

**Arriving in Memphis:  
the ESL education experience among refugees**

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Summer 2017

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## ABSTRACT.

This paper explores the English as a second language (ESL) education among adult refugees who have arrived in Memphis, Tennessee within the last twenty years. The research is based on an eight-week ethnography and interviews. By investigating the experiences of both ESL teachers and adult refugee students, this paper will demonstrate challenges that Memphis refugees face including a lack of time, resources, and confidence on their way to becoming proficient in English. This paper will conclude with strategies to combat future refugee resettlement challenges, including an increase in collaboration within the city and the refugee organizations, an increase in funding, and an increase in cultural sensitivity among the Memphis community.

*Keywords: Refugees, Memphis, English as a Second Language, Time, Resources, Confidence*

## 1. Introduction

According to United States law, a refugee is someone who “demonstrates that they were persecuted or fear persecution due to race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group,” which is different than an asylum seeker who obtains refugee qualities and will be protected as one, but have already entered or are at the border of the U.S (USCIS). Since 1975, 200-400 refugees from around the world have looked for shelter in Memphis, Tennessee after being forced out of their country every year. Within three months of resettlement they are expected to reimburse the government for their travel expenses and begin to finance their family on their own; this means finding a job, learning English, and adapting to the cultural norms of this society. What does it mean to be an English-learner (EL) in Memphis and in America? What kind of lifestyle does one need in order to learn a new language in such a short amount of time? What kind of help do refugees get? What challenges do refugees encounter? What happens if they fail? In this paper I examine such questions in light of the experiences of ESL teachers who are currently teaching refugees and those refugees who have

recently resettled in Memphis, Tennessee. This research will uncover the challenges of learning English as a refugee in Memphis in order to integrate into American communities. This research will also examine the programs that organizations in Memphis have already been providing to help the refugee population, and inspire what this city could strive for in its future. The paper begins with a review of two current and major problems: the first on the global refugee crisis and the second on what the United States is doing about it. The paper then introduced the study sites, discusses organizations in Memphis, and presents the methodological framework used to collect the data. The next component will examine the challenges facing refugees when trying to learn English, including multiple antidotes from both adult refugees and ESL teachers, highlighting the lack of time, resources, and confidence inside and outside of the classroom. The paper will continue with investigating various strategies to combat such challenges, again given by the two subject groups. I conclude my findings by suggesting that such implications to the learning process creates a lesser opportunity for refugees to successfully learn the English language and in turn, a disadvantage when attempting to integrate into the Memphis community as an assured equal

## 2. In the World Today

In today's world, there were 65.6 million people displaced of their homes by the end of 2016. That is a total larger than the population of the United Kingdom. A displaced person is someone who has escaped a war torn country and is seeking safety in another country, or has been forced out of his or her home but are still stuck in their home country. That number of displaced people is only expected to rise, as it has increased by 300,000 people since last year. The United

Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) puts it in a slightly different perspective, they acknowledged that “*on average, 20 people were driven from their homes every minute last year, or one every three second*” (Edwards 2017). Out of that 65+ million people displaced, there were 22.5 million seeking refugee status (2016), which is the highest number since the aftermath of World War Two. In its seventh continuous year at war, Syria has displaced 65% of its population, ringing in 12 million people, and 5.5 million have filed as refugees (Edwards 2017). One can only expect the number of future refugees to rise, if so many are currently displaced and could be looking for refugee status security in their near future. The United States of America has resettled over 3.2 million refugees since 1975, and 85,000 just last year (U.S. Department of State 2016). That 85,000 people was the largest number of refugees admitted since 1999, and 15,000 more than the previous year (2015) (Radford 2016). However, the current President of the United States, Donald Trump, has expressed no sympathy for these displaced people. Since taking office, President Trump quickly signed an Executive Order to “*protect the nation from foreign terrorist entry into the United States*” by putting a travel ban on all personnel traveling from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. He also suspended the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) for 120 days, and most importantly, he decreased the number of refugee admissions from Obama’s objective of 110,000 to just 50,000 for the 2017 fiscal year, and suspended the entry of Syrian refugees indefinitely (Trump 2017). The refugee cap has already been met, at 50,086 admissions as of July 12 and therefore, no more refugees are expected into the U.S. until the budget year renews in October. Although the U.S. Supreme Court has continued to revise this Executive Order, the initial statement was enough to instill a fear of diversity within the United States. At a time of great need, the

President of the free world has denied help to those who could use it the most, as well as labeled them as a dangerous population.

### 3. The Role Memphis Takes in the Refugee Resettlement Process

In 2016, 278 refugee individuals were relocated to Memphis, and 92 more have joined them this year (as of April). Memphis, Tennessee is a “Welcoming City,” which means it aims to create inclusive communities where everyone feels welcomed, mainly in terms of immigrants and refugees. In Mayor Jim Strickland’s words, “*Memphis is a welcoming city that values diversity, and each and every one of our citizens. And it will continue to be that way*” (Poe 2016). Upon arrival, they are met at the airport by a World Relief staff member or volunteer to be taken to their new home. World Relief is one of nine resettlement agencies in the United States, but contracted by both the U.S. Department of State, and over 20 local churches. They are the first giving hand to every refugee that relocates to Memphis. And, this year, President Trump has significantly decreased their funding, and created a fear of uncertainty for the future. Their funding is directly related to the number of refugee clients that come through their office. The agency receives \$950 to fund their offices and staff, and \$1125 to rent, furnish, and operate the incoming refugee’s apartment (for the first 90 days) per refugee. That money accounts for more than half of their total funding each year. Their annual budget usually tallies up to \$1 million, however the agency’s financial head is predicting next year’s budget to decrease to \$800,000. Due to the decrease in refugee admissions, and therefore decrease in federal funds, the World Relief resettlement agency has already closed five of its twenty-five offices across the nation (World Relief 2017). World Relief assists the new refugees move into their apartment, which should be fully furnished. Refugees are given a cultural orientation and other amenities such as

transportation to mandatory medical screenings, and allotted living expenses. However, these services do come at a cost. To begin, refugees must earn their protective status through an application system. They must meet American credentials, which include proving that they are in legitimate fear or persecution and that they will not harm American citizens (for example, they must pass a medical test for dangerous diseases), before the U.S. chooses to admit them (U.S. Department of States 2016). This process takes, on average, 18-24 months to complete, from obtaining a UNHCR referral to finally setting foot in the U.S. That is 18-24 additional months after living through the fear of potential persecution every day displaced in their home country or at a refugee camp. After arrival, refugees have, at most, three months until they are required to reimburse the federal government for their travel expenses. This travel loan is often thousands of dollars per person depending on how many connecting flights and baggage fees, for example it takes to help them escape their previous location. They are not expected to pay for this fee all at one time, but instead by monthly payments. However, after their initial 90 days, they not only must begin to repay their debts, but must also become financially independent for themselves or their families.

