



Migrant learners' experiences with foundation skills courses — support document

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This document was produced by the author(s) based on their research for the report *First Nations and migrant learners' experiences with foundation skills courses*, and is an added resource for further information. The report is available on NCVER's Portal: <<https://www.ncver.edu.au>>.

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
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Introduction

Purpose

This support document accompanies *First Nations and migrant learners' experiences with foundation skills courses* and provides more detailed information on the migrant cohort. It is divided into the following sections:

- 'Migrant case study' provides a more comprehensive account of the case studies held with migrant learners in the inner-city suburbs of Melbourne and Sydney.
- 'Quotes from migrant learners' consists of a table with quotes from migrant learners matched with particular topic areas and includes the quotes from the main report and case study write-ups in this support document, as well as additional quotes from participants.

Migrant case study

Focus groups and interviews were held with 60 migrant participants in six locations across the inner-city suburbs of Melbourne and Sydney from June to September 2024. The aim was to speak with people who had commenced a foundation skills course but who had not managed to complete it. Twenty-seven participants stated that they were involved in the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP), with 10 in the Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) program. Another 24 stated that they were enrolled in other language, literacy, numeracy and digital (LLND) skills programs,¹ with most of these mentioning that they were learning English².

Table 1 below provides some background information on the participants.

Table 1 Background information on migrant participants

Demographic characteristic	n
Gender	
<i>Male</i>	11
<i>Female</i>	48
<i>Did not answer</i>	1
Age group	
<i>20–24 years</i>	2
<i>25–29 years</i>	4
<i>30–39 years</i>	11
<i>40–49 years</i>	17
<i>50–59 years</i>	15
<i>60–64 years</i>	6
<i>65 years and over</i>	5
Previous qualification level ¹	
<i>Certificate I to IV</i>	19
<i>Diploma</i>	15
<i>Bachelor's degree</i>	24
<i>Bachelor's degree with Honours</i>	0
<i>Graduate certificate</i>	4
<i>Graduate diploma</i>	4
<i>Master's degree</i>	4
<i>Doctorate</i>	0
<i>No qualification</i>	15

Note: 1 A participant could have more than one qualification.

Participants were born in a diverse range of countries, including, but not limited to, China, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, South Korea, Vietnam and Sri Lanka. For some participants, Australia was not the first country they had migrated to. It is also worth noting that some students were highly skilled

1 It is possible that these participants were also involved in either the AMEP or SEE programs but did not recognise the programs by their names when completing the participant questionnaire.

2 One participant was involved in more than one type of program.

and qualified when they came to Australia. Amongst them were a piano teacher, politician, artist, manager and college lecturer and some who hold bachelor's degrees and postgraduate qualifications, including master's degrees. This cohort is intelligent and keen to learn, so their responses to the questions asked are likely measured against previous experiences with studying. The major life-changing experiences they have encountered in their migration journey should be commended and acknowledged, particularly as the resounding narrative throughout the case study responses is one of an overwhelming desire to succeed in Australia.

Note that some quotes will appear in more than one topic area in the support document. This is an important part of qualitative research of this nature.

Motivations

Having a strong, enthusiastic desire to acquire new knowledge, skills or experiences is at the centre of the life-changing experience of moving to a new country. Learning and improving foundation skills comprises only a portion of the motivating factors discussed by this cohort. Their motivations to undertake a course are enriched by a multitude of influences, not merely because 'everybody who lives on this country must know their languages'. For this reason, the question of whether they themselves chose to undertake foundation skills courses or were encouraged or pressured into it is more complicated than it first appears.

How learners first heard about the training

The experience of finding out about, recognising, realising or being given information about courses and then continuously having to make decisions about these was clear in the focus groups. Many students had heard about the training through friends, family, peers and students who had done the course previously:

From a friend. How many people [found out] from friends or family? So one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, great. [Facilitator]

When my friend tell me, let's go to do and I am coming here enrolment ...

I heard about ... from my sister because she arrived five years before me and she do the course. Then when I arrive my sister said oh, just do that course. It help you.

My husband told me.

Some had been notified about a course as part of a visa, citizenship program, or pathway to citizenship; via social media and the internet; staff at community centres or schools; job search providers (including interview feedback), work providers, Centrelink, or a job network:

Through providers. Some of them are return students. Some of them heard about a new program.

One of our teachers here, she was a student with the [details removed], and then she started to – we started to do a pathway to citizenship, and [name removed] actually brought her husband as a volunteer student for citizenship.

The government to give me the chance with the visa and then I was attending here.

On my visa grant letter, they told me I can join the AMEP free – AMEP course, because English not my first language.

Government asked me to attend the [details removed]. So, I register here. It is quite useful because of – actually I finished my university as a [details removed] Major.

When they have like an open session to everyone to – for enquiring the information. So, I bring – I brought my visa, write a letter to there and to ask her. So, I think that one helped me to find the right place and to start.

My job provider say me ‘up to you. You want looking for a job, you want to study, up to you’. So I pick up study.

I was a part of the process. My case manager enrolled for me and my partner, husband.

Found the opportunity on the Facebook.

On Instagram, I check and I see the advertisement – the advertising. It is on Instagram ...

I have Googled, I have checked.

I directed to go to the local community centre to ask information about [details removed], so I know here ... course, there is class. Yeah.

From library ... I got the [brochure].

I saw the news from the local – like a newsletter or something. They say, AMEP will start to enrol students. So, they have an address. They have a date. You can go there go there to enquire something or enrol, so I just go there and ask everything.

Amongst the groups, many parents who had children growing up here found that their children expect them to speak English at home, and/or be able to use the computer:

I have one kid who is [age removed] years old who is attend Year [level removed] class. He always criticise my English. He always say [inaudible], ‘mum you have to improve your English’, so I think I still have big room to improve my English.

It’s quite difficult to understand when my kids are talking to me in English. Even the way I communicate to them, when I say something, ‘oh dad, you say that again and again and again’.

In my house is me and my wife is speaking Spanish, none of my kids know much in Spanish.

Like we have to know how to use, you know, make Facebook, my sister, daughter, message to me from ... like my email, my son, that’s why I really need to know how to use the computer and I want to get a better job.

It’s the kids, when they talk in English.

The choice to study

The majority of responses indicate that many in the migrant group made the decision to take foundation skills courses themselves, as a personal choice, but almost always with encouragement from the external parties mentioned above. However, there are circumstances where encouragement is described as ‘pressure’ or ‘expectation’:

Because I want.

My choice, but my friend push me.

Same thing when my friend tell me, ‘let’s go to do’, and I am coming here enrolment and she [unclear].

So now is I really want to get a job but if I had an interview – so interviewer said to me you need more English here. Good writing skill, that’s okay my speaking isn’t that good, communicate with others and also [unclear] with others.

On arrival, all the staff, new arrivals, especially from [details removed] were sent to a language centre for learning.

I was already registered in the program on our arrival after completing of the registration for family residency visa.

I heard somebody say if I want to apply for citizen that by the time you finish the course – like if you finish the course or you study just half or the more you study then when you do interview for citizen you will get a little bit easier.

Reasons for enrolling

A variety of aspirations and ambitions were discussed, from simply not wanting to stay home any longer, to improving communication/writing/spelling, building confidence, broadening their social circle, helping other migrants, making friends, passing a citizenship test, getting a job, making money, going to university, or getting into graduate studies. Broadening, developing, building, updating, sharing and changing skills and knowledge, and in turn increasing mobility – socially and economically – appear to be driving factors.

Employment

The central goal highlighted, in the main, is gaining employment. This cohort are focused on income, housing, providing for their families, enabling children to thrive – they are focused on survival first, which means getting a job as soon as possible, ‘I intend after improving my English language, I hope I find any job, this is very important for me’. Learning and improving English skills is the keystone for gaining employment, many wanting to equip themselves with ‘better English to communicate with all people and have a chance to get a job’. This sentiment was clear in numerous comments made:

I have come to learn English. I want to improve my English, I want to make friends and get a job, yes.

In finish in studying English, for me, in my two years studying here I'm thinking also to find a job.

So I just I want more study and I need a job so finally I get a job if I English catch up everything ...

I had a dream to get a job so I can [unclear] I can talking to others, I can do. Before I was very nervous, I can't remember how can I speak everyone, I can't do.

If we want to stay here and if we want to do any job, we should speak English first. So now I am trying to find any job, so I thought first will have to learn English.

I think we are all migrants from other country, all most people want to get a job in the future, so I think we need to more chance to speak and more focusing for speaking and listening.

When I think about how can I get a job, so I need to have something, a certificate ...

And then after that I got my [profession removed] and I started studying my course and tried to get my job.

So now is I really want to get a job but if I had an interview – so interviewer said to me ‘you need more English here’. Good writing skill, that's okay my speaking isn't that good, communicate with others and also [unclear] with others. I want to be able to get a job but I still struggle English or speaking obviously.

Once they are in employment, many found they wanted to improve their fluency, conversations and communication in the workplace through practising and improving English language skills in class. Here, desires varied. While some found their writing or reading to be at a good level although their speaking and listening required improvement, others found the opposite, with their writing needing improvement, particularly to get promoted at work. So, the varied levels of educational need are clear, along with the many varied motivations: formal and informal emails, advanced computing, writing up a resume,

applying for a promotion, articulating into work they are qualified for, or concurrently gaining a qualification, were all mentioned. Participants enrolled to:

Start English improvement for understanding local Australian conversations to be able to communicate in the workplace.

Improve my English knowledge ...

Improve my communication at work.

Improve my skill how I get through to the computer ...

Continue my computer, the next level.

