I'd like to buy a money order for \$18.75.

2. Fill out a money order form.

Pay to _____	Date _____
Amount _____	Name _____

3. Ask for assistance in filling out money order forms, when necessary.

Where do I write my name?  
What do I write on this line?

Cultural Orientation

1. Money orders, like checks, are often used instead of cash to make payments by mail. It is not safe to send cash in the mail. Money orders are as good as cash.
  2. There is a minimal fee charged for every money order you buy.
- 

## E. STUDENTS LOOK FOR SIGNS IN THE POST OFFICE, COPY THEM, AND BRING THEM TO CLASS FOR DISCUSSION.

Target Skills/Sample Language

1. Read and recognize basic post office signs.

EXPRESS MAIL ONLY	ENTER HERE	STAMPS ONLY
OVERNIGHT PACKAGES	CLAIM PACKAGES HERE	

Cultural Orientation

1. The U.S. Post Office has office hours from 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. Monday through Friday, and from 8 A.M. to 12:00

noon on Saturday. These hours may vary at different post offices. It is important to know what hours the post office is open for service.

2. Different windows/counters offer different services. There is a window for packages, a window for overnight and express mail, a window for stamps and money orders, and so on. It is important to follow what the signs say.
  3. You can obtain information from the post office. If you are sending a package/letter and do not know the zip code, call the post office and ask a clerk to help.
- 
-

### III. T R A N S P O R T A T I O N

#### A. STUDENTS GET IN LINE TO BUY SUBWAY TOKENS AT A TOKEN BOOTH.

##### Target Skills/Sample Language

1. Indicate to the token booth clerk quantity of tokens needed.

Can I have four tokens, please?  
I need a ten-pack, please.

2. Make correct payment and verify correct change.
3. Ask for correct change when incorrect change is received.

Excuse me. I think you gave me the wrong change.  
I'm sorry. I think you made a mistake. I gave  
you \$10, not \$5.

##### Cultural Orientation

1. People get in line to buy tokens. Cutting in line is not acceptable behavior.
  2. To save time, it is best to buy several tokens at once so that one does not have to stand in line each time one travels.
  3. Tokens have a money value; they are not toys.
  4. If any problems arise in the subway, tell the token booth clerk. The clerk usually has the means to communicate with the train conductors and transit police riding the trains, if necessary.
- 

#### B. STUDENTS GO ON A SUBWAY TRIP WITH THE TEACHER. THEY ARE GIVEN A DESTINATION TO FOLLOW ON A SUBWAY MAP. STUDENTS COPY NAMES OF STATIONS/STOPS TO THE DESTINATION.

##### Target Skills/Sample Language

1. Read signs on a map indicating train routes, destina-

tions and station names.

42nd Street	Penn Station	8th Avenue Local
Beverk Road	Church Avenue	Bronx Uptown

### Cultural Orientation

1. It is important to be able to read as well as understand maps as they are important guides to going places.
  2. It is important to be alert on the train so as not to miss or pass one's station.
  3. Subways are usually the most efficient, convenient and cheapest means of transportation in many cities.
- 

- C. STUDENTS ARE GIVEN A SPECIFIC DESTINATION WHERE THE TEACHER WILL BE WAITING FOR THEM AT A TELEPHONE, WHICH NUMBER ALL STUDENTS ARE GIVEN. STUDENTS BREAK INTO SMALL GROUPS, EACH GROUP LEAVING WITHIN TEN MINUTES OF EACH OTHER. (A variation of this activity might be where a few others, e.g., the teacher's friends, are stationed in different places, and students locate them.) AT THE END OF THE TRIP, STUDENTS EXPLAIN HOW THEY GOT TO THE DESTINATION, THE DIFFERENT STATIONS THEY PASSED, CHANGES IN TRAINS THEY MADE, AND OTHERS.

### Target Skills/Sample Language

1. Read and follow a map to get to a destination.
2. Ask for information or assistance, when necessary.
 

Where can I get the RR to Queens?  
Is this the D or the M?
3. Follow oral instructions.
 

Take the RR to 14th Street. Change there for the N.  
Get off Grand Central. Take the 7 to Flushing.
4. Read numbers or letters on trains.

PATH	AA	7	M
LIRR	CC	4	D

Cultural Orientation

1. It is important to ask for information and/or assistance when one is lost or uncertain as to where one is going.
  2. It is very important to read and follow signs when travelling.
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- D. STUDENTS COPY SIGNS THAT THEY ENCOUNTER IN THE SUBWAY STATION AND ON THE TRAINS, AND TAKE THEM TO CLASS FOR DISCUSSION.