There are multiple establishments throughout Memphis that are striving to further help refugee families and individuals, long after their first three months of assistance from World Relief. In my research I worked with the most accessible and most recognized programs that provide resources to refugees in Memphis; the Refugee Empowerment Program (REP), Asha's Refuge, ConnectEFL, Shelby County Schools, and a few private tutors or volunteers. . The Refugee Empowerment Program puts on adult ESL classes, a nursery, after-school homework help, a pre-K readiness class, a summer enrichment program, reading times with kids, and a mentorship plan. This establishment has grown from two volunteers and twelve students, in

2002, to serving over 400 individuals and receiving hundreds of volunteers each year (The Refugee Empowerment Program 2016). They even pick up many students from the Big Hampton area on their own bus. Asha's Refuge is a Christian ministry organization that started teaching a few refugee women who wanted to learn English in a small apartment in 2011. They now teach English and "American Culture" to adults, and kindergarten readiness for preschoolers, which is offered to refugees only. Asha's Refuge provides their resources inside the Highland Heights Church through the school year (Asha's Refuge 2016). ConnecTEFL is an ESL certification non-profit that not only provides ESL certification classes, but also trains teachers, and teaches refugee and immigrant adults. They work largely among apartment complexes in Big Hampton and are working towards infiltrating various organizations to better their programs. Shelby County Schools not only places children in ESL programs within their schools, but also offers an after school program in different neighborhoods for adult English learners free of charge. ESL certified and bilingual teachers instruct the basic level classes for two hours twice a week during the school year and in the summer as well. Lastly, there are also various private tutors and church volunteers who offer different programs and resources such as ESL classes, child care, "American life skills" training, driving lessons, and many more.

In this study, I interviewed ten ESL "teachers" from these various institutions, I say "teachers" in quotations because the main person in charge of the lesson plan, who initially teaches in class, is not always certified in ESL, nor a professional teacher of any sort. These "ESL teachers" identify on a long spectrum including volunteers with experience abroad, previous science teachers, other high school staff with Masters degrees in English, certified ESL elementary teachers, and anyone else who can speak English with a good attitude and passion to help others achieve. Many of them argued that their experience living abroad, their Masters

degrees in English, and their passion is much more useful than another piece of paper (an ESL certification). However, while only a couple were certified, few also felt qualified enough to speak of topics such as Ramadan, and not one could confidently identify a name of a mental and social health provider for their students. There are organizations specializing in certain services for refugees and immigrants, but there is neither enough qualified personnel at each institution nor enough community awareness of their services. They are consistently understaffed and unrecognized throughout Memphis.

#### 4. Comparing Memphis

There are many directions that Memphis can go in, in order to create smoother resettlement processes for refugees. We can look to other “Welcoming Cities” for guidance, for example, Nashville, TN and Louisville, KY. Although these cities receive a higher number of refugees per year, they have a significantly more productive system in place. Nashville’s organization for immigrants and refugees is easy to find on their government website. There you can read an updated table, organized by categories, of 56 different establishments and all of their information. These make up such programs in language help, legal and financial services, cultural awareness, family services, health care and services **including mental health** and many more. There are 19 different institutions that focus primarily on fostering community and cultural engagement within Nashville. Each place targets a certain population, for example, they serve everyone, just refugees, or specific ethnicities e.g. Vietnamese communities. Most of these establishments are either free or low-priced as well (Nashville Organization for Refugees and Immigrants 2016).



Across the United States, cities are working towards creating a cooperative and encouraging environment for refugees and immigrants. An idea of a “Transitional school” has arisen, where children would have the option to enroll in the school upon arriving to the U.S. without knowing any English. For example, Louisville, Kentucky has created a “Newcomer Academy” They started their Transitional Schooling Program in September of 2005 “to effectively accommodate the growing population of non-English speaking refugee kids” (*BRYCS 2005*). That year they took in 750 students, 133 of them being refugees. The program was meant to serve only 2-6 weeks of intense language instruction, until they were placed back into regular public schools but with ESL programs still. This school didn’t last long- until 2006- but its establishers claim the school helped its kids develop basic literacy skills, got parents more involved in their children’s learning process and overall, better prepared its students to attend public schools” (*BRYCS 2005*). Shortly after, the “Newcomer Academy” opened with the goal to “provide a welcoming and respectful environment to meet the needs of 6-10th grade English learners” (*King Elementary School 2005*). There, students attend one to three semesters before attending public Middle or High School. The school is completely voluntary. Students are taught by bilingual instructors, and are given necessary school supplies, lunch programs, and can even join a program to receive clothes if they need them. The age limit-like many schools-is 21 years old, so those who are too old for the school but have not been given a prior education may enroll in a GED program. Those who may have graduate high school but need extra help to continue their education may go to the Louisville Academy for ESL to prepare for college. The Newcomer Academy also seems to be quite connected with the Kentucky Refugee Ministries, one of the voluntary resettlement agencies, which provides various services such as cultural orientations, programs specifically for family, youth, and the elderly; health services including mental health,

interpreters and language help, legal services, and job placement programs. This one agency employs over 80 professional staff members to specify in each needed area, in comparison to Memphis' only resettlement agency, World Relief, which staffs less than 20 people ("Staff & Board").

A transitional school could drastically impact the lives of so many refugee students. Not one ESL teacher, nor refugee student imposed on the idea when I brought it up at the end of their interviews. In fact, once fully explained, many teachers and students lit up with excitement and blessed me for contributing to the cause. They proceeded to offer their help with whatever the school or I might need, such as bilingual support, volunteer staff, and community engagement to raise awareness. Charlotte even asked me to pass on the information to her as soon as Memphis creates a plan, so that she can hang fliers and spread the word around the local Mosques.