Learn how to talk to people in working culture so that's why I need to come here to study English.

Study, I need to speak fluently English.

Learn English because I have problem with the conversation to understand. So, I am here to improve my language.

Talk English.

Have achieved something.

Go back to the English class and so the job ...

Communicate with the public on buses.

Gaining skills, capabilities and strengths, and recognising those that these migrants already hold are understandably a prime part of the classes. These skills are vital for not only articulating into employment but also – when previous working backgrounds and experiences overseas are not recognised here – they enable this cohort to progress into jobs they have aspired to, initiate new careers or restart earlier ones:

I wanted also to ... get a job and utilise my professional experiences but I couldn't because of this – some language pronunciations in the workplace.

I want to complete my study in the future because it's my dream and it's my passion. That's why I started with [profession removed] to complete my role.

Even though you finish your four-year course back home, you have to study here.

And in that course, I got an [unclear], like I was looking for a good career, a suitable career for me. In that period, [I did do something small] in school and in ... So, I got my [visa] and now I'm doing [profession removed] course. Yeah. So, this course helped me.

I had a dream to get a job so I can [unclear] I can talking to others, I can do. Before I was very nervous, I can't remember how can I speak everyone, I can't do.

And then after that I got my [profession removed] and I started studying my course and tried to get my job.

I can to the Australia workforce to restart my career here. That's why when on weekend they open the ... class. It's kind of pathway to the workforce course, give you many suggestions. So, I decided to stop my ... and go to that course.

When I first arrived, I'm thinking to work as [profession removed]. Then when in the ... in that class, I feel like, yes, I – this decision make me like – yeah, this decision is correct one, that's what I think.

Articulation

Foundation courses are also used for educational mobility and articulation, often being a prerequisite or a co-requisite for other courses:

Then I'm thinking like to study in my Master degree in here, but the problem is I still needed the language. The language is still a barrier.

At present I took [profession removed] course, short course, this is necessary for me improve my English [unclear].

I just stay here forever. But after that I do my Cert. III in [profession removed]. Then I still do it the same time because I know two days for English and two days for my course. [Unclear] and it's half of my ... because more and more it's about English it's help – very helpful for my course. Then after that I ... during my study. Then I ... all that time I still studied but cut out two days and one day. Then after that I got more job.

I learnt a Certificate IV [profession removed] through the university in [capital city removed]. That's my hobby. Hopefully I find a job with that ...

I just know about university but if no other sources, if available I will be happy to help. I just move in other places for training, further training. Just nearby university, I have heard about this but I haven't applied yet ...

Social aspects

Finding employment is seen as a very real opportunity to build a better life for their families, and the drive for social inclusion appears to be equally important because migrants are 'living here, not only working, there is the social life'. The importance of building social connections, contacts and networks, gaining confidence with daily interactions, feeling welcome and appreciated, being included and experiencing a sense of belonging are all central to their wellbeing, as these migrants build an understanding of a new life in Australia. Their desire to build rapport with others is evident throughout all focus groups; it is referred to continuously and seems to be the touchstone that unites the experiences of all participants:

I was hoping of course to improve English and meet other people, which is good because we know nobody here. So yeah, I also have a good experience trying ... food and the ... bread, and friends from all different countries.

The main purpose of come to this course is to improve my communication, not only inside my family, in my street or environment, [unclear] other people as well.

I [unclear] learn English and I'm try to help other peoples from China. Some person at my age they can speak English a little, well maybe some [unclear] little say something. So now I try to learn my English and grow my English and to help them, teach them. Now I am [unclear] here to teach the beginners, the Chinese people beginners, to speak English in [unclear].

Making friends in class was mentioned regularly. Not only is it important for confidence, but it is also what motivates many of these migrants to attend in the first place, and for some it is the reason they keep attending. Some reflected on how they had avoided contact with people when they first arrived – due to low English skills, they had low confidence. Even if they had been a socially outgoing person in their previous country, they had found it difficult to be extroverted enough here until they gained confidence. Finding they had the same experiences as others really helped them to feel they belonged:

At that time, we have no confidence to talk to the native speaker. When we go outside, I just feel, oh so scared to talk to ... and that how you met the friends, you met the people and they very nice people and you say, oh, you have the same experience.

Even now I'm comfortable to talk to you. Before no, I would stay away.

People, I was afraid to avoid whole thing but now is I am able to English as good.

The English course improved my grammar and more confident because I can now connect with the community for longer.

Being able to come and talk with friends and new people, in a new place, where they could exchange ideas and experiences, broadened their worlds. Many commented on how much they liked the diversity, of getting to know so many different cultures in the class:

So is my heart was open and then I can talk with the other classmate so this is related to good friendship.

I feel like I have a family business here. Everyone know each other, we talk, hi, how are you?

I love to meet new people and know about their culture. So, that was the right place for me, because now I have many friends from China, Iran and Afghanistan. Many countries. So, I guess after my home, this place is my second home.

For some, returning to study as an older person was seen as an opportunity, ‘now I have a chance to study, back to study, when I’m [age removed] years old’. Mature students also found themselves less tied down by social responsibilities:

When I arrived here, my children were very small, so I thought we stay at home. Now they are grown up and all are going in high school. So, I thought [unclear] is multicultural, so we need to speak English first.

Security, safety and advocacy

Personal, professional, digital and medical security, safety and advocacy were also significantly mentioned. Many wanted better language skills to advocate in the medical system for themselves but also for others in their family and community, with increasing advocacy required for the ageing community: ‘the older people, helping, helping very important you know sometimes, whatever, whatever, if you have something aged, people say, speaking English good’. This sentiment was repeated a number of times, particularly in hospital settings, where staff speak very rapidly. Sending and receiving formal emails was also mentioned, along with face-to-face and digital interactions with banks and agencies:

I remember that every time I said talk to the doctor, yes, because I have to see a specialist every three months and go to hospital, to special – I have to – really want [location name removed] help me to improve my English to talk with the doctor, specialist, and the nurse, what I want and what they [unclear] and more understand because the hospital, they use the language different, not like teachers, slowly, slowly. It’s very quick.

Language acquisition and cultural understanding

Many migrants want an Australian teacher to help with accents, pronunciation and general Australian conversation and particularly assistance with following the speed of Australian native speakers. Others wanted:

Different type of teachers. Because sometimes we go anywhere that area [unclear] the people are Chinese so we need to [unclear] different. Some are Aussie, some are [unclear] in my opinion and in community centre should be three, four, to five kind of type of teachers should be there. Indian, Chinese, Aussie all.

Understanding Australian culture, slang and history, ‘knowing the customs and religion – customs and traditions of Australia’ were mentioned repeatedly as significant reasons for enrolling in English classes. One participant said they ‘heard first time the national anthem in the class’:

Because it was covering different aspects, getting familiar with the Australian society, going to bank, using transport, hotels, restaurants, and some people’s culture and habits. In the meantime, it was

the topics, the teaching methods and paragraphs were all explaining all these things, also for learning and also for getting us to be familiar with everything. So, on daily subjects, which was topics which was provided for the teacher was from day to day it was different material. In each material, the students were able to learn different things, especially the teacher was teaching other level, his name was [name removed]. Maybe he is still teaching here. He's an Australian person and I was very much interested to learn his Australian English.

I think it's the slang. Sometimes it's slang. Like what does chuck a u-ey mean? Like do a U-turn, chuck a U-ey, that's obviously very specific slang, but also Australians mangle their vowels. G'day A-E-O-U all becomes like [mimics slurred speech] and then that can be very hard to understand. So yeah, there's probably a few things.

Interesting is we learn the Aussie language [slang].

My husband got a copy of the slang list.

I'm having difficult in speaking because when I heard — so that's why I want to hear a conversation because the - your accent, it's very — we're not familiar.

Chuck a U-ey is the one everyone has to learn, like that's a hard — do a U-turn, chuck a U-Ey, that's always — that's one of my favourites.

Teach us a lot of the culture out there ...

There are speaking very fast. So sometimes we cannot understand ... in the mall, we can see that. Even in retail store, they are speaking in very fast so we cannot understand ... They don't speak clearly.

I was much interested to have some English skills but get familiar with Australian, local accents, slang, way of speaking, there were much differences.

I'm interested in knowing the history of Australia — how they started — and also the Aboriginal people.

Then some accents, for example the Aussie accents that we got easily now to get understand, because of I think from the [course].

Intentions

Many in the migrant group had varied responses to questions about whether they had intended to complete their training at the time that they enrolled in the course. Some aimed to continue the course and complete it, irrespective of age or health issues, because of a need to feel useful, to help family, and to feel as if they are contributing and gaining a sense of achievement once they have completed all they wanted or needed to:

I want to keep going, I don't want to stop it. I don't mind my age, I want to keep going until I go through what I wish, you know, for the future of my family.

That's why I came here and like more stress on me, long time, you know, they what going on and I want to get rid of this one and then I want to move forward my life. Because at the moment in me, my, I'm not feel 100 per cent the way I feel my sickness, but you know, I keep pushing myself every day and I really want to keep going until — I wish I can still helping my family in the future, that's why I don't want to stop my study. I want to get going through until the one I wish.

Others had specific goals, such as discontinuing once English becomes 'good enough' or using a course to fulfil visa or citizenship requirements, which can mean ceasing to attend once a residency status changes, or undertaking the course as a pre- or co-requisite to reach another course, including advanced English. In some cases, this is because the desired course is at a more convenient time/venue, or simply not offered by the current provider. Again, once the major goal of employment is reached, they may not continue with the course:

I can live with my broken English, I can survive with it, but my family can't survive if I don't work.

