

CHAPTER 5

Home Care Worker Training for ESL Students

Kendi Ho

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

1 Introduction

From my seven years of teaching at the Adult Community School (ACS) in Honolulu, I have noticed that most students choose employment where linguistic demands are generally low (e.g., food service). Entry-level health careers (e.g., home care workers) can provide opportunities for immigrants as well as meet the growing demand for home care. According to Dr. Robert N. Butler, President and CEO of International Longevity Center-USA in (Schmieding Center for Senior Health and Education of Northwest Arkansas, 2008a), “nearly 40% of American families already need some level of in-home eldercare, and those needs will continue to grow dramatically” (p. ii). In this proposal I will describe the context of a partnership between the Adult Community School and a local Community College, and describe the development of an English for Medical Purposes (EMP) curriculum, beginning with a pilot needs analysis, which will form the beginnings of a healthcare career pathway for second language learners of English.

1.1 Institutional Background

The Adult Community Schools were established by the Legislature in 1945 to meet the educational needs of adults in Hawai'i through the Department of Education. These schools offer English as a Second Language (ESL), high school remediation, such as General Educational Development (GED) preparatory classes and tests, as well as other classes (e.g. Basic Computing) to meet the life-long learning needs of the community.

The Home Care Worker Training (HCWT), a non-credit certificate course at a local Community College in Honolulu, consists of three modules and an additional module for professional development with a specific elder population. The classes are to be taken in succession, but students can exit to work and re-enter for additional training. The courses are accessible to working adults by being short, affordable, and offered during evenings and weekends (T, Th 5-9:30pm / Sat. 8am – 5pm). Table 1 describes the modules in brief detail.

Table 1
Home Care Working Training Modules

Module	Duration	Cost
Elder Pal	2 weeks	\$170
Personal Care Assistant	2 weeks	\$170
Home Care Worker Assistant	3 weeks	\$220
Professional Development: Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia	1 week	\$90

I hope to create curriculum for a language support course for ESL students from the Adult Community School while they take the different modules of Home Care Working Training Modules. The proposed course would be taken in the ACS as a bridge course to the non-credit certificate course. Although the ACS runs both ESL and high school equivalency classes, the

majority of students are in ESL. Our immigrant population is placed in Pre-Literacy through Adult Secondary Education (ASE) and then to GED, depending on their language proficiency.

For the purposes of bridging students from the ACS to HCWT, I continued with the recommended levels of (ASE), Low or 9th and 10th grade reading level, which we have used for Long-Term Care Nurse's Assistants (LTCNA). For the HCWT, however, students are deemed eligible through four criteria met at the intake at the Elder Care Training. Students have an oral interview, submit a resume and references, and are not to have any criminal background.

1.2 Micro: Coursework for Elder Pal

The goals, course objectives, and curriculum for the HCWT Elder Pal module were developed by the Schmieding Center for Senior Health and Education of Northwest Arkansas (Appendix A). The course fee includes the Schmieding Student Handbook (2008a), accompanying DVD, and the use of the 7th edition of Mosby's textbook for nursing assistants (Sorrentino, 2008). Lectures and skills training are based on the Schmieding curriculum as well as needs pertinent to Hawai'i's population.

In addition to attending the course with approved absences, satisfactory performance of skills, written homework and assessments are required to earn a certificate. Skills, such as giving a partial bath, are assessed in class. Students need a cumulative score of 80% on written work based on homework (20%) from the Mosby textbook, a True / False quiz (30%), and a written multiple-choice final exam (50%). As a first step, then, it is necessary to find out what language support ELLs need to show satisfactory performance.

2 Needs Analysis

In undertaking a needs analysis of a course other than my own, I have found the definition of a needs assessment as “the systematic collection and analysis of all information necessary for defining a defensible curriculum” (Brown, 2009, p. 269) may need to incorporate more complexities in terms of the human element, as Brown (2009) continues, in “assembling information on the views of different groups of stakeholders and use the information to...” come to an agreement of workable options to resolve concerns and further develop a curriculum (p. 286). In understanding the stakeholders’ perspectives, it was necessary to first decide which people will participate in the assessment.