To clarify, a transitional school would enroll non-English speaking students to adjust them to American life, access their personal needs, and of course provide intensive English instruction. Once adjusted, the kids would continue their education in their zoned public schools (or chosen private school if they could afford it), but within an ESL program still. Memphis *is* listening to the needs of refugee families and is currently in the process of opening a transitional high school, this August of 2017. Head of the Shelby County Schools ESL Department, Andy Duck, met with me to explain the new school, which will be called the "Newcomer International Center." The school is expected to open this school year, and it has so far hired a Principal, however it has yet to be fully staffed (as of July 25th). The school will hold 14-18 year olds, who are new to the country, have not been in high school yet, and new to English. Andy is looking for dual-certified (ESL and a subject class) staff members, to provide four ESL specialists, three bilingual supporters, one **bilingual** counselor, a principal, program advisor, and clerical staff. Andy

explained, part of the day will be English language development, and the other will include other subjects such as math, science, and history but with ESL support as well. Students will also be able to attend various elective classes such as physical education and art with the public high school students. “We need that time to build a foundation for the students, and the NIC is supposed to do that” (Andy Duck, SCS ESL Dept.). He acknowledges the problems with sending a newly arrived students into the public high school without any prior education. In the Shelby County School system, 9th graders are expected to take Algebra 1. He explained, if a student has never taken math, let alone knows any English, how can the succeed in that domain? The transitional school will be a place for kids to catch up, and in a safe but fast-paced environment. Today, SCS is planning for about 100 students to attend the NIC this year. They hope to get them out in just two semesters, but will have additional support, and even vocational classes if they choose to stay for a third or fourth semester.

But what about the younger kids, and the parents? The Shelby County Schools ESL Department plans to offer an ESL class for the parents, much like an extended school day for everyone, “We really want to take advantage of this center and make it be more than just what a normal school day is perceived to be,” Andy says. They will be taught what to expect from American school systems and help establish connections with them and the community or needed resources. A GED is not a part of their program, however. He also wishes to expand this school. The transitional high school is just the first step; the future may hold transitional elementary and middle schools as well. Of course, the funding comes and goes, and with recent policy changes the future of immigration and refugee populations remains uncertain. “We’ve been looking at this concept for years,” Andy Duck said. If Memphis can get the ball rolling with this new school, perhaps positive outcomes will inspire more change to evolve in the benefit

of refugees. Parents need education too; they deserve a new life of their own. If they were given the resources and time that they need to resettle adequately, they could even become the staff and teachers of these Newcomer centers. That way families are receiving income, and incoming students are learning from empathetic, knowledgeable instructors who can relate to their experiences and understand their cultures. Refugees have a lot to offer, and it starts with education. Because education is knowledge, and knowledge is power. Power is what anyone needs to make a life for themselves and then help others do the same.

## 5. Literature Review

Research on America's response to diversity, as well as the process in which immigrants and refugees acculturate to U.S. has been an important study for many years. Olsen (2008) analyzes the three parts to the process of "Americanizing," as she terms it. First, students are marginalized and separated academically, then required to become English-speakers and drop their own native language, and finally pressured to take their place in America's racial hierarchy. Newcomers, and refugees especially, are put at a disadvantage from day one, when they step onto American soil or into American schools. They know very little, if any, English, and have to catch up to speed in every subject. They often remain at the bottom of the food chain if they cannot receive the help they need to catch up. Olsen (2008) has found that even in multicultural settings, there is still separation. Guo (2000) has found that many teachers are ill-equipped to work effectively with their immigrant students, and with their parents especially, asserting that they are afraid of diversity. He believes diversity is "*ignored, minimized, or seen as an obstacle to the learning process,*" (Guo 2000). Olsen (2008) further explains that the division begins with the teachers. The subject teachers (math, history, science) attempt to silence the ESL teachers,

the people working closest with refugees. The ESL teachers often serve as a voice for their students, especially for the beginning English-learners, and therefore those subject teachers structure their school's society, isolating the refugees.

Research on ESL education among adult refugees, in Memphis specifically, is very limited. Memphis, being a predominately African American population (63%) is unlike many cities such as Nashville (27%) (City-Data 2015), or the city with the highest number of refugee arrivals in 2016- San Diego, which is 58% white and only 6% African American (Suburban Stats 2016). It is important to acknowledge the racial demographics when studying the educational experience and overall integration of refugees because they are multicultural individuals who will face racial hierarchies within today's society. The demographics of the society in which refugees will face is crucial to their integration patterns, and feeling of inclusiveness or exclusiveness. In 1988, academic, Hirayama found that the Hmong refugees (from Laos) relied heavily on their family and friends for support when faced with stressful situations upon integrating the Memphis community, even though they were aware of the available social service programs. Communities have a great impact on the well-being of people, and refugees specifically. Most refugees today are escaping Africa and Asia (largely Syria and Sudan), which are made up of two very different demographics than Caucasians and each. It is important to understand the different impacts that environments have on refugees, and therefore, research on the educational experiences of refugees in Memphis, a predominately African American city, is essential to any further research refugee education and integration as a whole.

## 6. Methods and Limitations

My research is based on semi-structured interview and ethnography. The target population for this research includes both ESL “teachers” and refugees, because adult refugees are my subject population and ESL teachers work closest with refugees in an educational setting. I interviewed ten “teachers,” in total, between the four institutions and few private tutors who claim to teach English language, and five adult refugees. I began with a participant observational strategy to search for potential interviewees by volunteering in an adult ESL level one classroom, as well as the children’s nursery for one day a week each at the Refugee Empowerment Program. There I was able to see the experience of both refugees in class and the ESL teachers on the job. Through this ethnographic study, I was able to observe the challenges that both groups endure and how they were able, or unable, to overcome them. While that experience led me to observe the operations of ESL classes as well as work directly with the refugee students, it also allowed me to build trust with the adult individuals, their communities, and the organization’s staff members. This connection then led me to multiple contacts, which I later interviewed. I also spoke to multiple staff members within refugee organizations including, the head of the Shelby County Schools English as a Second Language Department and multiple employees of World Relief, such as the head of funding. Over the course of seven weeks, I also looked for ways to reach individual refugee participants. The “ESL teachers,” referred me names of certain adult refugee students they had taught. I successfully interviewed five different refugees currently lived in Memphis and had learned English since their resettlement. In my research, I made sure to interview a variety of demographics, therefore, my study includes men and women, various religions, ages ranging from 24-60, and refugees from multiple countries including Sudan, Syria, and Tanzania. However, they were all relocated to Memphis within the

last twenty years, the oldest in 1995 and the most recent in 2016. After I built trust with them through their teachers and friends, they were very generous to share with me their stories. Both the ESL teachers and refugees expressed their experiences within ESL classes, and how Memphis can work to better integrate and welcome incoming immigrants through education.

