



CATHOLIC LEGAL  
IMMIGRATION  
NETWORK, INC.

Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc

**CLINIC**

# The Mechanics of English Language Learning

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Organization

# Speakers

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# CLINIC's Mission

To enhance and expand delivery of legal services to indigent and low-income immigrants principally through diocesan immigration programs and to meet the immigration needs identified by the Catholic Church in the United States.

# CLINIC's Services

- Capacity Building
- Training and Technical Support
- Religious Immigration Services
- Advocacy
- Immigration Initiatives and Projects

# Immigrant Integration

## Benefits:

- Citizenship
- More civic participation (voting)
- Better jobs
- More interaction in child's education
- Home ownership
- Family reunification
- Security

# Webinar Goals

This Webinar will:

- Explain how the adult brain learns;
- Examine what challenges an ELL faces in and out of the classroom; and
- Address how a program might overcome these obstacles.

# Terminology

- ESL, ESOL, ELL, EFL
- NEP & LEP

# U.S. English Language Learners

- In 2008, 19.64 million people identified themselves as LEP.
- Adult ELLs were 44% of total adult ed. programs nationally in the 2003-2004 school year.
- 74% of CA and 80% of Nevada



# ELLs in the United States

- 24.5 million speak English less than “very well” (44.2% of total population who speak a language other than English at home). (ACS 2007)
- In 2008, 27.1 percent of adult foreign-born *had* a bachelor's degree or higher. (MPI)
- In 2008, 32.5 percent *lacked* a high school diploma. (MPI)
- 60% of all foreign-born came to the U.S. over 19 years of age. (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2009/2009034.pdf>)

# Why someone living in the U.S. may not speak English:

Quality

Affordable

Accessible

# Barriers

Quality

Affordable

Accessible

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Time

Level-appropriate lessons

Real-life application

Low-literacy

Transportation

Previous education

Ability to practice

Childcare

Available classes

Cost

Past traumas

# Supply and Demand

- Waiting Lists
  - Level-appropriate classes
  - Trained teachers
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- New York example
  - Massachusetts example

“People who speak different languages  
live in different worlds,  
not the same world with different labels.”