Yeah, I'm glad when my course is finish, this month, tomorrow, last day and I would like to keep going next course because I'm glad to improve my English.

I just did some, a few months this class, after that I stopped and again came last August and again stopped because I got my residency and after that I start my certificate III.

I took two courses and then I got now two certificates. That's why I stopped.

I'm not fluent in English so that's why I continue my study.

Barriers to completion/attending training

For this cohort, numerous factors create barriers that influence the decision-making associated with whether to continue studying or not. These include institutional and course issues, such as limited course options with some providers and limited learning models in the courses offered; having too many participants in courses, which impacts on course capacity or availability; or insufficient participants, which means courses cannot meet the minimum requirements to proceed. Aside from these technical issues, which are not unique to foundation skills courses, there are several other issues that are more specific to this cohort.

Personal reasons

Health and wellbeing

The health and wellbeing of participants and those they care for can strongly impact on their ability to attend classes. Not attending classes because of health problems, needing to rest or feeling homesick is one thing, but for many in this group they must take time out to care for others. One participant had been looking after her father for 14 years and when he died she became distressed and unwell. Another had become pregnant and very unwell with morning sickness; she needed rest and could no longer attend classes. There is disruption and stress, which is compounded if issues are recurring. The following quotes exemplify the diverse health and wellbeing experiences of this cohort:

When my husband gets sick, I have to look after him for long time and I start to get sick for — and then I got lots of stress and they gave me your email. That's why I want to get out and do something to make my stress ...

I was very sick, so I need to talk to study. So, I had this experience oh, I can't study English, this is my experience.

Something [unclear] sometimes issue we cannot avoid. Sometimes the school calling [unclear], sometimes the sick right injured kid [unclear] see the doctors, something like that.

Mental health ... He is very tired. He can't concentrate sometimes in class. I just asked him if it was okay to share, he had [details removed] family members pass away [details removed] overseas, [details removed]. So, maybe that's why he stopped because he needed to rest.

I'm [age removed] years old ... tired and things, especially from the war ... maybe I have to start again, and that energy to start again is not easy when you're older than when you are younger.

I get a [details removed] operation. So, this stopped me and avoiding to do some physical jobs, so at least had to wait maybe for one year, or one-and-a-half years until health condition [unclear] improved, be more active and then to do the skills vocational training or university.

When I come to class my mind is always with them.

Trauma

The impact of past trauma on mental health cannot be ignored for the migrant cohort. Participants described anxiety associated with grief, shock and trauma (previous negative and abusive educational experiences, family death, and earlier lived experiences of conflict and war) as a demotivating factor, also contributing to stress, and emphasised that when they were able to attend classes it did help their mental health. Unfortunately, COVID-19 lockdowns re-traumatised some individuals who had experienced similar lockdowns in conflict/war environments in other countries, making them fearful of leaving their homes, and impacted on their attendance at the time:

Worried about health, worried about seeing the police on the streets, worried about seeing the army. Coming from war-torn backgrounds, to suddenly seeing the army in your face, saying why are you outside of your home ... Very scary.

When I immigrated in Australia since [approx. 16 years ago], I got trauma very seriously, so I didn't do a lot of English at all.

Before I got the English trauma, so when I went to high school my teacher was very strict. So, I got the low score in English subject and then she hit me. At that time, I had a shock and then I didn't go school.

In my case I need more improving English so now I interested in English, before I wasn't interested in English before I got the trauma.

Childcare and community commitments

Home life can be incredibly busy for migrant learners and family commitments very demanding. Caring for children was one of the most highlighted areas here, especially if the children are all different ages or have any type of health or special needs, which limits childcare options. Lacking any before- or after-school care options also limits parents' capacity to attend courses that run during office hours. Participants face the same difficulties with accessing childcare places as the rest of the population, such as long waiting lists and limited availability in preferred locations. Needing to care for young children remains an issue for migrants, with some saying they waited until their children were older to attend classes.

I was so busy taking care of my children but they are all growing up nearly. The first one is [age removed] – and the second is [school year removed] so I have plenty time. So I think I need to develop myself and I want to [improve] myself.

My child is growing up now, so I have time to learn my skill ...

When I arrived here, my children were very small so I thought we stay at home. Now they are grown up and all are going in high school. So, I thought [unclear] is multicultural so we need to speak English first.

As mentioned, the pressure to study or survive is never far from the conversation in this group. It appears to be a difficult balance to maximise what is possible with government payments, finding a job (as it pays more than these), and then discovering that there is no more capacity to study due to work commitments. Some participants commented that, even with a subsidy, childcare is expensive and means needing to work more, and again this means less availability to study. Incidental costs also add up and may include the type of visa impacting on the cost of a course, as well as transport costs such as fares and parking. However, it is not just looking after children that takes time, it is also the number of commitments that children have, which can also mean time spent transporting to/from activities. Overall, participants commented on how tired they become, between looking after children and going to classes, which leaves them no time for anything else:

I take to school, came back and something you know housework never done but still I keep going. Afternoon when I pick him up, all of them. They come and they have – sometimes they want to be food, activity, eating, sometime after that, but I take them to [details removed]. I take them to [details removed]. I take them to [details removed]. When my husband come, I am more tired from him when he – he's a good person, tell me ... you work as a lot as me. I go for one work but you go for a different job like a housework and kids. That's why we stop, it about the kids here.

That's why I need to quit this course because I need to work right away. Even I have a subsidy about a childcare, but I have to work. It's only three days a week but still pay like \$200 nearly \$300 a week, a lot, that's why I need to go back and then quit this course.

Is a problem. So, we need to drop the kids. We need to come here and then pick up kids and then home, work at night, very tired.

That times I tried to learn English, but I have to do my housework and I have to do care of my children.

I was so busy taking care of my children but they are all growing up nearly.

Church and community commitments are also a factor, including deaths and grieving amongst family and the community. When extended family or community commitments require travel overseas, this can cause participants to be absent from classes for extended periods. There is apparently a three-month leave of absence from a course, after which participants are required to go through the re-enrolment process, which can be lengthy and repetitive. It was not uncommon for participants to mention travelling beyond this time limit and finding upon their return that courses were full, so they had to wait for a space.³

Time, distance and work-related reasons

Logistical components appear to drive completion barriers and cover three main areas: time, distance and work-related issues. Much of the time, the three are intertwined, so it is difficult to separate these for the migrant group. For example, a number of migrants described a difficult cycle of having no time for study due to work although they needed more English to better understand their workplace. Other barriers in this group include: scheduling of class times and work; locations of courses; finding time for extra study outside class; finding time for study with family commitments; distance to commute, transport logistics and scheduling; and, specifically, work commitments. Finding energy to 'do it all' was a sentiment repeated throughout the focus groups, with participants expressing that they simply didn't have enough hours in the day, 'Always I work at nighttime, everyone sleep':

Yeah, I'm doing this course for my personal interest and after my enrolment, I figure out that my working time is not fit in the schedule.

I'm just looking for a job now. If I get a full-time job, I can't continue this course, so it is online, ... I can continue this course.

Also, we needed to study that is more time ... Because we usually normally used to three day, four, three day but I need more time because we are forget easily.

Maybe financial pressures a little bit because you needed to work more so that ... became – that took away from the study.

Advanced English courses are often held too far from the initial course location, limiting access for participants who could attend the first course but who are now outside the new catchment area. On

³ In reference to the SEE program, which we have been advised by a SEE teacher has changed under the new SEE contract requirements.

occasion, courses were cancelled due to low enrolment numbers, causing students to decide whether to commute further to access other locations. Of course, with enough time in the day, it is possible to travel to a course further away; however, when work and family commitments are added into the mix, the time left for such a commute is simply not enough. The cost of travel can also be high, especially when less accessible locations require multiple transport combinations, and parking can be scarce. Some relayed their experiences in asking their workplace for time off to make this commute and were often refused. They were then left with a choice again. Reducing work hours, often to part-time or casual, to pursue study can have unsustainable economic impacts on survival for these migrant learners:

It's difficult ... to study advancing, the [location name removed] too far from us.

See only one reason I'm not going to continue, it's the location of another course.

When teacher say invitation to go to advance, to [location name removed], for us, for me it's very far, most of the time, because I wake up every day, I'm working full-time and two shifts, you know, I talk to my boss, say one hour less ... and [boss] say no. Say okay, but it's difficult not to work [in order] to study advancing, the [location name removed] too far for us.

Go to [location name removed], it is really far away. [Unclear] here is really good but [unclear] [location name removed], not a problem. Very good here but the most concern is the parking space.

For me, I'm [age removed], I have Opal, the ferries are cheap but compared with the young people under 60 or 50, the fare very expensive.

By far the most significant message coming through is the pressure to provide for family, which is at the top of the priority list for this cohort, with financial pressures and a need for stability dominating this discussion, particularly for single parents:

No one can provide, I have to provide.

I can live with my broken English, I can survive with it, but my family can't survive if I don't work.

I want to continue my career but for the moment ... I need to get a job.

Supports to help with completion/attending training

Ways training providers can offer support

Flexible learning options, more accessible locations and childcare options are the big three for this group. All three of these supports would free up precious time for migrant learners, enabling them to participate without pressure and avoid having to make the choice to study or survive, which is a theme throughout their responses.

With survival being a priority over learning English, participants suggested options for more flexible learning models. These suggestions include online learning options, weekend classes, classes during school hours, flexibility with arriving to class late or leaving early and part-time courses, which allow people to work. An ability to undertake concurrent courses, for example, English while also undertaking computing, would assist those wanting to fast-track their learning. Online learning, in particular, is viewed as more 'preferable than too far away'; 'if held online, better I do it online rather than going far', unless the online options were too expensive, which was said to be often the case.

