

New Guide for Training Limited English Proficient Students

The National Training Fund and the Apprenticeship and Training Department are excited about a new guide describing how local union apprenticeship coordinators and instructors can meet the needs of students for whom English is not their first language. This guide is entitled **Limited English Proficient Students: A Guide for Ironworker Instructors** and was written by Dr. Mickey Wircenski of the University of North Texas. Mickey has been working with our annual Ironworker Instructor Training Program and foreman training programs for many years and is an internationally recognized expert in this area.

In 2005 there were about 25.5 million U.S. adults ages 18 and older who spoke a language other than English at home, up from 17.9 million a decade earlier. Individuals who are limited English proficient (LEP) often come not only from a different language background but also from a very different cultural background.

There is no question that both the workforce and Ironworker education and training programs will be more culturally diverse in the future and that the preparation of future Ironworkers must include methods and techniques that address the needs of LEP students. Instructors must continually reflect on their teaching practices to address the needs of this population, placing a strong emphasis on the human side of teaching. Instructors must continually focus on these students and find effective ways to help them achieve success in our industry.

As the number of LEP students in Ironworker programs continues to increase, instructors should become more aware of strategies and resources that will be effective in working with them. This guide has been written for that purpose. The contents include the following.

Section 1: An Introduction to Individuals with Limited English Proficiency

This section contains a definition of LEP individuals as well as a description of

general characteristics that these learners may display.

Section 2: Second Language Learning

This section contains information about the obstacles that LEP individuals encounter in their efforts to learn the English language. An overview is provided of English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. A variety of options for assisting LEP students are also included.

Section 3: Cultural Considerations in the Ironworker Classroom

Culture and language are closely related. Learning a new language involves learning about new ways of thinking, feeling and expressing. Cultural differences can mean difference in perception and meaning that can contribute to making learning a difficult and confusing process. This section contains suggestions for instructors to communicate with LEP students in classroom and shop situations.

Section 4: Instructional Strategies and Resources for Ironworker

Instructors

This section contains instructional strategies that are effective in working with LEP students.

Interviews with Apprenticeship Coordinators

Ironworker Apprenticeship Coordinators from locals who are actively making accommodations for LEP students were interviewed for this guide. Their suggestions are included in this section.

Appendix A: Internet Resources for LEP Learners

This section contains a variety of internet resources that will assist LEP students to improve their use of the English language.

Appendix B: Community Resources

This section contains suggestions of community resources that can be helpful to

Ironworker instructors and LEP students.

Appendix C: Instructional Tools

This section contains blank forms mentioned in Section 4 that the instructor can copy and use in planning or and working with LEP students.

Appendix D: Spanish Vocabulary and Expressions Helpful for Use in the Classroom

This section contains basic expressions and vocabulary terms that can assist instructors in communicating with Spanish speaking LEP students.

Appendix E: Constructionary English-Spanish Guide

This section contains an excerpt from the Constructionary English-Spanish Guide that is used in many apprenticeship classes with Spanish-speaking students.

Appendix F: Internet Resources for Instructors

This section contains resources for Ironworker instructors who are working with LEP students in their classes.

References

This section contains all of the references cited in the manual.

Copies of this guide were distributed during the annual Ironworker Instructor Training Program. In addition, copies will be sent to all local unions. It is our hope that the information contained within this guide will assist instructors to prepare skilled Ironworkers to meet the needs of our employers and contractors.

Note – need to add a photo of Mickey teaching at USD. Caption to be added after we have the photo.