As the sole analyst of this needs analysis, I was both an insider and outsider. I have worked closely with the Elder Care Training administrators in the ACS’s formal partnership with the Elder Care Training. On the other hand, I have never observed their classes nor have I worked with any of the instructors on identifying language needs for our students.

I initially set out to identify perceived language needs for the target audience, but because of the small number of English language learners (ELLs) interested in taking the course, I decided to include both Native Speakers (NSs) and Non-Native Speakers (NNSs). I also wanted to include past students who might reflect the population of students at the ACS (e.g., GED students and ELLs). To further identify linguistic concerns, I hoped to include students who did not complete the course due to unsatisfactory written or skills work. With this larger pool of perceptions, I hoped to increase the credibility of identified language needs.

Unfortunately, due to a personal emergency, one of the administrators did not release information regarding NNSs and NSs in my target group of graduates. To preserve the goodwill of the partnership, it seemed necessary to focus on those remaining available participants: (a) the head administrator; (b) the two instructors; (c) the secretary; and (d) the 2 NSs and 1 NNS from the ACS. The same administrator, however, also asked me to not survey the students, allowing me to only gather a short personal history from the students during the limited time I had to talk with participants during class (see Appendix B).

2.1 Background Information

Language support classes were a useful means of gathering information from NNSs, and these classes were given to the NNSs during individual meetings on the Fridays before and during the weeks of the Elder Pal instruction (Appendix C). I used a list of high frequency words from the first lesson on the *Role of the Home Care Worker* to see what words were familiar and unfamiliar. I also used the Mosby textbook's multiple-choice questions to assess reading comprehension (Appendix D), since the final exam is also multiple-choice from the same source.

Before the first module began, interviews with the instructor and the NNS student identified some problems to focus on. In an initial conversation with the administrator/instructor, the role of the home care worker was identified as a difficulty for both NS and NNS students. The NNS student also had difficulty making inferences about the role of the home care worker as we discussed the answers to an initial reading comprehension assessment.

In addition, the readability of the materials—the Schmieding Student text, Mosby textbook, as well as a textbook used in the LTCNA course—was assessed using the Flesh-Kincaid formula (as cited in Klare, 1984). In order to give students an entry level to the HCWT, I needed to assess the level of reading of the materials. I chose the chain of infection from the first week of reading from each of the textbooks as well as a random chapter. Appendix E shows that the materials vary in grade level with the Schmieding student handbook ranking from “some high school” needed to “college level needed”. The LTCNA textbook by Dugan appears to be more consistently at the eighth grade level. Both of these sources of information provided excellent background linguistic information about the NNS participant.

2.2 Interview and Observation Data

For most of my data, however, I relied on informal individual interviews and conversations to identify what learners perceived were problems for the NNSs and NSs (Appendix F). I also observed two Saturday classes with field notes and limited audio recording. I could only use the survey for the NNSs and one of the instructors.

After the first two evenings of Elder Pal classes, the NNS student reported problems with the lecture, homework, and using the materials during the lecture. Some of the statements regarding materials reflected a lack of time (“my difficulty, homework, reading pages too much. Only one day”). Other statements about the lecture showed that the student had difficulty with the speed as well as the focus of the materials (“Teacher speed is fast”, “Teacher writing not look whiteboard”, “Is it important? Do I need to catch?”, “Not very clear what Teacher said”). Moreover, the student reported having problems finding the corresponding textbook passage

with the lecture. These concerns were then incorporated into interview questions to the instructors and the NS students.

In contrast to the above self-reported concerns, the NS students did not report any difficulties with the materials or the lecture. These students and the instructor also reported that they did not observe the NNS student having any problems with the lecture or the materials. They observed that the NNS student did not have trouble because she took her time and used her dictionary. The nurse instructor explained that she identified important points as “study points”. However, both instructors commented to me separately that they thought it would be better to have a separate class for ESL students. The nurse instructor noted that the NNS seemed to not follow the informal discussions where students shared their opinions.