Holding both initial and advanced courses at the one location is seen as much more suitable, as many of the students would have continued with their learning into advanced English, if not for the change of location, which meant it was simply 'too far from us', or the logistics of the commute became unsustainable because it takes too long or becomes 'very expensive'.

Having childcare or a creche onsite at the training organisation or the ability to bring young children to their foundation skills classes would be a huge support to parents. This type of onsite childcare would be particularly valuable to those migrant students whose commute to ‘drop the kids ... come here and then pick up the kids and then home’ leaves them exhausted, or those whose children need parental support when the children ‘cannot accept anyone in childcare centre’ during transition to the childcare environment.

Emotional support and mentoring

Teaching staff are seen as encouraging and patient when explaining things. They help with not only course work but other life aspects, such as how to fill in forms and process information. The migrant students consider them an avenue for support; this was noted on many occasions and often included gratitude for learning about the feelings associated with migration, for example, culture shock and homesickness. In this way they are much more than teachers: they also become mentors and have a huge impact on the confidence and motivation of migrant students:

Some days I feeling very low and mixed feelings, because I couldn’t find a word, I can’t make — give a name to my feelings but I was in cultural shock ... In the class I learned about the cultural shock ... I got some really kind of acceptance. So yeah. My teacher teach me — taught me that.

Apart from teaching staff, having friends in class also helps with learning, with participants saying that they support one another with the work:

When we do our course, we help each other, you know or whatever we don’t understand, I have to ask, help me ask to the teacher if the word, I can’t spell it, I ask to my teacher, please can you spell it that word for me, that is — and much more to me the way I really need help, I can get it from here.

Support from outside sources

By far, family and community encouragement are seen as the biggest support to migrant learners, although some community groups, church groups and community centres had also encouraged people to attend. Workplaces surfaced as a place where very practical support could be given, but this had happened rarely. Some participants had even been questioned about why they needed more English as it was ‘good enough’ as it is:

I went to see the manager and he was sad to say no and he asked me, ‘what is this course for’, I said, ‘English course’. He said, ‘you know how to speak English’. Yes, I do, but I need to know more about English.

Training experience

The training experience of migrant learners spans a number of areas: course content and alignment, the trainer and delivery.

Course content and alignment

Content

Migrant students found the staff were organised with education, schedules and with:

The teaching material, which was daily distributed to the students for learning and the teacher would often explain it, the topics and the daily teaching methods with the sheets, reading, writing, speaking, it was well designed.

Experiences with teaching styles were mixed. However, these students especially loved learning about Australian culture and slang, when teachers discussed their Australian backgrounds and, in turn, when students could present their own cultural backgrounds:

During this learning, speaking, conversations, reading, writing, getting familiar with Australian society, city maps, so all about the teachers were quite professional explaining for the new arrivals to get the students a bit familiar.

You know, the hardest ones to find, the hardest teachers to find, are the Aussie teachers.

A lot of our students say, I want an Australian teacher and we've got a couple but not many, they're hard to find.

We need teacher like in natural language ... his is outside, sometimes Aussies words.

The first centre, the teacher was focused for Australia history in English. He gives us a test and the question then, not too much for the grammar. Then when I came here the teacher in Level 2, she focused for the — she play with us a game, but — and this game she teach us — taught us how the grammar, how we — the phrase how we can put the word together.

Others felt they needed more diversity in teaching staff to enable them to become accustomed to English spoken in all the accents present in this multicultural country:

Australia is multicultural, so I think any community centre should be different type of teachers. Because sometimes we go anywhere that area [unclear] the people are Chinese so we need to [unclear] different. Some are Aussie, some are [unclear] in my opinion and in community centre should be three, four, to five kind of type of teachers should be there. Indian, Chinese, Aussie all are should be ...

These learners also enjoyed a variety of topics and activities in class; for example, writing formal and informal letters such as to neighbours and to authorities; writing stories; and formal English and grammar. Topics covered in class might be anything from climate change to medical emergencies/illness, to workplace presentation and interactions:

The teacher taught us how we dress for a presentation, because I'm a student, so I need to know that. In my country we don't — they didn't learn us how we do that and that — but actually we weren't — we have — when we went to high school, we're going to university, and we have to do presentation, but they didn't learn us how. Here, I started learning. It's really hard in the first, but then I would — it's easy ...

Migrant learners found great value in having some agency over topics and appreciated it when teachers embraced topic suggestions from students, and many mentioned they could continue their learning at home, reading books, and going on social media. Indeed, conversation practice is mentioned many times, with a number of students noting that more of this is needed: 'when we are writing, we can think. When we are speaking, we don't have time, we have to speak, speak, speak'.

Alignment

There were very mixed comments regarding alignment between course expectations and learning experiences. Many participants recounted that they were 'never disappointed', but others had found the different learning needs of students in class to be a problem, and in these instances combined classes were not working. Some participants who already had certificates and degrees, professions and vocations found their 'working experience, overseas experience and background ... was not recognised here in Australia', including those who had reached a high level in study, for example, a master's degree, or in work such as managerial positions. This caused frustration as they had been allocated to classes that

were too basic for them. There were also students who advanced faster than their peers due to more experience with learning languages, meaning that they then found themselves alone at a higher level in the class and not challenged enough and that classes were ‘too slow’. On the other hand, other participants had experienced being placed in classes too advanced for them and found the class was not what they expected:

For me, I think Chinese students — I think grammar okay for us, writing, reading, okay but listening and speaking I was disappointed. Make me feel disappointed at when I come to Australia, but I remember that we have some students, they are very good at talking. So, it’s very hard for teacher to organise the class because we are the whole class at the same time ... Every day I remember we have a topic, like today, we just focus on grammar. Next day, we just do some writing. Maybe next day the computer. There are some days I feel, oh, quite interesting. It’s very helpful for me but some days, oh, I already learn this one. It’s a little bit boring.

In teaching methods or registration in classes, how [can] students’ standards and levels can be separated for effective method of teaching? Because I know in my class also it happened. Students work in low level with low education, low working background, they had problems of easily daily English teaching problems ... Some other groups, because they had a better knowledge at least, people who had education and better knowledge, they were understanding very well, and low-standard students, no education and cultural — their age was low, they have problems of understanding. If this can be separated with registration of the students.

Many discussed this issue of varied abilities within a single class, which meant some students progressed more quickly than others. It is worth noting that the observations of the language used by participants when they discussed these scenarios indicates a degree of change management and resilience on their part: to continue even when the fit is not right, which should be commended.

The trainer

The migrant group were very happy with the trainers. They thought they were very helpful, patient, encouraging, motivating, professional, good communicators, supportive, good at explaining, good at mentoring, very friendly and welcoming, made English interesting, and cared for students. Participants described them as ‘amazing’, ‘great’, ‘inspiring’, and gave the students ‘lots of confidence’. With teacher encouragement and acceptance, students became more interested in English. Some mentioned that the teacher had assisted them to overcome a previous reluctance to learn due to many reasons, which included trauma, and helped them to understand their own experiences in Australia, including culture shock. One participant commented that the teacher ‘motivates me a lot’, while another noted that, through sharing Australian culture with the students, the teacher had made them feel ‘more comfortable’:

[They] always encourage and frees us, motivate us, so give us a lot of confidence ... Teacher very kind ... and helpful.

That’s why my teacher help me to improve my English, because she’s my inspiration to speak English.

My teacher, she really try and — when she teaches us, her pronunciation is easy for us, because her pronunciation is really clear [unclear] it’s made me confident to speak English. Before I’m really nervous to speak English.

The impression that, on many occasions, teachers go above and beyond to help their students fit into their new world was clear:

Every day he was coming, and he was putting some Australian slang on the board, just especially for me, and he was saying that you want to know Australian slang and accents. Every day he was finding

two, three slangs and idioms on the board on his arrival at the first moment he was writing all the other ...

Friendly, give a lot of paperwork, tasks like writing emails, letters, and when we don't understand she keeps trying ...

She keep repeating to us until we understand. But we are always like asking, you know, all the time to keep explaining, like you know, we make our ... letter, an email to her, to us, she want us to make letter, email to our teacher, when I don't understand how to do it, an email, she keep coming and keep trying us to understand, that's why we love it, the way she teach us, it's clear to us.

They share about their Aussie cultural background and then the history a little bit ...

Sometimes we encounter that our teacher teaches the history of other state and also they teach [us] if you want to pass the citizenship you should learn this.

Aussie teachers are great, teach us slang, skills, idioms, pronunciations.

However, differences in teaching style were noted, and appear to be strongly related to the level of support that participants said they received: some teachers who 'explain very well' and 'elaborate the meaning of that word' and others who did not; some who were flexible and incorporated the needs of individual students in their approach; and others were more focused on the task.

Delivery

Atmosphere

Delivery in this research also includes the environment or atmosphere of the course, as this was a central focus in the comments from the migrant group. For them, the atmosphere was almost as important as the content and appeared to have a strong influence on their outlook and trajectory during the course. When asked if there was something that helped them to stay in class, many said making friends made them happy, with one participant answering, 'the group, the class, the teacher':

We love it. Did not waste our time when we came here, we are learning different culture. I appreciate the teacher, the way they handle us because of different culture, difference [we have here], different for being [unclear].

