

Promising Practices: How Community Colleges Are Serving Skilled Immigrants



Note: This publication summarizes selected content from a 60-minute webinar. To view a recording and slides from the presentation, please visit www.imprintproject.org

Different from the traditional student, skilled immigrant students have a unique set of learning goals. Often, this includes learning professional-level English quickly or preparing for re-licensure in their original field.

Based on the work of the **Community College Consortium for Immigrant Education** and its **Blue Ribbon Panel** members, this 2-page publication:

- Outlines how community colleges can help skilled immigrants
- Identifies key elements of successful programs
- Spotlights two examples of best practices



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The Role of Community Colleges

Community colleges can help skilled immigrants transition back into professional careers by:

- Offering professional-level English classes
- Acting as a general resource and referral hub
- Filling educational gaps to help prepare immigrants for graduate school, re-licensure, changing fields or advancing in their careers

Because supporting local economic development is core to the community college's mission, the need to support skilled immigrants really resonates.

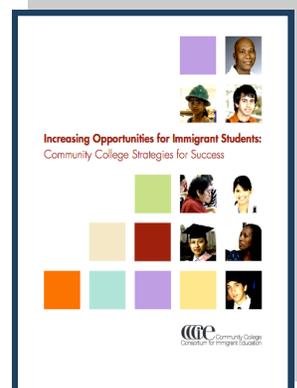
Teresita Wisell

Key Factors in Successful Programs for Skilled Immigrants

Community colleges that effectively serve skilled immigrant students:

- Have executive-level commitment that extends from verbal support to allocation of resources
- Develop programs tied to local employer needs
- Effectively assess the needs and strengths of each student
- Combine English as a Second Language instruction with career pathways and academic studies
- Provide additional support services to encourage retention and completion
- Form partnerships with community-based organizations and employers
- Focus on evaluation and outcomes

For more strategies, read ***Increasing Opportunities for Immigrant Students: Community College Strategies for Success***, available online at www.cccie.org.



Full report available at
www.cccie.org

Best Practice Example: Teaching ESL for Academic Purposes & Career Re-Entry

Project A.C.E is an accelerated, content-based ESL program at **Miami Dade Community College**. Its goal is to equip students with the language skills they need for continuing education and advancing in the workforce.

Funded by a grant from Title V of the Higher Education Act, Project A.C.E was developed based on research that:

- High literacy in one language predicts ease in acquiring a second language
- Content-based instruction promotes efficient language learning

With the end goal in mind, Project A.C.E's developers analyzed language, tasks and technology used in General Education courses and created a curriculum that prepares immigrant students for the demands of GE courses.

The program's overall success derives from *being respectful of students' time, acknowledging their previous education, and providing career guidance*.

Learn more at: www.mdc.edu/iac/esl/ace/

If we create a long road to English proficiency... we can improve a skilled immigrant's English but his or her skills and experience might atrophy along the way.

Teresita Wisell

Best Practice Example: Combining ESL with Workforce Training

The **REVEST Program** at Miami Dade Community College enhances the employment potential of refugees and asylees through vocational training and increased English proficiency.

Nearly half of REVEST students had previously attended college or earned a degree in their home country but are currently underemployed in the US due to limited English proficiency.

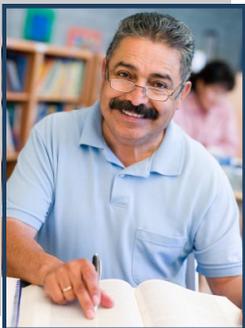
Serving over 3,000 students per semester, REVEST offers:

- 4 levels of vocational ESL classes
- Training for mid-level technical jobs that serve as a stepping stone to higher-level career positions or as alternative career paths

Its success hinges on offering *a variety of courses* and schedules to ensure accessibility, as well as community-based partnerships that provide *support services* (e.g. child care and transportation reimbursement) for eligible students to aid retention and program completion.

Learn more at: www.mdc.edu/wolfson/administration/revest/

Need Additional Resources? Connect with a Network!



The Community College Consortium for Immigrant Education (CCCIE) is a national network of community colleges and experts committed to meeting the needs of immigrant students at all education levels.

CCCIE's current initiatives include:

- Raising the profile of immigrant students
- Broadcasting best practices for program models
- Providing technical assistance to community colleges
- Advocating for inclusive and effective policies



Visit: www.cccie.org