CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH
Language Assessment
Part of the University of Cambridge

“English at Work: Learning and Using English on the Job”

Kathleen M. Bailey,
TIRF & the Monterey Institute of International Studies

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TIRF: www.tirfonline.org

The International Research Foundation for English Language Education

- An independent charitable foundation
- Started by the TESOL Association (1998)

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TIRF: www.tirfonline.org

TIRF's Current Focus:

Promoting research and best practices to improve the use of English in the emerging global knowledge economy of the 21st century

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Jobs for the Future: www.jff.org

Improving Workplace Opportunities for Limited English-speaking Workers (2006)

A study conducted with the National Association of Manufacturers (www.nam.org) for the US Department of Education

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Policy Context: Manufacturing jobs being filled by workers from Mexico, Cambodia, Honduras, Liberia, Poland, Brazil, etc.

Challenges: (1) workers' lack of English proficiency, and (2) poor workplace communication as a result.

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The Policy Concern:

Employees need sufficient English proficiency for safety and efficiency on the job (assessment and/or instruction).

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Exemplary ESL Training Practices

- Mutually beneficial
- Sustainable
- Scalable
- Replicable

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Practice:Manufacturing Institute survey in 2004

6,365 employers → 327 responses

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Of these, 65 employers that hire/train immigrants were interviewed.

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Six firms met the criteria above; four were studied; one is discussed here.

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Portland, Oregon Partnerships

- Woodfold-Marco Manufacturing (folding doors & roll-up windows)
- Portland Community College
- Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership

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Portland, Oregon Partnerships

Practice: On-site, on-the-clock ESL training designed specifically for that work context

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The “benefits are substantial” (p. 14)

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Increased job security & advancement options

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The “benefits are substantial” (p. 14)

Increased job security & advancement options

Internal barriers broken down – workers more involved in the company

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Portland, Oregon Partnerships

More manufacturing firms got interested in partnering to provide ESL training.

In a three-year period, the partnership grew from 30 to 60 firms.

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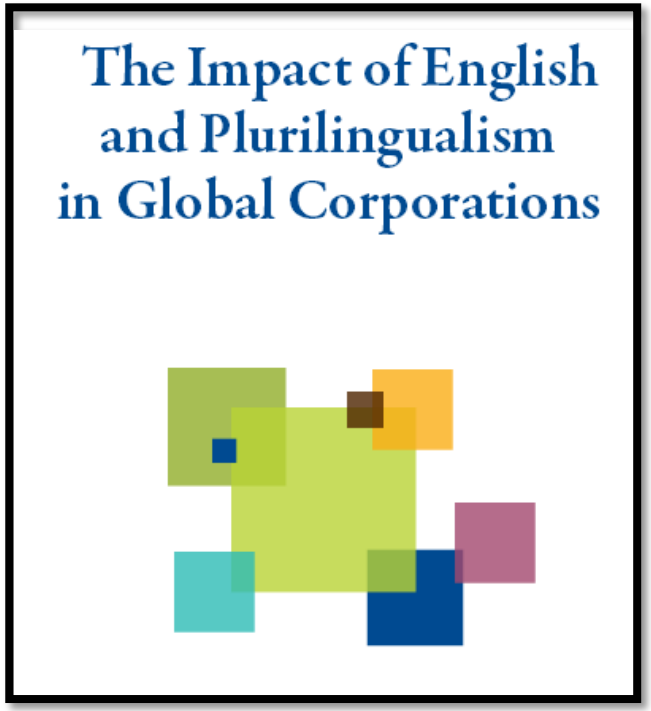
Prospects for the Future

TIRF: Free publications available at www.tironline.org



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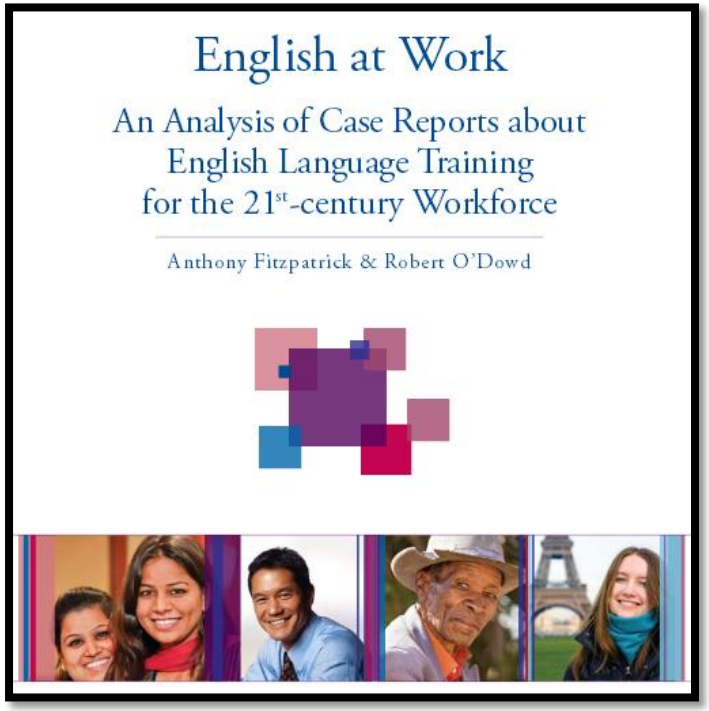
Prospects for the Future

2012
(by Tony Fitzpatrick & Robert O'Dowd)



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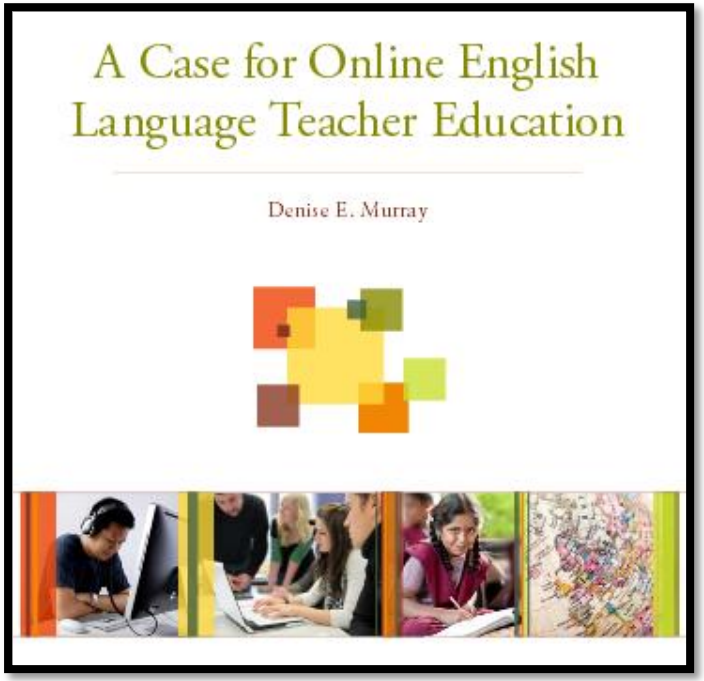
Prospects for the Future

2013

(by Denise Murray)



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