Hence, comments about atmosphere were not about the physical space in which learning took place, but rather they focused on interactional experiences. For example, many appreciated the diversity amongst the students, that class sizes were small, friendly, 'relaxed, encouraging and peaceful', where they felt 'accepted', which meant 'practising without pressure, just freedom to do the work'. Many felt reassured in an environment where there was no pressure and no teasing or mocking. This environment was co-created by teachers: 'all the supporting staff and admin teams' were seen as nice, well organised and 'solving the problem, very cooperative' in their interactions with students. The end-of-year party that was organised as a group was really enjoyed:

I feel so welcomed that day and I would like to continue with the English course.

Am learning here and I am very happy here because everybody's very kind and my teacher is very helpful ...

When the atmosphere doesn't feel right, they don't come but have found these classes good.

Easier to concentrate than at home.

This is create peaceful environment without [unclear], without [mocking] us, [teasing] us is very important ...

Teaching aids

There were many positive responses in this area, with many students appreciating the use of visual aids such as pictures, digital forums, links to online learning, and gamifying the work. Activities such as class presentations, interview preparation, role modelling and excursions (particularly using public transport) also reinforced the skills they had learned:

We did a [messaging] group, so we all joined and so there – normally she send the links to study, the useful links and we can share, so we can use that. It's very good for us.

My experience is that the teaching material, which was daily distributed to the students for learning and the teacher would often explain it, the topics and the daily teaching methods with the sheets, reading, writing, speaking, it was well designed.

It was the topics; the teaching methods and paragraphs were all explaining all these things also for learning and also for getting us to be familiar with everything.

Sometimes we also went for excursion, and it was really nice.

In the course was very useful because we're always writing those conversations ...

They come and – like during that activity they will come and interview us about this thing, that thing and then we can learn more about English.

There is a – there is one teacher. We do – we did the crossword puzzle and then every word he explained us the word – the meaning of that – and he create – he give sentence on that word ... You know, that's good.

Modality

Responses about the mode of delivery were very mixed. For some the preference was for face-to-face delivery for a number of reasons: they really appreciated the social side of their classes; they may not have been confident enough to use the computer to take online classes; they felt they received a lot more help in person; they just wanted to 'get out of the house'; and they received a level of mentoring they possibly wouldn't online. On the other hand, online learning was seen by others as a way to have flexibility around work and family commitments, overcome commuting issues, and access more courses:

There's a lot of reasons we need face-to-face ... making friends, meet new people, come to a new place, learning around other people's multicultural, you can learn – sometimes we're having lunch, to bring traditional food and we taste it ...

I like face-to-face because some of the word I don't know how to spell it, I can ask, they can help me spell it to me and some of the word, the meaning, I like to look at the teacher, explaining to me face-to-face, more understand to be like this.

Yeah, and like you know we help each other, our class, because some they not speak clear and you can see the way they react and you have to sit down and when you understand what the teacher told you, when they ask you help, I have to explain to them you know properly and that's why we all make friends and we happy.

Online has also many possible benefit but still I feel struggling with the computer skill and also just sitting for like five, six hours at home still wasn't good for me.

Other experiences

The students experienced some significant personal changes as a consequence of their foundation skills training that have not been mentioned. Although these changes are discussed in the context of undertaking foundation skills courses, they are significant in themselves, as they are interwoven through the entire migration journey.

Mindset

The mindset of participants is a central part of their self-perception as they build and change their identity in the context of a new country, meet new people and have new experiences. The beliefs and attitudes they carry with them about themselves can determine how they interpret, behave and respond to new situations. Language plays an important role in mindset development, and the desire for better communication resounded throughout all focus groups. Where participants had started out ‘feeling shy’, avoiding people, feeling afraid and nervous to speak to people, particularly native speakers who talk quickly, many had shifted to feeling confident, and even courageous: ‘now I try my best. I know sometimes I wrong but it’s okay I think’:

Even now I’m comfortable to talk to you. Before no, I would stay away.

Another good thing to me is to create a new mindset. You know more about life, about your society. The things that you didn’t know. So, from the course, that’s where you started increasing your learnings, skills.

[Foundation skills] also improve my English and get more confident when I talk ...

I was used to meet over 2,000 people daily in my college and when I came here, I was just – at the home. I saw it was very difficult to communicate because English was not my first language. I could try English, but we don’t speak.

We just need to get out there with the confidence, which is being built through this program and practise, and your accent, and my accent, and everyone else’s accent is the least worry of the language acquisition. The matter of communication is happening, you are communicating ...

I’m learning a lot, I’m interested to, yeah, I’m learning new things as well. I did it on other website and other social media platform, I just knew it when I come into this place.

I have a library card ... I borrowed books.

Life skill is important, more than a certificate ...

This desire to reach outwards into their new world includes a major fascination with learning about Australian culture, as mentioned previously, not merely learning the language. Class excursions are repeatedly highlighted throughout the case study as a favourite experience. Learning outside the classroom, interactions with all types of Australians, learning about day-to-day types of communications in real-world scenarios were all praised regularly. Teachers were commended for initiating these outside experiences.

Wellbeing

Many participants reflected that communicating better with family and friends, and with the community, was key to building their confidence and improving their wellbeing. Two cycles emerged: one in which increased nerves about not being able to communicate well decreased confidence, causing participants to be less likely to ‘put themselves out there’; and the other cycle, whereby once they had built some language skills, they were able to feel positive about continuing to enhance these skills, to take some risks and make mistakes, but keep trying anyway.

Many responses also reflect the underlying need for independence and being able to avoid relying on others for assistance with understanding. This quest for independence appears to be a major motivator, reflecting a desire to expand their horizons and have broader interactions than those they have at home. By attending class or by working, these interactions brought participants out of their homes and into society. They made new friends with people from diverse cultural backgrounds, and this was particularly cherished by those whose previous countries of residence lacked diverse societies. They also exchanged ideas, shared opinions, experiences and information about their time in Australia. These connections helped them to gain a sense of belonging through the realisation that others had similar or relatable experiences in their migration journey. Feelings of self-worth and confidence, enhanced through gaining independence, were said to be of significant assistance when looking for work. Many indicated that, with confidence, also came a desire to develop further and increased their capacity to make clear decisions about occupational choices. The social inclusion experienced by migrant learners when they came to class – by making friends and being with people outside the home – was also claimed by many to reduce stress in their lives:

Making new friends is very helpful, this is very helpful. It makes us strong.

I need my class, you know, we make friend, you know? Like my stress is going away from me, you know, when – because we all – when I come here, I talk to our friend,

Yes, it's helping me, my stress, you know and make me happy,

Staying at home, it's boring. We come here; we meet people ...

I can feel, really [feel] meet my friend and we – this is like my family because I'm living at home with only my husband and whenever he's on his work, there's nothing. So, this is the second home.

You don't want to be stuck at home.

The many indicators of satisfaction mentioned included the happiness achieved through acquiring skills and gaining employment. Feedback from friends and family is clearly one of the biggest rewards, 'Last week my little girl told me, 'mum I feel your English is improving':

We have achieved something.

I don't want to when I arrive in Australia just stay at home, be a woman. I did too, talk to husband every day and rely on him every day. I'm so – I think so frustrated that when I just arrive like first two – one or two months, because I can't do anything without my husband. So, at that time I enrol into the ... class. I was eager to find a job.

Because I was independent, because I always need my help for my daughter and son to deal with something very important in Australia. So, they need to always call to someone or some company to [deregister] something. So, whenever I asked them I feel oh, [unclear] here, who I am. So started to think I need to learn English. So, in the future I want to call by myself to deal something, then I feel very worthy. My effort feel very worthy and also, I want to get a job.

Ideas to improve training

The following suggestions were made by migrant learners to enable them to better balance study with survival. Note that some of the suggestions may seem contradictory, which is expected as the cohort encompasses many different needs. Overall, more flexibility around access is the key takeaway here.

Flexible and supported access:

- Shorter class times, or part-time, during school hours, and on weekends would accommodate parents
- Afternoon or evening classes, or half-day work, half-day study, would accommodate workers

- More condensed courses, shorter courses, would enable people to find employment sooner
- Less time between classes in the week would mean they would be unlikely to forget what they had learned so readily
- More time is also needed to be able to study what they learn in class
- Before- and after-school care, and childcare on site, would assist parents
- Online learning options would be helpful
- More computer availability in class would be desirable.

Individualised placement and learning:

- identification of students' individual needs
- better separation of students' educational levels at registration
- more advanced language and computing classes
- more challenges and opportunities to fast-track in class
- more availability of simultaneous courses, for example, English while also undertaking computing, would assist those wanting to fast-track their learning.

Teaching and course suggestions:

- More content in the following areas was suggested: interesting topics; everyday use of internet/language online; writing conversations/storytelling; tasks to be solved; listening/speaking/conversation practice (very popular); group discussions and casual discussion time; excursions and interactions with 'real' people; extra subjects like maths; student-suggested topics and special-interest subjects; topics covering Australian way of life/traditions/history etc.; interaction with the teacher; opportunities to go away and research topics; everyday language and conversation styles
- Teachers could speak more slowly to enable students to understand and to ensure that they don't miss the more complex segments of the language
- More visuals would assist in the learning process
- Teachers could focus on individual student needs more, having more of an individual focus
- An understanding of the certification process would incentivise students
- Australian teachers would be preferred by some; a mix of multicultural staff who speak English is preferred by others.

Quotes from migrant learners

The following table contains quotes from participants matched with particular topic areas to illustrate the diverse range of responses and to give a voice to more learners. Some of the quotes have already been used in the main document and in the detailed case study accounts in this support document.

Relevant quotes from facilitators and coordinators have been excluded. Where a facilitator or coordinator led discussions and participants only gave ‘yes’ or ‘no’ responses, these quotes have also been excluded from the table.