However, I encountered challenges in the recruiting process. Many refugees that I worked directly with in the ESL classroom, do not speak conversational English and would have had a difficult time understanding not only various questions I wanted to ask them, but also their legal or social rights when giving me information. Certain organizations I tried to infiltrate were worried that the refugees would feel obligated to give me answers, explaining that they would treat me as an authority figure. I took recommendations of particularly English-proficient refugees who had already gone through the organization's' programs. This way, I could hear about their resettlement process, and their journey through ESL classes in order to benefit my research. Therefore implications included language barriers and communication with newly arrived refugee adults.

The second implication consisted of time. I believe that if I were given more time to complete this research my interview sample could have consisted of 12-15 ESL teachers and 10-15 adult refugee individuals, perhaps even up to 5 refugee children. My current research may be biased to the opinions of the five refugees interviewed, when determining the challenges that refugees face within ESL education. These implications, however, do not discredit the findings of current ESL teachers and their experiences in Memphis education.

## 7. Challenges to Learning English

### *7.1 Refugees Battling Time*

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees UNHCR, Education is the number one problem facing refugees; *“refugees are five times more likely to be out of school than the global average,”* (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2016). Current English learning (EL) students make up about 11% of this country’s students and that number reaches 20% when students who were once classified as EL students are included (Amos 2013). This number includes not only refugees but all English-learning students. Under U.S. Supreme Court ruling, *“local school districts and states have an obligation to provide appropriate services to limited-English-proficient students [since the Lau v. Nichols case in 1974<sup>1</sup>], but policymakers have long debated setting time limits for students to receive such services”* (Hakuta 2005). English-language-learners are the least likely group of learners to graduate in the U.S., behind the disabled population. In Tennessee, the average graduation rate for four-year public high schools is 87.2%, however only 73% of English learning students graduated in the 2013-2014 school year. Half of states graduate less than 60% of their students with limited English proficiency (National Center for Education Statistics 2014). Upon arrival, refugee children are put into a grade in school that matches their age. Kids who enter the seventh grade are then seven years behind their peers in English, and they have to sit through other subjects such as math and science, which are taught in English. The situation is very different than learning the language in kindergarten. To clarify, children in the United States begin to learn English in Kindergarten, however refugee children start learning English at whichever age they enter the U.S. In Kindergarten, all the children are learning at the same pace, but refugee kids are expected to catch up to kids who have been taught English at a steady pace since Kindergarten.

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**Lau v. Nichols, (1974)**, was a United States Supreme Court case in which the Court unanimously decided that the lack of language instruction in public school for students with limited English proficiency violated the Civil Rights Act of 1964.



This is why time is so important in the lives of refugees. Many of the interviewed Memphis ESL teachers believe that above everything else, they intend on teaching their students how to read, no matter what level they're at or what age they are. Others suppose that being able to speak in English is most important. Every teacher, as well, battles time. There is really only so much ESL teachers can do with the time they have with their students. One to two hours a day, five days a week of language instruction is not an "intensive" language course, says ESL Teacher and certifier, Aiden. *"They need more hours, as much as possible,"* he said, *"they need to be exposed to English more"* (Aiden, ESL Teacher #6). When observing the most successful California school districts in teaching ESL students, the University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute found that oral proficiency in English took 3-5 years and academic English proficiency took 4-7 years (Hakuta 2005). Ava intends on getting her students out of ESL in 3-4 years, suggesting that if they don't pick up the language before middle school, the likeliness of that students dropping out is much higher.

Although students are encouraged to practice their English at home, they are often surrounded by their family or their community who speak their native language, instead of surrounding themselves with English-speakers. The time that ESL teachers get with their refugee students is very important to their ESL education and comprehension, especially when the students English to their native language ratio at home is very low.

*"Ultimately, the kids just adapt. It's drowning for a while but get through it and into High School. The adults are drowning,"* Aiden expressed. While most refugee children have access to time at a school with ESL programs and teachers, their adult family members may not. In the United States, children are expected to attend school by law and by society. Memphis's public schools do, at least, provide tuition-free education with ESL programs and instructors.

However, many adult refugees have never attended school either. This research's population of refugees have overcome years of poverty, war, and trauma in their home countries, leaving little resources for education. The refugees whom I interviewed have fled their previous situations for years, while journeying to multiple countries and living in refugee camps until finally escaping to the U.S. Survival was their main priority until arriving in Memphis, and now they must start over in a culture largely built upon education. Even now that they have arrived in Memphis, they often do not have the time for an education. It is critical to understand how fast refugees must get on their feet upon arrival. As this study has previously considered, refugees have 90 days (at most) of federal support, where their rent, medical bills, utilities and other necessities are covered. After those three months, they are expected to start repaying the U.S. for their travel loans, and become self-sufficient. Therefore, they must locate a source of income to support themselves. Refugees are constantly battling time, especially within the first three months of resettlement. Due to that federal agenda, refugees, often the husband or man in the family looks for a job instead of focusing on their ESL education. Because they often arrive without a high school diploma, and do not speak even conversational English, they are forced to work low-paying positions. Due to the small amount of money they receive, many refugees work over 40 hours a week, sometimes 15 hours a day, to make ends meet. This, of course, leaves little to no time for additional education or ESL classes, which in return makes it very difficult for the working refugee to move up in occupations and eventually make a larger income. The financial status of many Memphis refugees is a huge problem to their well-being, however that status originates in the lack of time that they are given to effectively prepare for a job that could secure their future.

Aria, for example, explains how her family's financial situation could improve if they were given more time to integrate. Sometimes families are cut off before their allotted 90 days; *"Our caseworker said they couldn't help us after a month. After two months my [20 year old] brother was working and after three, my father was working as well"* (Aria, Refugee #2). Her 20 year old brother, could have entered a GED<sup>2</sup> program and endured ESL classes, but due to his family's need for money he was pushed into working and then unable to do so. Her father began working as a dishwasher because it was the only job he could find that didn't require him to speak English. He has been doing that for nine years. If either had had more time to pick up some English, or earn their GED, they most likely could have made their way into a better paying job and given their family a bigger advantage at integrating into Memphis.

## 7.2 Lack Self-Esteem and Confidence

Refugees do not get a say in which country or even which city they are relocated to. They endure drastic change extremely fast. That is potential change in language, currency, nutrition, business, community, climate, routine, financial status, and social status. Overall, they take a blind step into a wildly different culture and lifestyle. My research explores the ways in which self-confidence, especially in terms of self-identify and self-esteem often inhibits the learning process of refugees. This study will also suggests the potential mental health issues existing among refugees in Memphis and how they are handled upon arrival.