As the analyst, I observed language problems that the NNS student reported and more. First, during the lecture, one of the NSs, who used to be an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), asked for clarification on two vocabulary items during the lecture, *What is Dysphagia*. Additionally, many of the NS students were also aware that the NNS needed prompts in remembering the details of the skills. For example, following the nurse instructor’s lead, the NS students would verify that the NNS did the correct steps in the skill training by asking, “Did you turn on the hot water or cold water first?” Although the NS students did not report observing the NNS as having difficulty, they were making attempts to help the NNS.

For the NNS student during the lecture, I also noticed that she could not follow the gist of the discussions. In contrast to gist problems in listening, with reading, the NNS would often ask

me more detailed questions about general vocabulary (e.g., people in their 40s and 50s). In addition, the NNS student experienced difficulties in producing general terms (e.g., parts of the body as well as slang terms like “down there” and “privates”). However, as the nurse instructor stressed, the students simply needed to find out what terms the elder uses or is familiar with. Finally, there were some linguistic features in the lecture that I perceived might be difficult to understand for NNSs. For example, sociopragmatic features of polite communication were quickly addressed. When confronting an elder regarding an observed change the nurse instructor suggested saying, “I noticed you’re a little under the weather” rather than “Are you depressed?” Also, in trying to help students understand terminology, the nurse instructor often used technical terms to clarify meaning. As mentioned previously, one NS raised a question regarding “dysphagia”. The nurse instructor responded that the prefix “dys-“ means difficulty and “phag” means to swallow. She then explained that white blood cells were phagocytes because they swallow bacteria. The language of the lecture as well as the lack of scaffolding may be a hindrance to NNS.

This needs analysis will ultimately be the basis for an evidence-based course proposal to help our immigrant ESL students transition from ESL courses at the ACS to vocational training at the Community College. Therefore, I hope to share the results with the Elder Care Training administration and staff as well as the ACS administrators. For future study, I hope to talk with current employers of Elder Care Training graduates in order to assess the students’ linguistic and professional performance. This includes both elders in the home as well as elders in the Adult Day Care and administrators.

3 Student Learning Outcomes

The emerging results of this needs analysis have incrementally formed the language support objectives since “objectives are the link that connects the curriculum (i.e., to the materials, testing, teaching, and program evaluation)” (Brown, 2009, p. 284). The goals and objectives here are focused on the areas of discrepancy observed and identified in classroom materials, lecture, and language used in skills.

The following are general statements that have guided the learning activities in the language support class. These goals support the Elder Pal goals and are more language specific for NNSs and may change as the program adapts to learner needs. The goals are as follows:

- Use appropriate communication with elders in activities of daily living
- Apply skills needed for active reading and listening

More specific instructional objectives are as below, with learners being able to do the following by the end of the course:

- Give appropriate and comprehensible instructions, directions, ask for clarification, and negotiate their role with the elder and the family
- Identify the main idea and listen for details in classroom lecture and discussions
- By the end of the course, students will be able to use their textbook effectively to assist in learning material for written assessments and skills

4 Materials and Curriculum

In order to organize the scope and sequence of materials, a functional content-based syllabus was developed. The student will practice cognitive language skills and strategies in the context of caregiving to elders. In a cognitive framework, students need meaningful practice (e.g., task related to their goals) to transition from declarative knowledge to procedural knowledge. Table 2 summarizes the scope and sequence of for the Elder Pal course.