Target Skills/Sample Language

1. Read and follow instructions on signs relating to travel.

DO NOT RUN	Hold Handrail	EXIT
NO SMOKING	Watch the doors	No Soliciting

Cultural Orientation

1. Some signs are essential to the safety and protection of people (e.g., NO SMOKING). It is important to adhere to them. Some violations (e.g., jumping the turnstiles) are punishable by law.
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#### IV. T E L E P H O N E

- A. THE TEACHER TAKES THE STUDENTS TO AN OFFICE WHERE PHONES RING ALL THE TIME. (All calls are pre-arranged by the teacher.) STUDENTS TAKE TURNS ANSWERING PHONES. THEY ALSO TAKE MESSAGES AND RELAY THEM TO THE TEACHER.

##### Target Skills/Sample Language

1. Take a phone message.

1/5/86	5:00 P.M.	1/5/86	9:45 A.M.
Andy,		Andy,	
Pat called. Call		Mr. Tith wants to	
her tonight at 7.		see you tomorrow.	
	Khlang		Ramon

2. Ask for clarification, when necessary.

Could you say that again, please?  
Is that B as in Boston?

3. End a conversation appropriately.

Thank you for calling. Goodbye.  
It was nice talking to you. Bye.

##### Cultural Orientation

1. Tone and volume of voice are important things to monitor when talking on the telephone.
  2. It is important to ask for clarification when one does not clearly understand what the other is saying.
  3. It is important to listen attentively so as to get information.
  4. Make certain the other person has finished talking before hanging up the receiver.
  5. Messages should be relayed at all times. It is usually appreciated if the message taken includes the time of the telephone call and the date, if it is open to question.
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- B. THE TEACHERS GIVE STUDENTS TELEPHONE NUMBERS TO CALL, ALL OF WHICH RESPOND WITH A RECORDING (e.g., Greyhound Bus Company, Immigration Service, etc.). STUDENTS LISTEN TO THE RECORDING AND WRITE THE INFORMATION DOWN.

Target Skills/Sample Language

1. Write down (or take notes of) important information.

This is Greyhound. All our operators are busy right now. Please hold on. A service representative will be with you shortly.

This is the Immigration and Naturalization Service. If you need forms, call 349-5286. If you need visa information, call 206-6500. Thank you.

Cultural Orientation

1. Answering machines are common in busy offices where a large number of calls are received every minute. It becomes necessary therefore to put people on hold until a service representative is available to talk to a customer. Do not hang up until one answers. Sometimes, you may have to wait a few minutes before someone can attend to you.

- C. STUDENTS USE A PAY PHONE TO CALL THE TEACHER AT THE OFFICE OR AT HOME. THEY ALSO COPY INSTRUCTIONS WRITTEN ON THE PHONE, AND BRING THEM TO CLASS FOR DISCUSSION.

Target Skills/Sample Language

1. Follow written instructions correctly.

Lift the receiver.

Use quarters, dimes and nickels only. Do not use pennies.

2. Read and recognize prices (numbers and currency symbols).



.25	.10 + .10 + .05
25¢	10¢ + 10¢ + 5¢

3. Make correct change.
4. Ask for assistance, when necessary.

Can you show me how to use this?  
I don't know how to use this. Can you show me?

### Cultural Orientation

1. Pay phones are an essential means of communication outside the office or home. They are important for "at the spur of the moment", emergency, and other urgent calls.
2. It is all right to ask someone to show you how to use a pay phone if you do not know how to use one.
3. It is always good to have loose change when out of the home as you may sometimes need to make local calls.

- D. STUDENTS CALL INFORMATION (411) FOR TELEPHONE NUMBERS AND/OR ADDRESSES OF PEOPLE AND PLACES ASSIGNED BY THE TEACHER.

### Target Skills/Sample Language

1. Ask for the number and/or address of a person or place.
 

I need the number for Citibank at 59th.  
I need the address of the Immigration Service, please.
2. Spell names of people and/or places for purposes of clarification.
 

The name is Shaklee, S-H-A-K-L-E-E.  
The address is 44 Sojo Street, S-O-J-O.
3. Write down information given by the telephone service representative.

The number is (212) 522-7530.  
The address is 1754 Ocean Avenue, Brooklyn.

4. Ask for clarification, when necessary.

What's the number again, please?  
Is it 425-7404?

5. Respond appropriately to information representative's questions.

Is that in Queens or Brooklyn?  
Do you want the ticket or information office?

#### Cultural Orientation

1. It is important to give as accurate and exact information as possible in order to facilitate customer assistance.
  2. INFORMATION (411) can be called twenty four hours a day, seven days a week.
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## V. H O S P I T A L

- A. STUDENTS GO ON A TOUR OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD HOSPITAL WITH A HOSPITAL GUIDE/EXPERT. THE EXPERT GIVES AN ORIENTATION, EXPLAINS WHAT GOES ON IN THE DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS, DISCUSSES HOSPITAL SERVICES, AND OTHERS. STUDENTS ASK QUESTIONS, COPY SIGNS THAT THEY SEE IN THE DIFFERENT SECTIONS OF THE HOSPITAL, AND TAKE NOTES OF INFORMATION GIVEN BY THE EXPERT. (Beforehand, the teacher and students can work on what sort of questions to ask of the expert.)