The majority of ESL teachers expressed the overwhelming lack of confidence within their students, both children and adults. Part of the problem is the assimilation that takes place in our Eurocentric America today. ESL teacher, Isabella worries about schools with things like American uniforms, assimilated names, and books and curriculums that refugees are unable to

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relate to. She is outraged at staff member when they change the spelling or pronunciation of their students' names to make them seem more American and thus taking away from their true identity; *"Every kid in that classroom believed they had a name in English and a name in their native language,"* she said (Isabella, ESL Teacher #9). Often times, children will be registered without their full names, for example, individuals within particular cultures that keep both their mother's and father's last name. On the class roster it might read "Jane Doe" with just their paternal family name instead of "Jane Doe-Smith" with both maternal and paternal names. Others worry about refugees' ability to be themselves when receiving help from religion-affiliated organizations. Charlotte's students have found churches that advertise ESL classes but try to *"push Christianity down your throat,"* which is obviously not a comfortable learning environment for Muslims in this example (Charlotte, ESL Teacher #10). I have found through the outrage of current ESL teachers, there is also frequent mistranslation between textbooks and certain curriculum topics, and their refugee students. Many family centric books in classrooms revolve around a mom, dad, sister, and brother. They always live in a **house**, and possess various kitchen appliances, furniture, clothes, etc. In reality, many refugees are relocated to an apartment, with their family of perhaps three kids, their mother, uncle, and grandmother. *"Completely ignoring the fact [of your family structure] is already changing your identity or robbing you of a piece of your identity. Or encouraging you to fit to models like that..."* (Isabella, ESL Teacher #9). Unrealistic textbooks may discourage refugees about their current situations, and create learning barriers. One can not relate to a specific family arrangement that they see over and over again. They cannot relate to what it's like living in a free-standing home with five bedrooms and walk-in closets. *"One of the biggest obstacles for beginning English learners is sorting out the differences of what they need and what they might grow to want*

*because they see it,*” (Emma, ESL Teacher #2). She says even the picture dictionaries she’s been given to use in class are exclusively white middle class orientated. The pictures of kitchens for example, contain all sorts of “appliances and gadgets [that] complicate their vocabulary” and is not what they need to be learning. The pictures also show predominantly white people using the expensive devices, perhaps broadcasting who they think **should** be using those things. Even if the students once had such items, they have left everything behind in their home country, and do not need a constant reminder of what they have lost, according to many ESL teachers.

Self-esteem is very important when trying to rebuild one’s lifestyle. Aria explained, “*When we got here, [my mother’s] hope got taken away. They kept telling us ‘if you can’t learn English there’s no way out. You can’t get a job, you can’t do this’*” (Arai, Refugee #2). Zoe said she asked her caseworker to take her back home, as many refugees have probably felt, “*I just felt like everywhere I go I have to speak English and I am just useless. I didn’t want to stay here, I [thought I] couldn’t do anything here*” (Zoe, Refugee #3). As this study has shown, refugees arrive with a few helping hands to get them started, but their English is nonexistent and their knowledge of resources is scarce. They were once straight-A students, school principals, farmers, entrepreneurs, sons and daughters, spouses, and many titles. But now, they may feel like they’re nothing. They have expressed their need in a community to believe in them, to guide them to their feet, and to help open doors of opportunity for them. And while this may be available to some, it is not to all. A sense of community begins with a smile and a greeting. Due to President Trump’s recent executive order (for example), which in large signified a fear of diversity and international communities, which was then backed by his millions of followers; that uncertainty and distrust of multicultural interactions remains in the United States today, even in Memphis. “*There’s certain things that I choose not to do now because I wear the scarf... Because of all the*

*hate that is going on,”* Charlotte reveals, *“ I used to feel more comfortable walking through Shelby Farms at sunset but I won’t do it anymore”* (Charlotte, ESL Teacher #10). Although she is an ESL teacher, and fourth generation immigrant-not a refugee, she relates to her students who share her religion; the Syrian refugees for example. *“I know they feel the same way,”* she acknowledges (Charlotte, ESL Teacher #10). Isabella feels that Memphis portrays *“the whole ‘we take care of our people first, before anyone else’”* mentality, *“without recognizing that these are people and people of value and are important and special for our society”* (Isabella, ESL Teacher #9). *“They are scared of you because of the unknown and you are also scared because of the unknown as well,”* as Riles puts it. *“Until you get to have some education about the people or they have some education about you, then you have to just take a step”* (Riley, Refugee #1). Someone must take that step to bridge the unknown, either a refugee individual or Memphis citizen, but both have that responsibility to reach out. As someone who has been the victim of extreme racial hate, Charlotte shared, *“there are so many times that people just come up to me and ask questions,”* and *“I love that! Come ask me! Don’t be afraid or just have that ignorance of whatever you see in the media,”* she says (Charlotte, ESL Teacher #10).

ESL teachers feel that subject teachers get frustrated with their English-learning students, as said by Ava who works within the Shelby County Schools, *“their teachers lose patience with them because they couldn’t communicate, and so they would sit the kids by each other [to translate for each other]”* (Ava, ESL Teacher #5). She said the subject teachers approach these children with an attitude of *“we don’t know how to adapt to them so we’re just going to ignore them,”* or, *“I want them to be in a different place, they’re hard.”* Another SCS ESL teacher, Isabella, shared that the school environment can be too competitive, that it’s too focused on grades and test scores, and ignores social or mental health problems that may be interfering with

refugees' ability to properly learn. Both, Ava and Isabella have felt the need to mediate conversations between a subject teacher and their refugee student when the student was unable to defend themselves due to their language barrier.

Studies have shown that *integration* in comparison to other factors such as assimilation or separation enhances the amount of happiness and satisfaction within refugees (Berry 1997). Berry explains the ways in which refugees typically discover the keys to acculturate into the society they've relocated to: *cultural maintenance (to what extent are cultural identity and characteristics considered important by individuals, and their maintenance strived for) and contact and participation (to what extent should individuals become involved in other cultural groups, or remain primarily among themselves)*(Berry 1997). In which, they then will strategize in one of four different ways; integration, assimilation, separation, or marginalization. For example, if one chooses to maintain their cultural identity while also interacting with other groups on a daily basis, they may *integrate* into society; in comparison to someone who chooses to forget about their culture and instead seek daily interaction with other cultures, by those means they would *assimilate*. Essentially, "*they will in the end be a hybrid of where they are*" (Sophia, ESL Teacher #1). This integration strategy may be one that many refugees strive for, as they would ideally like to keep in touch with their roots as well as successfully function in their current society. And as studies have shown, if refugees can successfully integrate, they should in return be much happier in society. By integrating, refugees can hold on to their cultural-identity and feel confident about the people that they are. However, in many cases, self-confidence plays a major role when initially learning English.

