

**Looking Back and Moving Forward: 20 years of Worker Education and Training
NIEHS National Trainers' Exchange – March 2007**

**WORKSHOP SESSION SUMMARY
NIEHS NATIONAL TRAINERS' EXCHANGE
MARCH 2007**

1. Session Title and Presenter's Contact Information:

"Putting Cultural Literacy into Action – Spanish Language Training"

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2. Workshop Summary

The objectives of this workshop were to discuss the numerous cultural factors that must be taken into account when delivering Health and Safety training in other languages, and to demonstrate a specific training module (DOT NAERG) of an NIEHS grantee translated into the Spanish language, using participatory training methods (small group activity and large group discussion) and illustrating some of the cultural factors discussed.

3. Methods

The exercise used in this workshop consists of the presentation of a scenario, followed by questions which are then answered in groups of 4-6 trainees who use the DOT Emergency Response Guidebook and a set of factsheets. The exercise was conducted in the Spanish language, using a Spanish language version of the DOT NAERG. The exercise was followed by a facilitated large group discussion on the challenges posed when training in other languages, including curriculum development, instructor and trainee language capacities, literacy levels, prior education levels of trainees, and socio-cultural and political factors that can affect how training is both delivered and received.

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A brief powerpoint presentation of statistics illustrating the specific needs of the Hispanic community was also given, which also added to the overall conversation.

4. Main Points

- *Literacy level may depends on education level
- *Workers have preconceived ideas about this country because there are better conditions in the U.S.A than in their own countries
- *Political spectrum is very different depending on country of origin. Immigrants may think or have the wrong idea about unions or may be very active politically speaking
- *Work ethic may relate to a survival principle
- *As trainer, you cannot rely only on written materials. Have materials written in both languages so that you are prepared for your audience
- *Literacy issues also apply to American people
- *Some employers have the mentality that immigrants must learn English
- *It is a challenge to develop material for those who are well educated back in their countries but have dangerous/low wage jobs in the USA

Responses from the participants

How did you feel being trained in Spanish?

- *"It is a good tool to see how people feel when they do not understand the language"
- *Strange situation. "I did not know if I was allowed to communicate in English"
- *"I had low literacy level in Spanish since I do not know the language"
- *There is a lot to learn from each other. It is important to create an inclusive learning environment

5. References

The 2004 edition of the DOT NAERG, Spanish version

6. Workshop Handouts/ Resources

Handouts: Spanish Language Training - PPT

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UAW – Seccion 7: Letrero DOT, Etiquetas, & Manual de Respuestas de Emergencia

OAI – Modulo 1: Determinacion de los Materiales Peligrosos

OAI – Modulo 1: Examen

OAI – Hispanic Workforce Safety Participation Ideas