Note that some quotes appear in more than one topic area in this table. This is an important part of qualitative research of this nature.

Table 2 Quotes from migrant learners matched with topic areas

Motivations and intentions
<p>Discovery of foundation skills courses</p> <p>I saw the news from the local – like a newsletter or something. They say, AMEP will start to enrol students. So, they have an address. They have a date. You can go there go there to enquire something or enrol, so I just go there and ask everything.</p> <p>Everybody who lives on this country must know their languages.</p> <p>When my friend tell me, let's go to do and I am coming here enrolment ...</p> <p>I heard about ... from my sister because she arrived five years before me and she do the course. Then when I arrive my sister said 'oh, just do that course. It help you'.</p> <p>My husband told me.</p> <p>Through providers. Some of them are return students. Some of them heard about a new program.</p> <p>One of our teachers here, she was a student with the [details removed] and then she started to – we started to do a pathway to citizenship, and [name removed] actually brought her husband as a volunteer student for citizenship.</p> <p>The government to give me the chance with the visa and then I was attending here.</p> <p>On my visa grant letter, they told me I can join the AMEP free – AMEP course, because English not my first language.</p> <p>Government asked me to attend the [details removed]. So, I register here. It is quite useful because of – actually I finished my university as an [details removed] Major.</p> <p>When they have like an open session to everyone to – for enquiring the information. So, I bring – I brought my visa, write a letter to there and to ask her. So, I think that one helped me to find the right place and to start.</p> <p>My job provider say me up to you. You want looking for a job, you want to study, up to you. So I pick up study.</p> <p>I was a part of the process. My case manager enrolled for me and my partner, husband.</p> <p>Found the opportunity on the Facebook.</p> <p>On Instagram, I check and I see the advertisement – the advertising. It is on Instagram ...</p> <p>I have Googled, I have checked.</p> <p>I directed to go to the local community centre to ask information about [details removed], so I know here [details removed] course, there is class. Yeah.</p> <p>From library ... I got the [brochure].</p> <p>I have one kid who is [age removed] years old who is attend Year [level removed] class. He always criticise my English. He always say [inaudible], 'mum you have to improve your English', so I think I still have big room to improve my English.</p> <p>It's quite difficult to understand when my kids are talking to me in English. Even the way I communicate to them, when I say something, 'oh dad, you say that again and again'.</p> <p>In my house is me and my wife is speaking Spanish, none of my kids know much in Spanish.</p> <p>Like we have to know how to use, you know, make Facebook, my sister, daughter, message to me from ... like my email, my son, that's why I really need to know how to use the computer and I want to get a better job.</p> <p>It's the kids, when they talk in English.</p>

The choice to study

I have one kid who is [age removed] years old who is attend Year [level removed] class. He always criticise my English. He always say [inaudible], 'mum you have to improve your English'.

It's quite difficult to understand when my kids are talking to me in English. Even the way I communicate to them, when I say something, 'oh dad, you say that again and again'.

Because I want.

My choice, but my friend push me.

Same thing when my friend tell me, let's go to do and I am coming here enrolment and she [unclear].

So now is I really want to get a job but if I had an interview – so interviewer said to me you need more English here. Good writing skill, that's okay my speaking isn't that good, communicate with others and also [unclear] with others.

On arrival, all the staff, new arrivals, especially from [details removed] were sent to a language centre for learning.

I was already registered in the program on our arrival after completing of the registration for family residency visa.

I heard somebody say if I want to apply for citizen that by the time you finish the course – like if you finish the course or you study just half or the more you study then when you do interview for citizen you will get a little bit easier.

Reasons for enrolling

I have come to learn English. I want to improve my English, I want to make friends and get a job, yes.

I intend after improving my English language, I hope I find any job, this is very important for me.

Better English to communicate with all people and have a chance to get a job.

In finish in studying English, for me, in my two years studying here I'm thinking also to find a job.

So I just I want more study and I need a job so finally I get a job if I English catch up everything ...

I had a dream to get a job so I can [unclear] I can talking to others, I can do. Before I was very nervous, I can't remember how can I speak everyone, I can't do.

If we want to stay here and if we want to do any job, we should speak English first. So now I am trying to find any job, so I thought first will have to learn English.

I think we are all migrant from other country, all most people want to get a job in the future, so I think we need to more chance to speak and more focusing for speaking and listening.

When I think about how can I get a job, so I need to have something, a certificate ...

And then after that I got my [profession removed] and I started studying my course and tried to get my job.

So now is I really want to get a job but if I had an interview – so interviewer said to me you need more English here. Good writing skill, that's okay my speaking isn't that good, communicate with others and also [unclear] with others. I want to be able to get a job but I still struggle English or speaking obviously.

Start English improvement for understanding local Australian conversations to be able to communicate in the workplace.

Improve my English knowledge ...

Improve my communication at work.

Improve my skill how I get through to the computer ...

Continue my computer, the next level.

Learn how to talk to people in working culture so that's why I need to come here to study English.

Study, I need to speak fluently English.

Learn English because I have problem with the conversation to understand. So, I am here to improve my language.

Talk English.

Have achieved something.

Go back to the English class and so the job ...

Communicate with the public on buses.

I wanted also to ... get a job and utilise my professional experiences but I couldn't because of this – some language pronunciations in the workplace.

I want to complete my study in the future because it's my dream and it's my passion. That's why I started with [profession removed] to complete my role.

Even though you finish your four-year course back home, you have to study here.

And in that course, I got an [unclear], like I was looking for a good career, a suitable career for me. In that period, [I did do something small] in school and in ... So, I got my [visa] and now I'm doing [profession removed] course. Yeah. So, this course helped me.

I had a dream to get a job so I can [unclear] I can talking to others, I can do. Before I was very nervous, I can't remember how can I speak everyone, I can't do.

And then after that I got my [profession removed] and I started studying my course and tried to get my job.

I can to the Australia workforce to restart my career here. That's why when on weekend they open the ... class. It's kind of for pathway to the workforce course, give you many suggestions. So, I decided to stop my ... and go to that course.

When I first arrived, I'm thinking to work as [profession removed]. Then when in the ... in that class, I feel like, yes, I – this decision make me like – yeah, this decision is correct one, that's what I think.

Then I'm thinking like to study in my Master degree in here, but the problem is I still needed the language. The language is still a barrier.

At present I took [profession removed] course, short course; this is necessary for me improve my English [unclear].

I just stay here forever. But after that I do my Cert. III in [profession removed]. Then I still do it the same time because I know two days for English and two days for my course. [Unclear] and it's half of my ... because more and more it's about English it's help – very helpful for my course. Then after that I ... during my study. Then I ... all that time I still studied but cut out two days and one day. Then after that I got more job.

I learnt a Certificate IV [profession removed] through the university in [capital city removed]. That's my hobby. Hopefully I find a job with that ...

I just know about university but if no other sources, if available I will be happy to help. I just move in other places for training, further training. Just nearby university, I have heard about this but I haven't applied yet ...

Living here, not only working, there is the social life

I was hoping of course to improve English and meet other people, which is good because we know nobody here. So yeah, I also have a good experience trying ... food and the ... bread, and friends from all different countries.

The main purpose of come to this course is to improve my communication, not only inside my family, in my street or environment, [unclear] other people as well.

I [unclear] learn English and I'm try to help other peoples from China. Some person at my age they can speak English a little, well maybe some [unclear] little say something. So now I try to learn my English and grow my English and to help them, teach them. Now I am [unclear] here to teach the beginners, the Chinese people beginners, to speak English in [unclear].

At that time, we have no confidence to talk to the native speaker. When we go outside, I just feel, oh so scared to talk to ... and that how you met the friends, you met the people and they very nice people and you say, oh, you have the same experience.

Even now I'm comfortable to talk to you. Before no, I would stay away.

People I was afraid to avoid whole thing but now is I am able to English as good.

The English course improved my grammar and more confident because I can now connect with the community for longer.

So is my heart was open and then I can talk with the other classmate so this is related to good friendship.

I feel like I have a family business here. Everyone know each other, we talk, 'hi, how are you?'

I love to meet new people and know about their culture. So, that was the right place for me, because now I have many friends from China, Iran and Afghanistan. Many countries. So, I guess after my home, this place is my second home.

Now I have a chance to study, back to study, when I'm [age removed] years old.

When I arrived here, my children were very small, so I thought we stay at home. Now they are grown up and all are going in high school. So, I thought [unclear] is multicultural, so we need to speak English first.

The older people, helping, helping very important you know sometimes, whatever, whatever, if you have something aged, people say, speaking English good.

I remember that every time I said talk to the doctor, yes, because I have to see a specialist every three months and go to hospital, to special – I have to – really want [location name removed] help me to improve my English to talk with the doctor, specialist, and the nurse, what I want and what they [unclear] and more understand because the hospital, they use the language different, not like teachers, slowly, slowly. It's very quick.

Different type of teachers. Because sometimes we go anywhere that area [unclear] the people are Chinese so we need to [unclear] different. Some are Aussie, some are [unclear] in my opinion and in community centre should be three, four, to five kind of type of teachers should be there. Indian, Chinese, Aussie all.

Knowing the customs and religion – customs and traditions of Australia.

Heard first time the national anthem in the class.

Because it was covering different aspects, getting familiar with the Australian society, going to bank, using transport, hotels, restaurants, and some people's culture and habits. In the meantime, it was the topics, the teaching methods and paragraphs were all explaining all these things also for learning and also for getting us to be familiar with everything. So, on daily subjects, which was topics which was provided for the teacher was from day to day it was different material. In each material, the students were able to learn different things, especially the teacher was teaching other level, his name was ... Maybe he is still teaching here. He's an Australian person and I was very much interested to learn his Australian English.