### 7.3 The Lack of Resources and Lack of Publicity

There are many programs here in Memphis, catering to the needs of refugees and immigrants. There are passionate people with useful experiences who are working to make integration into Memphis easier for refugee families and individuals. However, there are many complications circling within each establishment and throughout the entire system as a whole. Most of these organizations are constantly understaffed, underfunded, and largely unqualified especially when it comes to bilingual instructors and translators. Each institution, for the most part, specializes in a particular resource. For example, the Refugee Empowerment Program thrives in after-school homework help, and ConnecTEFL is primarily an ESL teacher certifier. Not every organization assists every demographic of refugees, for example, Asha's Refuge only serves adults and preschoolers, and ConnecTEFL only teaches adults. There is also simply a lack of ESL certified, and overall volunteers putting forth their time and effort to teach immigrants. At the Refugee Empowerment Program, for example, there may be anywhere from 6 to 26 adult students in the level one class that day, with only one teacher and one volunteer helper. At the same time, there may be brand new students who can't even write their name and phone number sitting next to a student who has started to spell words and tell the time. Even within the level one class, there are many levels of English proficiency, which makes it very difficult for the two "teachers" to work closely with their students. If there were more volunteers, they would actually be able to successfully put the set curriculum aside and focus on the needs of individualized students. A smaller ratio of students to teachers could drastically change the fate of each student's' English learning process.

In this study, I have found that the major issue with these resources is their community awareness. When refugees first arrive, most don't know any English at all. They largely rely on



their resettlement agency, World Relief, to show them what to do, how to do it, and how to get what they need. Their World Relief agent is their initial integration tool. Aria, who was resettled by a former agency in Memphis, Catholic Charities, shared that it was *“so hard to communicate and know what was going on and what they were doing and how they were transporting us”* (Aria, Refugee #2). She explained that if their caseworker didn't tell them about a certain resource, they wouldn't likely locate them. ESL teacher Olivia further explained, *“So many of them finish those months [with help from their caseworkers] and then they have no clue what to do next.”* When I asked another individual about refugee organizations she could go to, she only knew about the Refugee Empowerment Program. She was surprised to hear about Asha's Refuge, Shelby County Schools classes, and other organizations around town. Although she has taken advantage of the opportunities that the Refugee Empowerment Program has provided for her, they could not give her everything that she needed. For example, Zoe has been interested in earning her GED, however, that particular program does not offer the GED examination. Because she did not know about her options to other resources, such as a possible GED class and examination, she assumed there was no such thing. Two different ESL instructors informed me that their students find their class by word of mouth-their friends and other community members (Mia, ESL Teacher #7 and Olivia, ESL Teacher #4). Without the ability to speak, read, or write in English dramatically changes one's potential to navigate their surroundings. One ESL teacher recounted that her student's parents did not know what Google was. They've never heard of it. *“So I took her phone and goog-led for her, to show her how to search for things”* (Charlotte, ESL Teacher #10). Publicity through word-of-mouth should not be the only way that refugees are finding the programs that they need to succeed. This study has revealed the need for collaboration and communication between the refugee community and the organizations that

claim to help them. Upon arrival, refugees lack the direction to resources or even how to find them on their own using tools like Google, which can be translated to any language for their use. If caseworkers do not know what their refugee clients need exactly, tools that can help them navigate their options on their own would be very helpful for them.

Even if these resources were to be broadcasted to the greater population of refugees living and arriving in Memphis, they are not enough to meet all of their needs. In a study on Cambodian refugees twenty years after their resettlement in the United States, Marshall (2005) found that refugees “*continue to have high rates of psychiatric disorders associated with trauma.*” Tom Craig’s 2009 study revealed that stress-related mental health disorders are frequently found within refugees escaping to the U.S. Craig (2009) explained that refugees are often reluctant to disclose their experiences of trauma due to their past experiences of victimization, which is also a type of behavior shown by patients with mental health disorders worldwide. Scholars have identified traumatizing pre-acculturation situations to frequently cause forms of depression, anxiety, PTSD, substance abuse, and other mental health problems (Berry 1997). Adult refugees within this study shared their traumatic experiences before seeking protection in Memphis. For example, Zoe contributed a personal anecdote of hers: she “*saw war, and bombs, and people dying,*” right in front of her, “*I saw killings everywhere, people blown up, etc.*” (Zoe, Refugee #3). Riley witnessed her young nephew develop malnutrition when her family was surviving off of cornmeal, “*I watched my nephew die after six months,*” she told me, “*I wished that I had not brought him*” (Riley, Refugee #1). These three studies, plus my own research of present day refugees in Memphis show that mental health among refugees has become a reoccurring issue for decades. Yet, in Memphis, there has been little to no effort to solve it.

While organizations have focused on practical measures and pushed refugees to resettle into a home, learn some English, and get a job, they have ignored the necessity to examine their mental health. Although mental health may tremendously affect the way a person adapts to their new surroundings, especially when trying to learn a new language, for example, it is not a top priority here in Memphis Tennessee. Eight out of the ten ESL teachers mentioned the need for a professional counselor or psychiatrist to speak with their students, and two out of the five refugees said they wished they had had access to that kind resource as well. Yet not *one* teacher, nor refugee, could confidently identify the source of a mental health provider or counselor. The most common answer was along the lines of *“I think World Relief is in charge of that,”* or *“I would assume they could ask World Relief about that.”* However, World Relief provides no mental health help, because they do not have the funding for it. Aria said she could find a local Swahili speaker affiliated with her school, to help her find what she needed, and that the counselors *“tried their best”* to understand her. My findings show that there are no counselors, who have the ability to keep their information confidential, speak to them in their native language, and who has even had experience with the refugee process, available to refugees in need of mental health help. *“I wish there would have been a professional who could speak my language,”* Aria expressed (Aria, Refugee #2). When asked if her students have access to a counselor, ESL teacher Isabella responded; *“legally, yes. Practically, no. In my experience there are far too many students and not many counselors. And a counselor that doesn’t speak another language is far less likely to learn and dig deep into the story of what’s going on,”* she continued, *“I have not heard of a refugee organization that is putting a focus on mental health”* (Isabella, ESL Teacher #9).

