

Topic: Employment

Activity: Adjusting to Job Realities and Solving Problems: A Case Study for Refugees

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Objective | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Participants will consider their expectations of jobs in the United States✓ Participants will consider the possibility of accepting a new career path✓ Participants will consider problem-solving strategies to take advantage of new job opportunities |
| Lesson Time | 35 minutes |
| Materials | <ul style="list-style-type: none">☐ Critical incident (included)☐ Optional: Flipchart paper, markers, tape |
| Introduction | It is difficult for resettled refugees to find a job using their previous skills, and many are forced to accept new career paths. Viewing new career opportunities positively is an important step in minimizing frustration. In addition, when initial job prospects or advancement opportunities appear, refugees should be prepared to solve problems in order to take advantage of those opportunities. |
| Practice | <p>(Note: Feel free to change names to reflect your participants.)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Put participants into small groups of 2-4 and ask each group to choose a spokesperson.2. Read “Adjusting to Job Realities and Solving Problems: A Critical Incident for Refugees” aloud, pausing after each set of reflection questions.3. In small groups, participants discuss the reflection questions. Listen in on the discussions to check for understanding.4. After the last set of reflection questions, bring the large group together and ask the spokesperson from each group to summarize the main ideas from their group discussions. Discuss as necessary. |
| Reflection Questions | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● What happened in this critical incident?● How did Pat solve his problem of getting to the new office?● Who else could Pat have asked for help?● What could Pat have done differently? |
| Variations | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Give flipchart paper to each small group and have groups draw and present the highlights of their discussion.● If literacy levels allow, prepare flipchart paper with reflection questions for each small group and have groups write and present their answers. |

Adjusting to Job Realities and Solving Problems: A Case Study for Refugees

Pat* lives in the United States with his family. Before he resettled, Pat was a top university student in chemistry and spoke English well. In the U.S., however, the only job Pat can find is a part-time interpretation job for a community organization. He feels disappointed because he cannot use his chemistry skills.

Stop and reflect:

- What happened so far?
- Do you think Pat should take the interpretation job? Why or why not?
- How do you think the part-time job might help Pat?

Pat takes the interpretation job because it is currently the only way he can earn money to support himself. Even though Pat does not find the job to be as interesting as chemistry, he feels proud to earn enough money to send some back to his relatives.

Pat's boss is impressed with Pat's English and people skills, so she offers him a full-time job. The new job is on a subway line, but Pat's apartment is not. Pat does not have a driver's license or a car.

Stop and reflect:

- What are Pat's options to get to his new job? How can he solve this problem?
- What would you do if you were Pat?

Pat knows that his American neighbor drives a car to work every day and passes by a subway station. Pat explains his situation to his neighbor and offers to help care for his neighbor's yard in exchange for rides to and from a subway station. His neighbor agrees. Pat also applies for a driver's permit. He reads the driving rules book and his neighbor helps him practice driving.

After one year, Pat gets a driver's license and buys a used car. He can now drive his own car to work and teach his friends how to drive. Pat would like to continue his chemistry studies in the future, but for now he is happy knowing that he is supporting himself and helping others in the community.

Stop and reflect:

- How did Pat solve his problem of getting to the new office?
- How has Pat's positive attitude been helpful?



* This case study is based on the real-life experience of a resettled refugee. All identifying information has been changed to protect privacy.

© 2011 Center for Applied Linguistics

This document is a product of the Orientation Technical Assistance Project, funded by the Office of Refugee Resettlement, Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, Grant No. 90RB0037. The views herein do not necessarily represent views held by the Office of Refugee Resettlement.

For more information about resources available from the Cultural Orientation Resource Center, visit www.culturalorientation.net.