



Case Study

College of Western Idaho | Higher Education | ESL Workforce Development

Successful Skill Development for Job Placement

Challenge

The College of Western Idaho (CWI) needed a language-learning solution for adult English as a Second Language (ESL) learners that would provide the critical language-learning skills needed to obtain employment. Due to a local beef-processing plant closing operations, 500 workers were given 60 days' notice of termination. A large component of this displaced workforce comprised Hispanic workers with limited English proficiency, many of whom had worked for the plant for more than 20 years. CWI was charged with creating a program that would provide transitional training targeting this Hispanic workforce. The requirements of the program included building the necessary skills for learners to fill out job applications, participate in interviews, and be considered as viable candidates for employment. With only one week to develop a six-week workforce program, CWI needed an effective language-learning-solution partner that could augment the classroom experience for participants.

Implementation

CWI partnered with the Idaho Department of Labor to obtain the funding necessary to provide transitional training for these Hispanic workers. The college used the Rosetta Stone TOTALe® solution, which was incorporated into the existing curriculum to supplement instruction and enhance the classroom. CWI learners were scheduled for four-hour blocks of study each day, which included keyboarding class, the Rosetta Stone® program, and classroom instruction. Learners averaged 1–3 hours of study each day with the TOTALe® solution during the six-week class offering, depending on whether they were enrolled in the morning, afternoon, or evening courses. Rosetta Stone Manager™, the administration tool, was used to ensure that learners were making progress with the program. With its success in leveraging TOTALe as a supplemental language-learning solution, the college is planning to implement a blended-learning approach to classroom curricula during the next academic year.

Results

Through supplementing the classroom with the Rosetta Stone TOTALe solution, CWI realized the following benefits in offering the program to learners, since implementing it in October 2011:

- An estimated 35% of participants obtained new employment due to completion of the course.
- Over 95% of participants completed the course.
- Increase in supplemental learning options by participants, including enrolling in GED and nursing-assistant programs.



At a Glance:

The College of Western Idaho is a public, open-access, and comprehensive community college committed to providing affordable access to quality teaching and learning opportunities to the residents of its service area in western Idaho. CWI has seven campus locations throughout Southwest Idaho providing higher education and 21st-century technical skills acquisition. The college is dedicated to improving the community's economic well-being by responding with highly-educated and productive graduates.

"Our focus on community and industry needs is what led CWI to develop Workplace English and digital-technology classes for many non-English-speaking laid-off workers. By breaking down language and technology barriers to employment, 35 percent of participants reentered the workforce, leading to a more skilled labor force in our local economy."

—Scott Fenwick

**Director of Business Partnerships
Workforce Development
College of Western Idaho**

Focusing on community needs

In the true spirit of entrepreneurship, the College of Western Idaho's Business Partnerships/Workforce Development programs focus on serving the needs of the community. Operating as a self-funded business model, the goal of the program is to provide affordable education that provides the certifications and skill-set training needed for a successful workforce. Through community outreach, CWI identified the need for training to develop critical skills for displaced Hispanic workers, following the closing of a local processing plant. With only 60 days' notice, Hispanic workers needed to acquire English language skills to apply for new positions. CWI was able to develop and deliver a program to meet their needs within a week of the request from the Idaho State Department of Labor.

Securing funding support

In order to support the language-learning initiative to build English skills for displaced workers, CWI partnered with the State of Idaho Department of Labor to fund the program. The funding supported the cost of instruction and administration of the program. In addition, the Department of Labor assigned caseworkers to each participant in the program to provide the support needed to ensure success of the CWI program and to help to quickly place workers in new jobs.

Preparing for the workplace

CWI focused on the skills required for participants to obtain new employment. The focus was on developing the communication skills necessary for success in the workplace. The Rosetta Stone® solution provided foundational communication skills and helped build confidence for learners to communicate with others. In addition to building language skills, participants were taught basic computer skills. With an average age of 45 and an average of less than six years of formal education, participants had not developed the technology skills for success in today's workforce. Use of the Rosetta Stone solution, as well as focused keyboard instruction for 1–3 hours per day, developed solid technical skills for learners. Last, participants had 1–3 hours of classroom instruction each day that focused on completing job applications and interview techniques. The overall goal of the program was to create a quality workforce candidate by building language, computer, and interview skills.

Implementing for success

CWI implemented the Rosetta Stone TOTALe® solution as a supplement to classroom instruction. Utilizing the Rosetta Stone solution to provide core language-skill development, CWI was able to build upon language skills acquired to prepare learners for reentering the workforce. Classes were offered over a six-week period for four-hour sessions per day, five days per week. To accommodate the needs of participants, CWI was able to offer morning, afternoon, and evening classes. Implementing a "must-attend" policy, CWI provided flexibility regarding which session learners attended to ensure that they made it to a session in the course every day. Offering flex scheduling was the key to course-completion rates that were higher than anticipated.

Realizing benefits

CWI began implementation of this program in October 2011. The Rosetta Stone solution was incorporated into the program beginning in January 2012. A total of 67 participants in the program used Rosetta Stone an average of one hour per day during their six-week course. Over 1,900 program hours using the Rosetta Stone solution were realized during the six-week course. CWI's effective implementation led to realizing a 95% course completion rate.

Participants were able to secure interviews for new positions. Due to the English language skills acquired from the Rosetta Stone solution, as well as the classroom activities centered around acquiring a new job, participants were able to find new employment. Overall, 35% of the 67 participants were placed into new jobs after completing the program. Some participants elected other supplemental learning options which included enrolling in GED and nursing-assistant programs.

About Rosetta Stone

Rosetta Stone Inc. is the global leader in language-learning software. With 20 years of experience behind us, we're continuing to develop award-winning innovations that improve the lives of people and the operations of organizations every day.

Our proprietary, proven method leverages interactive technologies to replicate the immersion environment in which people learn their first language, and it activates each learner's natural aptitude for acquiring a new language regardless of language background.

We offer our clients scalable solutions for a variety of needs, from individual learners to single classrooms to entire organizations. Our solutions have been implemented in over 20,000 schools and in more than 15,000 private and public sector organizations, and they are used by millions of learners in over 150 countries throughout the world.



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