### Target Skills/Sample Language

1. Take notes from an oral, "lecture-type" presentation.
2. Ask questions in order to obtain information, when necessary.

What is this instrument for?

What happens in the Emergency Room?

3. Read and recognize important hospital signs.

X-RAY	NO SMOKING	EMERGENCY EXIT	CLINIC
PHARMACY	ELEVATORS	REGISTER HERE	EXIT

### Cultural Orientation

1. Some signs are important to the protection and safety of others (e.g., NO SMOKING, DANGER: HIGH VOLTAGE). It is important to adhere to them.
2. It is easy to get lost in big hospitals. Ask someone for assistance when lost or uncertain as to where to go.

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- B. STUDENTS SPEAK TO A HOSPITAL HEALTH EXPERT (e.g., nutritionist, doctor, pediatrician, etc.) ABOUT HEALTH-RELATED MATTERS. (Beforehand, students, with the help of the teacher, prepare questions to ask. Questions might focus on day-to-day needs/problems of students.)

Target Skills/Sample Language

1. Ask questions to obtain information pertinent to medical needs.

What do I do when my baby has diarrhea?  
Is it OK for a pregnant woman to smoke?

2. Take down notes of important medical information, e.g., medical terms.

allergy	flu	blood test	insomnia
X-ray	virus	EKG	blood pressure

Cultural Orientation

1. It is important to give honest and accurate information about yourself when asked questions about health or physical condition by your doctor. Your doctor has an obligation to keep private such information. The more information a medical doctor knows about you, the better able he will be to help you.

- C. STUDENTS MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE DOCTOR FOR THEMSELVES AND/OR THEIR CHILDREN OR PARENTS.

Target Skills/Sample Language

1. Make an appointment with the doctor on the telephone.

I'd like to make an appointment for Rany Tith.  
Can I see the doctor on Friday, January 3rd, at 3?

2. Ask for clarification, when necessary.

What time is the appointment again, please?  
Is it Friday, January 3rd, at 3?

3. Cancel or change a doctor's appointment.

I'd like to change the appointment for Rany Tith. Can I see the doctor on Monday, January 6th, at 2?

I'd like to cancel my appointment with Dr. Lee.

#### Cultural Orientation

1. It is important to keep appointments. Call the doctor if you cannot come, or if there are any changes. Many doctors, dentists, etc. will bill you if you fail to arrive as scheduled and have not contacted them in advance to inform them you cannot make the appointment.
  2. Always be on time for your appointments. Doctors, on the other hand, are rarely on time, and you may have to wait.
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- D. STUDENTS ARE GIVEN A LIST OF OVER-THE-COUNTER DRUGS AND HEALTH CARE PRODUCTS (e.g., shampoo, skin lotion, etc.). THEY ASK THE PHARMACIST OR STORE CLERK FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE PRODUCTS. (Beforehand, the teacher can work with students on kinds of questions to ask.) FINDINGS ARE BROUGHT BACK TO CLASS FOR DISCUSSION.

#### Target Skills/Sample Language

1. Ask for information about over-the-counter drugs and health care products.

What is Vick's 44 for?

Is Lubriderm good for skin allergy?

#### Cultural Orientation

1. In the U.S., some drugs are sold over the counter while others are sold by prescription. You need a prescription from a doctor to be able to buy prescription drugs.
2. It is important to know exactly what a health care product or drug is used for. This information is usually required by law to be printed on the package or container. You can always also ask the pharmacist or store clerk for information.

## VI. E M P L O Y M E N T

- A. STUDENTS FILL OUT APPLICATION FORMS FROM A NUMBER OF FAMILIAR WORKPLACES IN THE COMMUNITY (e.g., restaurants, hotels, delivery services, etc.) AND SEND THEM TO PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYERS. THE TEACHER HELPS WITH COMPLETING THE FORMS.

### Target Skills/Sample Language

1. Read and answer questions on employment application forms properly and accurately.

NAME	AGE	I-94#	SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER
STATUS	SEX	Visa #	CITIZENSHIP

2. Ask for assistance in filling out forms, when necessary.

Excuse me, what does STATUS mean?  
What is CITIZENSHIP?

### Cultural Orientation

1. It is at all times important to write correct, honest and accurate information on application forms. False information can jeopardize one's chances of obtaining gainful employment.
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- B. STUDENTS INTERVIEW WITH EMPLOYERS AT DIFFERENT COMPANIES OR AGENCIES. (The teacher sends resumes of students to employers, and interviews follow.)