Table 2

Scope and Sequence for the Language Support Class for Elder Pal Course

Course / week	Goal	Activity
Elder Pal/ week 0	a) Use textbook effectively	Needs Assessment Textbook orientation: checklist of skills, vocabulary lists Academic reading strategies Meaning of words in context
Elder Pal / week 1	a) Give appropriate and comprehensible directions and negotiate role b) Identify main idea and details in lectures	I.D. and match parts of body Giving directions for Activities of Daily Living Kinesthetic body positions Active listening for main idea and details in a mini-lecture
Elder Pal / week 2	a) Give appropriate and comprehensible directions and negotiate role	Communication during Activities of Daily Living

In regards to the existing materials used in the HCWT, several adaptations and recommendations can be made. Although the Schmieding Student Book may give a NS a good

overview to approach more detailed reading in the Mosby textbook, the Student Book varies in its level of readability from some High School to college level. The Mosby textbook also varies, but at a lower level from 8th to 9th to some High School (Appendix E). For this reason, the intake level should be kept at 9th grade to High School or our ASE Low level. From the NNS's feedback and from my observation, the DVD was helpful in reviewing and presenting skills.

The classroom lectures could also be altered to meet the needs of NNS students. First, the role and responsibilities of the caregiver could be clarified throughout the lectures by all instructors. Next, critical information and medical terminology could be written on the board. Finally, as Hutchinson and Waters (1987) noted in their own needs analysis for Iranian students studying English for marine Engineering, Navigation, and Radio, the content instructors could refer to more commonly known situations and systems to explain more specific systems (p. 121). Explanations of terminology might also use more commonly known examples and terms. The stories or discussions used to help exemplify notions of care are difficult for NNSs. While dialogue may help NS students, the long discourse may be overwhelming for NNSs, especially when they report not knowing the gist of the discussion.

In addition, NNSs need clear instructions regarding their role in activities. Since almost all the other skills were satisfactory, I am sure the instructors have modeled or given clarity. Assisting an elder with cane skills is the only skill where the caregiver acts as a coach, so perhaps specific role-play instructions need to be used. As far as noticing details, the NNS could use the checklist in the back of the student book to review the skill before performance assessment.

5 Assessment and Evaluation

In the future, based on my observations and student evaluation, I would like to give the students scaffolding, practice, and strategies to succeed in the following identified areas:

(a) materials and (b) lectures. For materials, giving students copies of body systems studied in the LTCNA course could help build their background knowledge. In this way they could practice top down and bottom up reading activities. Likewise, after the reading assessment, students could role-play a home care worker observing changes in the elder and make decisions about the next step. For lectures, I could use audiotaped lectures for mini-lectures to help students listen for gist and details then have students practice asking questions when they can not understand the gist.

6 Conclusion

Creating the bridge for the ACS students while simultaneously collecting and analyzing data for the purposes of this paper seems to best be described by Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) emphasis on "ESP: approach not product" and their discussion of how a "learning-centered approach" (p. 16) within course design is "a negotiated process" as well as a "dynamic process" (p. 74). In the middle of the text analysis previously discussed as well as the discourse analysis in observations, I found myself creating the syllabus (Appendices C, G), materials to match the following objectives to help the NNS learn study skills, practice functional language, and lexical items needed to achieve the necessary satisfactory performance in the classroom.

The needs analysis of the Elder Care Training really became an evaluation of how they met their goals and objectives both for NSs and NNSs. Although I met resistance, I was pleased to see that some changes were made to accommodate second language learners. I hope in the future they will be able to target their efforts to growing the program.

I was also pleased to learn from my student that she will go to China to care for her aging parents and then return to finish the home care worker modules. She would also like to begin to study nursing at Kapiolani Community College here in Honolulu. I informed her that the skills she will learn at Elder Care Training are the same skills at the LTCNA program.

In terms of limitations, I unfortunately only had access to a few participants in my pilot study and will need to wait to see if the size will increase for future studies. The lack of access to both materials and students both past and present also limited the data I could gather. Moreover, due to schedule conflicts, I could not observe all classroom lectures and skills training. As previous researchers have pointed out, it is imperative to link the classroom language to the workplace. The scope of this pilot study was limited to the classroom. Also noted by other researchers, it is still difficult to distinguish between difficulties in linguistic competence or professional competence when students show a discrepancy in achieving performance goals.