The most common answer about why the *lack* of a mental health provider didn't seem to be a huge problem was because *"they just want to move on,"* (Olivia, ESL Teacher #4) or *"we believe in God, we believe that whatever happens is going to happen"* (Lily, Refugee #5). However ESL teacher, Charlotte says she sees a need for a professional counselor *"because a lot of things are suppressed that will come out later on,"* she goes on to justify the need for mental health providers for the refugee parents more than their children, she says, *"They've lived their entire lives one way and then all of a sudden everything got swept away from them"* (Charlotte, ESL Teacher #10). Lily, however, explained how her community is enough for her, *"it's very hard in the beginning but they become stable in three or so months... We check on each other, and all the neighboring families are like one family. We help each other"* (Lily, Refugee #5). For many others, though this is not the case; *"They are too afraid to be judged,"* Charlotte conveyed, *"they don't like to admit defeat"* (Charlotte, ESL Teacher #10). She thinks that more adults-especially men who are busy at work all day- would try harder to attend English classes and other forms of help if they could get psychological help to persuade them that it's okay. That it is not admitting defeat, that they should not feel humiliated (Charlotte, ESL Teacher #10). Some refugees may not want or need to speak to a professional, they need to help themselves in whatever way works best for them personally. However, they deserve to have that option.

## 8. Strategies ESL Teachers Use to Combat Refugee Challenges

While refugees largely face challenges due to lack of time, confidence, and resources and their publicity, there are a few strategies that various ESL teachers are using to help their refugee students overcome them. They include, creating an English "crash course" to combat lack of time, community infiltration and engagement to combat lack of resource publicity, and verbal

encouragement to combat lack of confidence. In this section of the paper, I will reveal the current personal tactics of ESL teachers, as well as anecdotes of success from both the teachers and refugees. Some stories exemplify multiple challenges faced throughout the English-learning process.

In order to get their refugee students up to speed in a hurry, some ESL teachers have decided to throw out their planned curriculum and books, and create an English language “crash course” instead. They allow their classrooms to become more individualized, meaning refugee students will help decide what they learn each day. This is helpful because often times the curriculums may teach too much vocabulary, for example, on topics that they won’t prepare them for things like going to the bank or the doctor, according to the interviewed ESL teachers. *“I want them to treat their families and themselves as they would with their family being the highest priority, not material things,”* Emma said after discussing why she can’t even use magazine to help teach her class because they describe more materials than refugees initially need (Emma, ESL Teacher #2). These progressive instructors can allow refugees to enter class with the intention of learning how to fill out a medical form, for example, if they know they are headed to the doctor’s office soon. *“We recognize that they are adults and as such they are going to have to function in society as adults,”* (Mia, ESL Teacher #7). So, to imitate any establishment they visit, students sign in to every class on a piece of paper passed around, and many times proceed with practice medial forms These kinds of skills are in demand much more in the initial 90 days of arrival than learning about topics such as fruits and vegetables. Olivia is also an example of an ESL instructor who chooses to individualize their classes by the direct needs of her students. She has tutored many refugees in the English language and in “American life skills,” but has recently created business-language sessions where she focuses on English

conversation that would be used in the business world, or at a specific career of choice, and nothing else. This way, her students can endure things such as interviews for a job as soon as possible, before learning vocabulary such as the fruits and vegetables. This strategy is aimed to put refugees on a path to succeed by conquering their first ninety days.

After acknowledging the immense lack of confidence within his or her students, almost every interviewed ESL teacher claimed to build their classrooms on a foundation of safety and openness. For example, Lucas refers to his adult students as “friends” and he consciously welcomes his friends with a warm smile and greeting before class begins. As someone who has previously tried to learn another language (Swahili) in a foreign country, he feels that he can empathize with their experiences. *“I think people learn a lot better with a smile on their face, than they do being frustrated,”* he recognizes (Lucas, ESL Teacher #8). He is also very mindful of the way he speaks while teaching; *“You want to be careful,”* he says, *“You don’t want to say ‘do it in the American way.’ You want to say ‘this is how a lot of Americans do it.’”* This kind of culturally sensitive dialect is implied to prevent from assimilating the refugee students. ESL teacher, Isabella, values the culture of her students when she begins each lesson with saying “hello” in all six native languages among her classroom. This allows her students to feel comfortable and accepted as the culture they are. She also is a strong voice for her students in times of need, for example when subject teachers change their names to sound more American. She tells her students to correct their teachers, and makes sure that she is correcting their names for other teachers as well. Isabella, and Ava both focus on created a “safe space” in their classrooms. Mia, as well, says she “invites [refugees] to share with [her] about their beliefs and what they do and their customs” and that her programs are founded on love (Mia, ESL Teacher #7). These passionate instructors are using encouragement and the creation of safe spaces to

help raise the confidence and self-esteem levels of their students. However, as this study has recognized, the time that students have with their teachers is kept to a minimum.

Lastly, with the intention to fight the lack of publicity among resources, teachers like Olivia are making an effort to infiltrate the international community meetings, for example, to help raise awareness of refugee organizations as well as her own services. As a personal tutoring business, she aims to make a profit from her services, however when she encounters refugee or immigrant English-learners without the reliable income, she helps them get on their feet quicker by tutoring free of charge. The majority of ESL teachers interviewed also included their dedication to community engagement and encouragement. They feel that they constantly encourage their students to spread the word of the programs to others in their communities, as the word-of-mouth strategy is what directed many of the refugee clients to these various establishments within Memphis in the first place. Another ESL teacher works to routinely translate informational flyers from English to Arabic and hangs them up in Mosques. She is aware of the lack of publicity among Memphis refugee resources and is trying to help her fellow community get the help they need. She admits that she, herself, doesn't know every and all available programs in the city, however her infiltration of the Muslim community-acting as sort of community translator and advisor-has already greatly increased the knowledge and awareness among the group. The staff at ConnecTEFL, are also infiltrating the international communities, as well as the other establishments in Memphis. They are trying to certify more ESL "teachers" that are often uncertified volunteers. They have also worked with local churches who offer ESL classes to pass on information about other available programs for their students to get the word out. As far as actual resources go, each program is looking to expand their services in the future, however lack the funding. Many of these institutions rely on donors or fundraisers done on their

own in order to change their size or quality. The Refugee Empowerment Program, for example, aims to move into a larger building, where they can provide more programs, more often, and with more volunteer workers. There are many people dedicating their time to combat the lack the resources and their publicity among the refugee population, but not yet enough to rid of this challenge to the ESL learning process.

So, what does happen when refugees-adults and children-receive positive motivation and encouragement? ESL Teacher, Charlotte says she sees a “*dramatic difference with the kids.*” For example, when she gives them a high five for a 70% on their test and encourages them to try for a 75% next time, they come back and score an 85%! She has numerous proud stories of her kids who had not even known the alphabet but can now read, or of children who had not cared about learning but now come to her and say “*I swear to you all I did was study, I didn’t watch TV, I didn’t do anything*” and ace their tests. Examples like this can be achieved with care and support, in this case given by their motivated teacher (Charlotte, ESL Teacher #10). These ESL teachers swear that confidence is the key to education, and once refugees can feel comfortable being themselves they will excel within our society.