### Target Skills/Sample Language

1. Talk about skills, education, training and qualifications in job interview situations.

I was a student of Economics in Cambodia.  
I have three years experience as a mechanic.

3. Ask for information about the job, when necessary.

What are the hours?  
What are the duties?

#### Cultural Orientation

1. In the U.S., it is important to talk about one's experience, skills and abilities during a job interview. It is not good to "hide" one's knowledge and talents, and present oneself as an incapable person.
  2. It is important to act appropriately during a job interview. Smoking, chewing gum, inappropriate clothing, and failing to answer the questions of the interviewer are not acceptable during a job interview.
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- C. STUDENTS DO A JOB SEARCH WITH JOB ADS. THEY COLLECT NEWSPAPER WANT ADS AND CALL PLACES THAT ARE LOOKING FOR HELP. (The teacher helps with the formulation of questions and answers as preparation for the job interview.)

#### Target Skills/Sample Language

1. Read and inquire about job openings in a newspaper.

I'm calling about the opening you have for a busboy.

I'd like to apply for the position you advertised for in today's papers.

2. Talk about oneself (skills, qualifications, etc.) on the telephone.

I'm interested in the opening you have for a typist.

I was a typist in Vietnam for seven years.

#### Cultural Orientation

1. The HELP WANTED section of the newspaper is one way people can find out about job openings.

2. It is important to emphasize one's skills, experience, training, and other strong points when talking to an employer.
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Author's Notes

I have found experiential activities invaluable in allowing adult Indochinese refugees to experiment, practice and play with the English language in the real world. Students enjoy doing activities outside the classroom that have meaning and importance to their personal lives. As they move about and participate in the world around them by shopping in the supermarket, travelling on the trains, mailing letters at the post office, and using public telephones, refugees tend to learn and use English more actively. Concrete and realistic experiences in the English-speaking world beyond the classroom motivate refugees to use the English language to communicate with others.

Experiential activities are eye openers to aspects of U.S. culture. In the classroom, it might be easy to say, "In America, people get in line to buy stamps at the post office. Cutting in line is not acceptable behavior. It can provoke anger in others." With an experiential activity wherein students actually go to a post office to buy stamps or mail packages, the classroom statement "People get in line to buy postal supplies" becomes more clearly understood. Classroom concepts are more easily communicated in light of real and meaningful experiences in real life situations.

Through interactions with speakers of English, refugees learn more about members of their new environment. They

acquire ideas about other people's lifestyles, attitudes and values. English then becomes a "real" communication tool for refugees, working as a vehicle for sharing ideas, experiences and feelings with other members of U.S. society. Through face to face interaction with speakers of English in a variety of settings, refugees develop cultural awarenesses. For example, as they order food in an American restaurant, they not only learn or practice the structure "Can I have a cup of tea, please?", but also learn how to act appropriately in a U.S. restaurant, how to address a waiter, how much tip to give, and others. Experiential activities give students the opportunity to translate classroom ideas and concepts into real and active "outside world knowledge."

Essentially, language is a vehicle for communication. If refugees are given opportunities to use the English language in their new environment, they will develop confidence and security in themselves. They will feel less threatened to participate in their new home as they gain knowledge about the resources in their environment. Refugees will feel more comfortable to use English to carry out day-to-day tasks that are essential to their survival.

Learning English as a second language is the most immediate concern for Indochinese refugees. Their ability to use English will relate to all aspects of their resettlement-- employment, coping with everyday living, and developing friend-

ships. Building confidence in their English ability will bring a sense of control and choice back into the refugees' lives. Refugees need language training that is relevant, flexible and efficient--training that can help them survive and cope with their new home. Refugees need more than just traditional ESL classroom training; they also need training for successful resettlement in the U.S. Experiential activities are a step towards this end.

### Helpful Hints in Using Experiential Activities

1. Call places that you want to visit a few days in advance. Let them know about what your class intends to do. Surprise visits do not work.
2. The ideal class size is 10-12. If you have a large class (e.g., 30), divide it into manageable groups, each group with a specific activity. In the supermarket, for example, one group can do the shopping, another one can make a survey of prices, and so on. Taking a whole group of 30 at one time in one section of the supermarket to do one activity can be chaotic.
3. Use more advanced students to help or assist the slower ones. Advanced students can also help translate important cultural information or concepts, when necessary. Developing leadership skills in students is a worthwhile task.
4. Always be prepared to use alternative activities if what you have planned does not work, or if your goal is not achievable under the present circumstances or conditions. If you want your students to window shop at Macy's, only to find out that it is closed, try some other store that could provide your students with just about the same kind of information.
5. Be as clear as possible with instructions that you give your students.