That said, this small beginning has become the start of a larger immigrant pathway to entry-level healthcare careers. Despite having few participants and a limited number of observed classroom sessions, the results of this qualitative study affected change in the instruction and afforded success for the NNS. I learned that all stakeholders have different views of what is

needed and therefore are essential for creating an effective curriculum. For future research, I will be focusing on potential participants identified in my resource group to bring more work-related language needs based on input from employers, home care workers, and elder clients and their families.

Appendix A

Elder Pal Goals and Objectives

GOALS

“Students who successfully complete...Elder Pal...achieve a level of competency appropriate for providing care to individuals in need of supervision and minimal assistance with activities of daily living. Elder Pal graduates are trained to provide age appropriate companionship, safety and support in the home or assisted living setting.”

(Elder Stay @ Home, Home Care Worker Training brochure, Kapiolani Community College, Spring Semester: January – May 2013)

OBJECTIVES

- To provide students with a brief overview of home care services, methods of reimbursements and self-employment issues.
- To promote a better understanding of caregiver issues and identify strategies for assisting families in crises.
- To describe the functions and responsibilities of the Elder Pal and the personal qualities essential for performing the required tasks competently and compassionately.
- To provide a brief overview and promote understanding of the legal and ethical implications for the Elder Pal.
- To stimulate the student to increase self-awareness, skills and knowledge to better understand and provide quality care for others.
- To promote an increased understanding of communication and provide methods to enhance communication with others.
- To provide students with basic information related to observation techniques, observation reports and documentation of routine and on-routine events.
- To provide basic information on the causes of infection and the use of standard precautions to prevent the spread of infection.
- To provide basic information related to normal changes due to aging, as well as methods for assisting older adults with specific conditions/ diseases and age-appropriate activities.

(Schmieding Center for Senior Health and Education of Northwest Arkansas, 2008b, p. 3)

Appendix B

Limited personal history of participants.

	Gender	Country of origin	Background in medical field	Educational background	L2,3 languages?	Goals for the class
NS #1	Male	USA (Hawai'i)	Taking care of family elders	College	Dutch	start home care business
NS #2	Male	USA (Hawai'i)	1 yr exp. as an EMT (4 yrs. ago)	College	None	start home care business
NNS	Female	China	Family members in medical field/ experience in Chinese reflexology	High School	English	employment

Appendix C

Preliminary Elder Pal Language Support Bridge Syllabus

Kupuna Education Center: Elder Pal		MCSA: Bridge	
Topic/ Activity	Skills	Topic /Activity	Skills
		Week 0	Needs Analysis / Orientation: 1) st background - interview 2) st reading perceptions - survey 3) reading/ multiple choice 4) medical/ academic lexis 5) Review of Schmieding & Mosby books: reading strategies
Week 1		Week 1	
Tues	Ethical & Legal Issues Health Care Team: Role of the Caregiver Infection Control & Prevention	Handwashing; Removing Gloves	
Thurs	Reminiscence & Recreation Activities Body Mechanics Nutrition & Fluid Balance Menu Planning Maintaining a Clean, Healthy Environment	Gait Belt Application Ambulation w/ Cane and Walker Transferring and Elder: chair / wheelchair to bed Wheelchair use / safety	
		Friday	1) Informal conversation of needs 2) Parts of the Body / Systems 3) Practice Body positions: Fowler's; semi-Fowler's, lateral, Sim 's, etc.
Sat	Delirium, Dementia, Alzheimer's Disease & Dementia QUIZ Basic Human Needs Normal Changes in the Aging Process Personal Care: Skin Care, Bowel & Bladder, Incontinence Safety Precautions: Home Safety/ Fire Extinguisher	Brushing Teeth, Denture Care, Mouth Care Fingernail Care, Foot & Toenail Care Hair Care Partial Bath w/ Assistance Shampooing an Elder's Hair at the Sink, during a Shower Shaving Beard Care	

Appendix C (Continued)