Edward Sapir, 1928

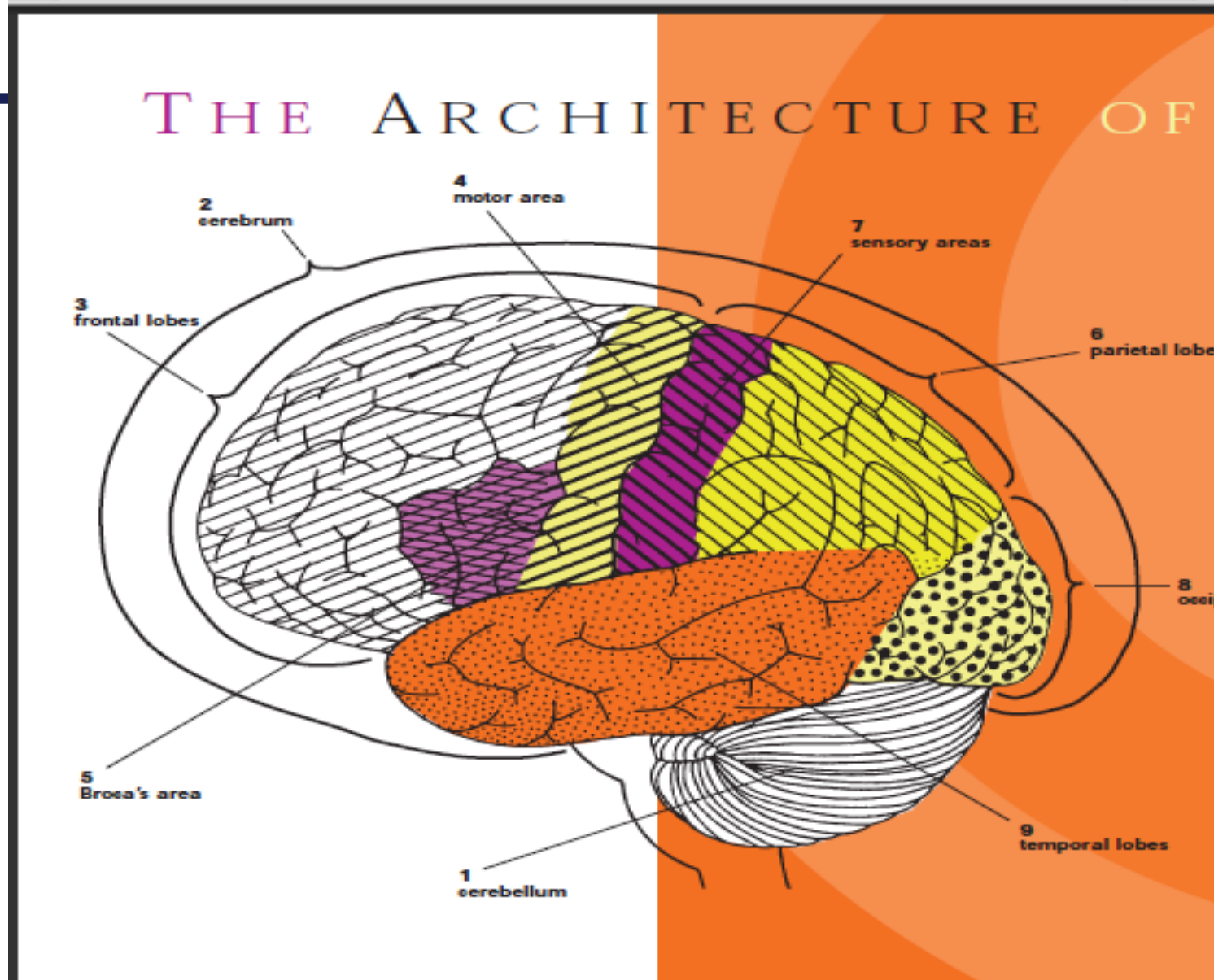
# English Language Learners

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- How the adult brain learns
- Why some brains learn language faster
- How to encourage adult brains to learn a new language faster

# The Human Brain -

Know Your Brain. National Institute of  
Neurological Disorders and Strokes



# Adult English Language Learner

- Integrates new information into already-existing schema;
- Takes a while to process information that does not fit into the schema;
- Takes a long time to accept completely new information; and
- Does not respond well to complex tasks used to teach new information.



# Adult English Language Learner

- Has a specific, life-induced reason for wanting the material
- Needs to know “Why”
- Needs to know what can be applied immediately

# English Language Learners

Factors that might speed up learning:

Age

Self-awareness

Already speak a second language

Opportunities to practice

# Materials to Use

- Activate the adult brain!
- Use real-world tasks:
  - practice the oral exam for the Citizenship test
  - write a resume
  - understand a job listing
- Ask the students what concrete tasks they want to be able to perform.

# Characteristics of Good Materials

- Uses real-world tasks that allows students a chance to practice the language involved;
- Provides a chance to practice appropriate socio-cultural rules involved in a task;
- Provides practice in coping strategies to use when language is not yet fully developed; and
- Teaches new material in the context of real-world situations and tasks.

# Characteristics of a Good Teacher

- Can adjust material and lessons to reflect student experiences/knowledge/interests;
- Can plan and identify both short and long term goals for student learning;
- Develops lesson plans that include learning, review, and assessment;
- Uses a variety of strategies to appeal to all learning styles; and
- Can develop activities for outside the classroom to continue student learning.

# Suggestions for Adult Learners

- Create a classroom atmosphere that provides challenges in a relaxed and unthreatening learning environment
- There is diversity in learners and learning styles so the use of a range of techniques and strategies is necessary.

# Suggestions for Adult Learners

Research supports separate classes for non-print literate Adult ELL's because of:

- A lack of orientation to text
- May lack self-confidence
- Do not risk losing social status among more literate peers
- Different assessments are used
- Use of materials more suited to non-literate ELLs and slower introduction of literacy

# Guest Speaker

Maggie LeLeaux, Program Director,  
Migration and Refugee Center at Catholic  
Social & Community Services of Biloxi



# Features of the Migration and Refugee Center ESL Program

- Multiple levels
- GED; TOEFL; College Level Course Options
- Course objectives for each level
- Methods/Activities for each level
- Materials for each level
- Evaluation for each level

# What if you can't offer an ELL program?

## Partnerships you might pursue:

- Community Colleges, another community-based organization, a church, tutors, the local literacy council, employers

## How to vet potential partners:

- Types of classes offered, assessments available, schedule of classes, teacher quality, location of classes

# Good Resources

- TESOL: [www.TESOL.org](http://www.TESOL.org)
  - Local TESOL chapter
- Migration Policy Institute: [www.migrationpolicy.org](http://www.migrationpolicy.org)
- Center for Applied Linguistics: [www.cal.org](http://www.cal.org)
- National Institute for Literacy: <http://lincs.ed.gov>
- Local adult ed programs, community college programs, and literacy councils

# Literacy Directory

USCIS' Office of Citizenship

<http://www.literacydirectory.org/>

# References and Related Articles

Martha Bigelow and Robin Lovrien Schwarz. “Adult English Learners with Limited Literacy.” National Institute for Literacy. September 2010.  
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Lera Boroditsky. “Lost in Translation.” Wall Street Journal. July 23, 2010.  
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Mary Ann Christison. “Applications of Brain-Based Research for Second Language Teaching and Learning: Part 2.” TESOL Matters. Vol. 9 No. 3 (June/July 1999)  
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[http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/brain\\_basics/brain\\_basics\\_know\\_your\\_brain.pdf](http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/brain_basics/brain_basics_know_your_brain.pdf)

# Membership & Subscription

- Membership for Catholic non-profits
- Subscription for non-Catholic, non-profits

Contact Jeff Chenoweth at [jchenoweth@cliniclegal.org](mailto:jchenoweth@cliniclegal.org) for information and application.

# Questions?



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