

Topic: Learning English/Cultural Adjustment

Activity: Communicating Without English: A Lesson Plan for Use With Refugees From Burma

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| Objectives | Participants will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ describe why learning English is important in the United States✓ identify ways to communicate with others if you do not share a common language✓ list ways to help and encourage others to learn English |
| Lesson Time | 35 minutes |
| Materials | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Refugees from Burma in the United States</i> (http://www.cal.org/co/videos/Burmese/Refugees_from_Burma.html)• Internet access, laptop, projector, and screen, or DVD, television, and DVD player• Flipchart paper, markers, tape |
| Introduction | <p>Divide participants into small groups of 4-5.</p> <p>Tell participants:</p> <p><i>Speaking English in the United States helps you communicate with your community outside those who speak your first or home language(s). However, learning English takes time and can be very challenging.</i></p> <p>Ask participants to take a minute to think about ways to communicate with people if you do not speak the same language.</p> |
| Viewing Activities | Show the clip from <i>Refugees from Burma in the United States</i> video of Mary Lay and Pain Paing disagreeing over whether you can get by in the United States when you do not speak English, from 7:55-9:48. |
| Practice | <p>In their small groups, participants spend a few minutes to discuss what happened in the video clip between Mary Lay and Pain Paing.</p> <p>Bring the large group together and ask for highlights from the small group discussions. Then ask participants to stand if they agree with Mary Lay. Ask participants to stand if they agree with Pain Paing. Ask participants to stand if they agree with both, neither, or are not sure.</p> <p>In their small groups, participants brainstorm ways to communicate with people you do not share a language with. Bring the large group together and record a list on flipchart.</p> |
| Discussion Questions | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why is English an important language to learn in the United States?• Do you agree more with Mary Lay or Pain Paing with regard to speaking English in the United States, both, or neither? Why?• What are some ways you can communicate if you do not share a language with someone?• What are some ways you and others can try to learn English? |

This document was developed with funding from the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, United States Department of State, but does not necessarily represent the policy of that agency and the reader should not assume endorsement by the federal government.

Variations

- How might you assist others who are having a hard time learning English?
1. In pairs or small groups, participants practice communicating without speaking by using some of the methods from the brainstormed list.

Key English Vocabulary

difficult

hard

to communicate

to speak

easy

language

to disagree

to take time

English

to agree

to learn

to understand

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