	Kupuana Education Center: Elder Pal	Skills	Week 2	MCSA: Bridge Topic / Activity	Skills
Week 2 Tues	Caregiver Stress Communication Caregiver Registry Continuing Education FINAL EXAM Documentation of Care	Client Information / Documentation Worksheet/ Personal Care Worksheet			
Thurs	Personal Care (pt 2) Lifting and Moving an Elder in Bed	Dressing / Undressing an Elder Unoccupied Bed Making Lifting and Moving an Elder in Bed Moving an Elder to the Side of the Bed Turning and Positioning an Elder in Bed Moving an Elder Up in Bed Moving an Elder Up in Bed with a Lift Sheet Raising an Elder's Head and Shoulders Sitting on the Side of Bed w/ Assistance			
Sat	Competency Assessment Course Evaluation & certificates presented	Skills that were not passed in the week will be checked	Friday	1) Evaluation of Elder Pal & Tutoring session 2) Practice: checking elder's comfort in personal hygiene/ moving, handling, and transferring / grooming * categorizing * intonation * vocabulary: buttons, zipper	Review of Cane skills: DVD

Appendix D

Initial Assessment – Reading Comprehension

Read the questions and read the article again. Choose one letter: a,b,c, or d that completes or answers the question.

1. As a nursing assistant, you
 - a. Must perform all nursing tasks as directed by the nurse.
 - b. Make decisions about a person's care
 - c. Should have a written job description before employment
 - d. Should give a drug when a nurse tells you to

2. As a nursing assistant, you
 - a. Can take verbal or telephone orders from doctors
 - b. Are responsible for your own actions
 - c. Can remove tubes from the person's body
 - d. Should ignore a nursing task if it is not in your job description

3. Which statement is *false*?
 - a. You are accountable for your actions.
 - b. You must be honest when performing nursing tasks.
 - c. You can use the person's property for your own needs.
 - d. A law can require you to share the person's confidential information.

4. Who assigns and supervises your work?
 - a. Other nursing assistants
 - b. The health team
 - c. Nurses
 - d. Doctors

Appendix E

Materials analysis with Flesh-Kincaid

	Infection Grade Level	Infection Readability	Random Grade Level	Random Readability
Schmieding handbook	12.0	28.5 (college)	11.1	44.7 (some HS)
Mosby Textbook	6.7	67.5 (8 th – 9 th)	8.9	48.8 (some HS)
Dugan Textbook	8.1	59.0 (some HS)	8.0	67.6 (8 th & 9 th)

Appendix F

Perceived and Self-reported problems for NS and NNS

	Materials	Lecture	Skills
admin/ instructor	role	role	cane skills
nurse instructor	none	informal discussion	role in assisting cane skills
NS #1	Answers in the back, Schmieding book is helpful	“false”	none
NS #2	none	uses dictionary takes time	none
Analyst		NS: asks questions to clarify	NS: give prompts
NNS	not enough time for homework; Schmieding book is difficult	speed/ focus/ can't find in book	male /female contact
Analyst	book: role, inference, varied readability DVD: detail listening	problems with gist in discussions; difficult terminology; sociopragmatic	directions, small talk, fluency with basic medical terms, slang

Appendix G

Syllabus for Alzheimer’s Disease and Dementia

Kupuna Education Center: Alzheimer’s Disease and Dementia		MCSA: Bridge
Topic/ Activity		Topic /Activity
	Week 0	Orientation / Intro to Dementia & AD: 1) Objectives in book / lectures 2) Understanding vocab in context 3) Top down processing: reading titles 4) Mini-lecture: understand gist
Week 1	Week 1	
Tues	Intro to Dementia and Alzheimer’s Disease Maintenance of Respect, Dignity, and Quality of Life	
Thurs	Communication Behavior Issues Caregiver Stress and Burnout	
	Friday	1) Informal conversation of needs 2) Mini-lecture: Towel Bath * Listening for gist / details 3) Lexis: Categorizing stages of AD 4) Evaluation
Sat	Behavior Issues “Bathing Without a Battle” Towel Bath Demonstration Behavior Issues “When Someone You Love Has Alzheimer’s” QUIZ Activities Nutrition FINAL EXAM End of Life Care	