Aria, a refugee resettled in 2007, told me about how difficult it was to enter the 7th grade without knowing any English. For a while she struggled to communicate with her peers and teachers, and was teased about her accent. She was able to move to the 8th grade in the appropriate time frame. However, there were other refugee students who didn’t pass in their first try, Aria said because “*they didn’t know anything.*” Aria is a story of success, which may not have been possible without a specific instructor. She lit up when I asked about her ESL experience; “*The teacher tried his best to use sign languages and act things out to show us what things meant. It was amazing how he taught us to speak English. He was awesome,*” she said.



He was dedicated to creating a safe and encouraging learning environment for his students. Thanks to a passionate language instructor, and her ability to “use logic” to get through her math classes, Aria was able to complete her schooling and graduate from high school, defying the odds against her. She now speaks nearly perfect English and inspires her younger siblings to follow in her footsteps. Lily experienced a similar ESL education process. She has had amazing volunteers who have planned around work schedules, provided babysitters, and created gender divided classrooms to make people more comfortable. She, after less than a year, can speak conversational English, has learned to sew, and even obtain her driver’s license. Such teachers who strive to learn about their students’ own culture, language, and overall needs, in order to effectively educate do exist, and they’re right here in Memphis, Tennessee.

## 9. Conclusion

While the number of refugees in the world is expected to increase, the number of them relocating to the U.S. and Memphis is only decreasing under President Trump’s current policy. This does not mean, however, that Memphis will let the lack of funding determine the amount of success within ESL education for refugees. There are many organizations working hard to provide the necessary resources to refugees and other immigrants. The refugees have proven to be powerful, resilient, skillful. However, more resources are needed in the city to during the period of their relocation and integration to the new environment.

From my study, I have found that this city lacks collaboration and funding. Through my findings, I conclude that there is a common lack of time, confidence, and resources and their publicity among the refugee population in Memphis, Tennessee. Currently, various ESL providers are doing what they can to combat those challenges, including creating an English

“crash course,” infiltrating the international community, and verbal encouragement and motivation. However, there is much more than can be done. Refugee-helping organizations should strive to certify their teachers. ESL teachers can focus on individualizing and contextualizing their classrooms. Possible improvements to curriculums include field trips for refugees to practice their English and interact with different communities, guest speakers for special topics to help refugees hear other accents and dialects, and pre-school set-up rooms with special stations to practice categorized vocabulary. Organizations must continue to recruit more volunteers to create smaller ratios of students to teachers, and find ways to increase their budget in order to expand. Memphis can work together to create collective resources that are practical and affordable. Resources such as English tutoring, GED programs, childcare, mental health care, and career skills programs; but combined with a safe environment where cultural differences are celebrated instead of ignored. The transitional school, “Newcomer International Center,” must meet its agenda and provide an alternative education to ease students into the public school system. That idea must then expand, and Shelby County Schools should create elementary, middle, and even adult or GED schools to help effectively educate all ages of refugees. In return, refugee adults who have retrieved an education can then have the opportunity to work at such transitional schools. This would be effective because Memphis would provide refugees a stable income, but also because former refugees can best empathize with arriving refugees and help translate. Not only could Memphis improve on the quantity and quality of resources, but also the way they are broadcasted over all of Memphis, Shelby County, and to all demographics of people. Refugees would greatly benefit from having a single institution that can direct them with their needs. In short, a collaborative, collective institution where refugees can go to ask questions and get the help they need after their caseworker leaves

them after 90 days. This way, refugees will at least know about the option they have instead of assuming such resources do not exist. Memphis, being their new home, must become a safe space. According to Berry (1997), welcoming faces and volunteer teachers alone are not going to resolve problems such as their mental health. Memphis needs professionals who are fluent in languages other than English. For example, psychiatrists who speak Swahili or Arabic. The demand for a change in refugee resettlement policy is at large. At the state, and national level, refugees need more time to resettle without worrying about repaying their loans. In order for refugees to avoid the current cycle of immobility after entering the workforce without an ESL education, the current resettlement policy that provides 90 days of funding needs to be revamped. A new system that can allow refugees to effectively learn English before finding a job, and that can boost their self-esteem would greatly impact the refugee population as a whole, as well as the city of Memphis.

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## Appendix

The following tables show the ESL teachers and refugees interviewed in this study. The original names of all participants have been changed to respect their privacy. The sample consists of a variety of ethnicities, classes, occupations, levels of English spoken, genders, and ages. They were recruited from multiple establishments including the institutions described in the study. The names are numbered for the convenience of the audience to identify the demographics of the participant with the text.

## Memphis ESL Teachers Interviewed:

<b>Name</b>	<i>1. Sophia</i>	<i>2. Emma</i>	<i>3. Jackson</i>	<i>4. Olivia</i>	<i>5. Ava</i>
<b>Occupation</b>	Professor	Former High School Teacher	Former Science Teacher	ESL and Swahili Tutor	ESL Elementary Teacher
<b>ESL Certified</b>	No	No, but has a Masters in English	No	No, but has a Masters in English	Yes, plus a Masters in Teaching
<b>Current ESL Role</b>	Volunteers to teach once a week	Volunteers to teach two days a week	Volunteers to teach two days a week	Privately tutors refugees	ESL Elementary Teacher

<b>Name</b>	<i>6. Aiden</i>	<i>7. Mia</i>	<i>8. Lucas</i>	<i>9. Isabella</i>	<i>10. Charlotte</i>
<b>Occupation</b>	ESL Teacher	Co-Founder of Refugee Organization	?	ESL Elementary and Adult Teacher	ESL Elementary Teacher
<b>ESL Certified</b>	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
<b>Current ESL Role</b>	ESL Teacher and certifier	Teaches English and American Culture	Volunteers to teach once a week	ESL Elementary and Adult Teacher	ESL Sub and Summer Program Teacher

## Refugees Interviewed:

<b>Name</b>	<i>1. Riley</i>	<i>2. Aria</i>	<i>3. Zoe</i>	<i>4. Liam</i>	<i>5. Lily</i>
Resettled in	2001	2007	2001	1995	2016
From	Sudan	Tanzania	Sudan	Sudan	Syria
At Age	? (mother)	14	24	? (adult)	? (mother)