I think it's the slang. Sometimes it's slang. Like what does chuck a U-ey mean? Like do a U-turn, chuck a U-ey, that's obviously very specific slang, but also Australians mangle their vowels. G'day A-E-O-U all becomes like [mimics slurred speech] and then that can be very hard to understand. So yeah, there's probably a few things.

Interesting is we learn the Aussie language [slang].

My husband got a copy of the slang list.

I'm having difficult in speaking because when I heard – so that's why I want to hear a conversation because the – your accent, it's very – we're not familiar.

Chuck a U-ey is the one everyone has to learn, like that's a hard – do a U-turn, chuck a U-ey, that's always – that's one of my favourites.

Teach us a lot of the cultural out there ...

There are speaking very fast. So sometimes we cannot understand ... in the mall, we can see that. Even in retail store, they are speaking in very fast so we cannot understand ... They don't speak clearly.

I was much interested to have some English skills but get familiar with Australian, local accents, slang, way of speaking, there were much differences.

I'm interested in knowing the history of Australia – how they started – and also the Aboriginal people ...

Then some accents, for example the Aussie accents that we got easily now to get understand, because of I think from the [course].

Intentions to complete

I want to keep going, I don't want to stop it. I don't mind my age, I want to keep going until I go through what I wish, you know, for the future of my family.

That's why I came here and like more stress on me, long time, you know, they what going on and I want to get rid of this one and then I want to move forward my life. Because at the moment in me, my, I'm not feel 100 per cent the way I feel my sickness, but you know, I keep pushing myself every day and I really want to keep going until – I wish I can still helping my family in the future, that's why I don't want to stop my study. I want to get going through until the one I wish.

Yeah, I'm glad when my course is finish, this month, tomorrow, last day and I would like to keep going next course because I'm glad to improve my English.

I just did some, a few months this class, after that I stopped and again came last August and again stopped because I got my residency and after that I start my certificate III.

I took two courses and then I got now two certificates. That's why I stopped.

I'm not fluent in English so that's why I continue my study.

Barriers to completion/attending training

Transportation and location of courses/ Time, distance and work-related reasons

Always I work at nighttime, everyone sleep.

Yeah, I'm doing this course for my personal interest and after my enrolment, I figure out that my working time is not fit in the schedule.

I'm just looking for a job now. If I get a full-time job, I can't continue this course, so it is online, ... I can continue this course.

Also, we needed to study that is more time ... Because we usually normally used to three day, four, three day but I need more time because we are forget easily.

Maybe financial pressures a little bit because you needed to work more ... so that became – that took away from the study. it's difficult ... to study advancing, the [location name removed] course too far from us.

See only one reason I'm not going to continue, it's the location of another course.

When teacher say invitation to go to advance, to [location name removed], for us, for me it's very far, most of the time, because I wake up every day, I'm working full-time and two shifts, you know, I talk to my boss, say one hour less, like at a pay to maybe – and [boss] say no. Say okay, but it's difficult not to work [in order] to study advancing, the [location name removed] too far for us.

Go to [location name removed] it is really far away. [Unclear] here is really good but [unclear] [location name removed], not a problem. Very good here but the most concern is the parking space.

For me, I'm [age removed], I have Opal, the ferries are cheap but compared with the young people under 60 or 50, the fare very expensive.

No one can provide, I have to provide.

I can live with my broken English, I can survive with it, but my family can't survive if I don't work.

I want to continue my career but for the moment ... I need to get a job.

Course-related issues

Am disappointed with ... when I register the English and have no student, only me, so the course was cancelled.

Health and wellbeing/ Personal reasons/ Family commitments/community commitments

Worried about seeing the police on the streets, worried about seeing the army. Coming from war-torn backgrounds, to suddenly seeing the army in your face, saying why are you outside of your home.

I was so busy taking care of my children but they are all growing up nearly. The first one is [age removed] and the second is Year [level removed] so I have plenty time. So I think I need to develop myself and I want to [increase] myself.

My child is growing up now, so I have time to learn my skill.

When I arrived here, my children were very small so I thought we stay at home. Now they are grown up and all are going in high school. So, I thought [unclear] is multicultural so we need to speak English first.

That's why I need to quit this course because I need to work right away. Even I have a subsidy about a childcare, but I have to work. It's only three days a week but still pay like \$200 nearly \$300 a week, a lot, that's why I need to go back and then quit this course.

I have childcare, but my son not accept it ... He was sick – yeah. He was asthma when he crying so much, he's vomit. They're calling me, come to pick him up. So, I can't study ... So, maybe if the time shorter or part-time. Yeah. It's more good for mums.

When I was in AMEP my son was [age removed] years and he cannot accept anyone in childcare centre ... He cannot eat anything. So, when I go to the AMEP from 9.00 to 2.30, he spent all the day crying and not eating, and this is what make me stop.

When my husband gets sick, I have to look after him for long time and I start to get sick for – and then I got lots of stress and they gave me your email. That's why I want to get out and do something to make my stress ...

I was very sick, so I need to talk to study. So, I had this experience oh, I can't study English, this is my experience.

Something [unclear] sometimes issue we cannot avoid. Sometimes the school calling [unclear], sometimes the sick right injured kid [unclear] see the doctors, something like that.

Mental health ... He is very tired. He can't concentrate sometimes in class. I just asked him if it was okay to share, he had [details removed] family members pass away [details removed] overseas, [details removed]. So, maybe that's why he stopped because he needed to rest.

I'm [age removed] years old ... tired and things, especially from the war ... maybe I have to start again, and that energy to start again is not easy when you're older than when you are younger.

I get a [details removed] operation. So, this stopped me and avoiding to do some physical jobs, so at least had to wait maybe for one year, or one-and-a-half years until health condition [unclear] improved, be more active and then to do the skills vocational training or university.

When I come to class my mind is always with them.

Worried about health, worried about seeing the police on the streets, worried about seeing the army. Coming from war-torn backgrounds, to suddenly seeing the army in your face, saying why are you outside of your home? ... Very scary.

When I immigrated in Australia since [approx. 16 years ago], I got trauma very seriously, so I didn't do a lot of English at all.

Before I got the English trauma, so when I went to high school my teacher was very strict. So, I got the low score in English subject and then she hit me. At that time, I had a shock and then I didn't go school.

In my case I need more improving English, so now is I interested in English, before I wasn't interested in English before I got the trauma.

I take to school, came back and something you know housework never done but still I keep going. Afternoon when I pick him up, all of them. They come and they have – sometimes they want to be food, activity eating, sometime after that, but I take them to [details removed]. I take them to [details removed]. I take them to [details removed]. When my husband come, I am more tired from him when he – he's a good person, tell me ... you work as a lot as me. I go for one work but you go for a different job like a housework and kids. That's why we stop, it about the kids here.

Is a problem. So, we need to drop the kids. We need to come here and then pick up kids and then home, work at night, very tired.

That times I tried to learn English, but I have to do my housework and I have to do care of my children.

Social and work influences

I stopped well for a while because my husband have full-time job. I have to three kids ... I did my [profession removed] certificate. Always I work at nighttime, everyone sleep, but during the day I'm too stuck with them.

If there's no possibility to bring the course here, I have to decide to go back to the casual [work].

Migrants and balancing the need to 'study or survive'

No one can provide, I have to provide.

I can live with my broken English, I can survive with it, but my family can't survive if I don't work.

I want to continue my career but for the moment ... I need to get a job.

working now is more important for me because everything now is hard without job.

I'm just looking for a job now. If I get a full-time job, I can't continue this course, so it is online, ... I can continue this course.

Stability is important for me, because I'm the – how can I – single mum. So, I have to work. This is why I quit.

That's why I need to quit this course because I need to work right away. Even I have a subsidy about a childcare, but I have to work. It's only three days a week but still pay like \$200 nearly \$300 a week, a lot, that's why I need to go back and then quit this course.

When teacher say invitation to go to advance, to [location name removed], for us, for me it's very far, most of the time, because I wake up every day, I'm working full-time and two shifts, you know, I talk to my boss, say one hour less, like at a pay to maybe – and [boss] say no. Say okay, but it's difficult not to work [in order] to study advancing, the [location name removed] too far for us.

Supports to help with completion/attending training

Supports from training provider

At that time, we don't know when we finish the AMEP what we can get ... We don't know if certificate can help us work in Australia or in our future ... We don't know that ... We want to work, so we need some certificate to be in Australia, but we don't know after AMEP if we can a very useful certificate.

Preferable than too far away.

If held online, better I do it online rather than going far.

Some days I feeling very low and mixed feelings, because I couldn't find a word, I can't make – give a name to my feelings but I was in cultural shock ... In the class I learned about the cultural shock ... I got some really kind of acceptance. So yeah. My teacher teach me – taught me that.

When we do our course, we help each other, you know or whatever we don't understand, I have to ask, help me ask to the teacher if the word, I can't spell it, I ask to my teacher, please can you spell it that word for me, that is – and much more to me the way I really need help, I can get it from here.

External supports

I went to see the manager and he was sad to say, no and he asked me, 'what is this course for', I said, 'English course'. He said, 'you know how to speak English'. Yes, I do, but I need to know more about English.

Training experience

Overall

We love it. Did not waste our time when we came here, we are learning different culture. I appreciate the teacher, the way they handle us because of different culture.

Course content and alignment

The teaching material, which was daily distributed to the students for learning and the teacher would often explain it, the topics and the daily teaching methods with the sheets, reading, writing, speaking, it was well designed.

During this learning, speaking, conversations, reading, writing, getting familiar with Australian society, city maps, so all about the teachers were quite professional explaining for the new arrivals to get the students a bit familiar.

You know, the hardest ones to find, the hardest teachers to find, are the Aussie teachers.

A lot of our students say, I want an Australian teacher and we've got a couple but not many, they're hard to find.

We need teacher like in natural language ... his is outside, sometimes Aussies words.

The first centre, the teacher was focused for Australia history in English. He gives us a test and the question then, not too much for the grammar. Then when I came here the teacher in Level [details removed], she focused for the – she play with us a game, but – and this game she teach us – taught us how the grammar, how we – the phrase how we can put the word together.

Australia is multicultural, so I think any community centre should be different type of teachers. Because sometimes we go anywhere that area [unclear] the people are Chinese so we need to [unclear] different. Some are Aussie, some are [unclear] in my opinion and in community centre should be three, four, to five kind of type of teachers should be there. Indian, Chinese, Aussie all are should be ...

The teacher taught us how we dress for a presentation, because I'm a student, so I need to know that. In my country we don't – they didn't learn us how we do that and that – but actually we weren't – we have – when we went to high school, we're going to university, and we have to do presentation, but they didn't learn us how. Here, I started learning. It's really hard in the first, but then I would – it's easy ...

When we are writing we can think. When we are speaking, we don't have time, we have to speak, speak, speak.

Working experience, overseas experience and background ... was not recognised here in Australia.

For me, I think Chinese students – I think grammar okay for us, writing, reading, okay but listening and speaking I was disappointed. Make me feel disappointed at when I come to Australia, but I remember that we have some students they are very good at talking. So, it's very hard for teacher to organise the class because we are the whole class at the same time ... Every day I remember we have a topic, like today, we just focus on grammar. Next day, we just do some writing. Maybe next day the computer. There are some days I feel, oh, quite interesting. It's very helpful for me but some days, oh, I already learn this one. It's a little bit boring.

In teaching methods or registration in classes, how that students' standards and levels can be separated for effective method of teaching? Because I know in my class also it happened. Students work in low level with low education, low working background, they had problems of easily daily English teaching problems ... Some other groups, because they had a better knowledge at least, people who had education and better knowledge, they were understanding very well, and low standard students, no education and cultural – their age was low, they have problems of understanding. If this can be separated with registration of the students.

The trainer

That's why my teacher help me to improve my English, because she's my inspiration to speak.

We love it. Did not waste our time when we came here, we are learning different culture. I appreciate the teacher, the way they handle us because of different culture.

There are some teachers who explain this – who explain very well. She – they – she – he or she elaborate the meaning of that word because there are some teachers who are not explain that word.

[They] always encourage and frees us, motivate us, so give us a lot of confidence ... Teacher very kind ... and helpful.

My teacher, she really try and – when she teaches us, her pronunciation is easy for us, because her pronunciation is really clear [unclear] it's made me confident to speak English. Before I'm really nervous to speak English.

Every day he was coming, and he was putting some Australian slang on the board, just especially for me, and he was saying that you want to know Australian slang and accents. Every day he was finding two, three slangs and idioms on the board on his arrival at the first moment he was writing all the other ...

Friendly, give a lot of paperwork, tasks like writing emails, letters, and when we don't understand she keeps trying ...

She keep repeating to us until we understand. But we are always like asking, you know, all the time to keep explaining, like you know, we make our ... letter, an email to her, to us, she want us to make letter, email to our teacher, when I don't understand how to do it, an email, she keep coming and keep trying us to understand, that's why we love it, the way she teach us, it's clear to us.

They share about their Aussie cultural background and then the history a little bit ...

Sometimes we encounter that our teacher teaches the history of other state and also they teach [us] if you want to pass the citizenship you should learn this.

Aussie teachers are great, teach us slang, skills, idioms, pronunciations.

She want us to make letter, email to our teacher, when I don't understand how to do it, an email, she keep coming and keep trying us to understand, that's why we love it, the way she teach us, it's clear to us.

Delivery

Online has also many possible benefit but still I feel struggling with the computer skill and also just sitting for like five, six hours at home still wasn't good for me.

The group, the class, the teacher.

We love it. Did not waste our time when we came here, we are learning different culture. I appreciate the teacher, the way they handle us because of different culture, difference [we have here], different for being [unclear].

Practising without pressure, just freedom to do the work.

I feel so welcomed that day and I would like to continue with the English course.

Am learning here and I am very happy here because everybody's very kind and my teacher is very helpful ...

When the atmosphere doesn't feel right, they don't come but have found these classes good.

Easier to concentrate than at home.

This is create peaceful environment without [unclear], without [mocking] us, [teasing] us is very important ...

We did a [messaging] group, so we all joined and so there – normally she send the links to study, the useful links and we can share, so we can use that. It's very good for us.

My experience is that the teaching material, which was daily distributed to the students for learning and the teacher would often explain it, the topics and the daily teaching methods with the sheets, reading, writing, speaking, it was well designed.

It was the topics; the teaching methods and paragraphs were all explaining all these things also for learning and also for getting us to be familiar with everything.

Sometimes we also went for excursion, and it was really nice.

In the course was very useful because we're always writing those conversations ...

They come and – like during that activity they will come and interview us about this thing, that thing and then we can learn more about English.

There is a – there is one teacher. We do – we did the crossword puzzle and then every word he explained us the word – the meaning of that – and he create – he give sentence on that word ... You know, that's good.

There's a lot of reasons we need face-to-face, this lady said, making friends, meet new people, come to a new place, learning around other people's multicultural, you can learn – sometimes we're having lunch, to bring traditional food and we taste it ...

I like face-to-face because some of the word I don't know how to spell it, I can ask, they can help me spell it to me and some of the word, the meaning, I like to look at the teacher, explaining to me face to face, more understand to be like this.

Yeah, and like you know we help each other, our class, because some they not speak clear and you can see the way they react and you have to sit down and when you understand what the teacher told you, when they ask you help, I have to explain to them you know properly and that's why we all make friends and we happy.

Online has also many possible benefit but still I feel struggling with the computer skill and also just sitting for like five, six hours at home still wasn't good for me.

Other experiences

Another good thing to me is to create a new mindset. You know more about life, about your society. The things that you didn't know. So, from the course, that's where you started increasing your learnings, skills.

Now I try my best. I know sometimes I wrong but it's okay I think.

Even now I'm comfortable to talk to you. Before no, I would stay away.

[Foundation skills] also improve my English and get more confident when I talk ...

I was used to meet over 2,000 people daily in my college and when I came here, I was just – at the home. I saw it was very difficult to communicate because English was not my first language. I could try English, but we don't speak.

We just need to get out there with the confidence which is being built through this program and practise, and your accent, and my accent, and everyone else's accent is the least worry of the language acquisition. The matter of communication is happening, you are communicating ...

I'm learning a lot, I'm interested to, yeah, I'm learning new things as well. I did it on other website and other social media platform, I just knew it when I come into this place.

I have a library card ... I borrowed books.

Life skill is important, more than a certificate ...

Making new friends is very helpful, this is very helpful. It makes us strong.

I need my class, you know, we make friend, you know? Like my stress is going away from me, you know, when – because we all – when I come here, I talk to our friend.

Yes, it's helping me, my stress, you know and make me happy,

Staying at home, it's boring. We come here; we meet people ...

I can feel, really [feel] meet my friend and we – this is like my family because I'm living at home with only my husband and whenever he's on his work, there's nothing. So, this is the second home.

You don't want to be stuck at home.

Last week my little girl told me, 'mum I feel your English is improving'.

We have achieved something.

I don't want to when I arrive in Australia just stay at home, be a woman. I did too, talk to husband every day and rely on him every day. I'm so – I think so frustrated that when I just arrive like first two – one or two months, because I can't do anything without my husband. So, at that time I enrol into the [details removed] class. I was eager to find a job.

Because I was independent, because I always need my help for my daughter and son to deal with something very important in Australia. So, they need to always call to someone or some company to [deregister] something. So, whenever I asked them I feel oh, [unclear] here, who I am. So started to think I need to learn English. So, in the future I want to call by myself to deal something, then I feel very worthy. My effort feel very worthy and also, I want to get a job.

Migrants and their personal journey/growth with the training

Another good thing to me is to create a new mindset. You know more about life, about your society. The things that you didn't know. So, from the course, that's where you started increasing your learnings, skills.

We just need to get out there with the confidence, which is being built through this program, and practise, and your accent, and my accent, and everyone else's accent is the least worry of the language acquisition.

I love to meet new people and know about their culture. So, that was the right place for me, because now I have many friends from China, Iran and Afghanistan. Many countries. So, I guess after my home, this place is my second home.

Making new friends is very helpful, this is very helpful. It makes us strong.

I can feel, really [feel] meet my friend and we – this is like my family because I'm living at home with only my husband and whenever he's on his work, there's nothing. So, this is the second home.

Being able to come and talk with friends and new people, in a new place where they could exchange ideas and experiences broadened their worlds.

There's a lot of reasons we need face-to-face, this lady said, making friends, meet new people, come to a new place, learning around other people's multicultural, you can learn – sometimes we're having lunch, to bring traditional food and we taste it.

When we do our course, we help each other, you know or whatever we don't understand, I have to ask, help me ask to the teacher if the word, I can't spell it, I ask to my teacher, please can you spell it that word for me, that is – and much more to me the way I really need help, I can get it from here.

At that time, we have no confidence to talk to the native speaker. When we go outside, I just feel, oh so scared to talk to ... and that how you met the friends, you met the people and they very nice people and you say, oh, you have the same experience.
