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A Handbook for Teaching English to Afghan Women Refugees

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A Handbook for Teaching English to Afghan Women Refugees

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In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Second Language

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Deborah de Lambert
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MASTER OF ARTS

in

TEACHING ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

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Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all the members, this field project (or thesis) has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

Approved:

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This project is dedicated to the women of Afghanistan who have endured, and continue to endure, extraordinary hardship, suffering, and denial of their human rights, and who, despite it all, continue to persevere with hope for a better future. May a thousand splendid suns shine down upon them.

I would like to thank and acknowledge several people who have helped me to accomplish my goal of finishing the Master's TESOL program at USF. First, I would like to thank Dr. Sedique Popal who helped me to see what form this project could take, and whose enthusiasm for teaching inspires me every day to be a better student and a better teacher. I also want to express gratitude to Dr. Luz García for plowing through the drafts of this project and guiding me to make it better with her insightful comments and questions. Next, I want to thank my classmates at U.C. Berkeley Extension and at USF for supporting and encouraging me when I had doubts about undertaking this master's degree program. I also want to thank Ratna Noteman at No One Left Behind for taking time to answer all my questions about their volunteer program, and for working so hard to provide support for Afghan women refugees in the Bay Area. Finally, a huge thank you to my family, who supported my endeavors even when their "What's for dinner?" was met with a shrug and a frozen pizza. I love you all.

ABSTRACT

There are now millions of refugees worldwide, people forced from their homes seeking refuge from violence or persecution in other countries. These people face different challenges to resettlement and acculturation than voluntary immigrants. They may arrive after witnessing or experiencing horrific events and they carry that trauma with them. Moreover, as involuntary immigrants they still long for a home they can no longer return to. To make matters worse, many of these refugees find themselves the target of hatred or hostility in their new homes. Helping them to achieve a successful adjustment to their new homes and new lives is the impetus behind this project.

In the United States, we admit a limited number of refugees each year. One group that finds a home here is those who receive Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) status due to their assistance to our war efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. The SIV holders are typically men who have worked for the U.S. military in some capacity (often as translators), and their wives and minor children. With their husbands working and their children at school, these women, who are largely not literate in their native language and do not speak English, are in danger of greater isolation and, as a result, exacerbated mental health problems related to post traumatic stress and other trauma related issues.

This project, then, is a handbook to train volunteer mentors who work with Afghan women refugees. The handbook provides Afghan historical and cultural background so that the volunteers know more about the women with whom they are working. It also provides information about the incidence and impact of trauma in refugee populations. Finally, it provides a series of eight one-hour lessons in teaching life skills and some English. English, although a necessary component, is not emphasized in these lessons as it is important for the

women to begin to feel comfortable in their new homes and lives before they will be ready to tackle a new language.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

A refugee is a person who has had to flee his or her home and cannot return due to a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1951). According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) there are currently 22.5 million refugees in the world, more than half of whom are under the age of 18 (UNHCR, 2017). Fifty-five percent of these refugees come from three predominantly Muslim countries – South Sudan, Afghanistan and Syria (UNHCR 2017). In fiscal year 2016, 38,901 Muslim refugees were admitted to the United States, nearly half of all the refugees admitted to the country that year (Connor, 2016). Half of these Muslim refugees were from Syria and Somalia. The remainder were from Iraq, Burma, Afghanistan, and other countries (Connor, 2016).

Refugees admitted through the United States resettlement program receive three to five days of cultural orientation, prior to being admitted, describing the resettlement process, their rights and obligations as refugees, and life in the United States (Fix, Hooper, & Zong, 2017, p. 7). Upon resettlement, the refugees are provided services by a voluntary organization for 30 days (extendable for up to 90 days). These services include help obtaining food, clothing and housing, as well as enrolling children in school, finding English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, applying for social security cards and appropriate social services (Fix, et al., 2017, p. 7). Voluntary organizations that provide these services can receive a one-time grant of $2,025 per refugee for fiscal year 2017 (Fix, et al., 2017, p. 7 n. 32).

My introduction to the problem this project addresses was when I began volunteering with an organization called No One Left Behind (NOLB). NOLB serves refugees from Iraq and Afghanistan who are admitted to the United States on Special Immigrant Visas (SIV). These visas are issued to people (mostly men) who have worked as translators for the U.S. military and their wives and children (United States Department of State. Section on U.S. Visas). NOLB provides support for these families, including volunteers to act as mentors for the wives and families of these men, and to help them learn English, past the initial 90-day resettlement program. The volunteers that work with these families are dedicated and well-intentioned, but the vast majority of them have no training in teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) (Clark-Kasimu, 2015, p. 22), teaching illiterate adults, or working with victims of trauma. They also know very little about Afghan history or culture.

The SIV families that NOLB serves are refugees. They typically qualify for these visas because their lives are endangered due to the work they have performed on behalf of the U.S. military. They have typically been targeted by rebel groups fighting against the U.S. supported government in Iraq and Afghanistan. Thus, they have been forced from their homes, and it is unsafe for them to return. They have left behind extended family and friends whose lives may also be threatened either because of their relationship to the SIV recipient, or because of the ongoing war in their countries.

Refugees face many difficulties in resettlement that other immigrants may not experience. Because of the dire circumstances that precipitate their refugee status, many refugees suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or other lingering effects of trauma (Schulz, Resick, Huber, & Griffin, 2006). Refugees may have been the victim of rape or torture, or a witness to the rape, torture or murder of family or friends (Neuner, Schauer, Klaschik,

Karunakara, & Elbert, 2004). Moreover, the nature of the civil strife in their native countries may have made institutions, such as schools, inaccessible, leading to deficits in formal education. Finally, many refugees face larger hurdles to acculturation due to the fact that they are involuntary immigrants (Kupzyk, Banks, & Chadwell, 2016). Unlike people who willingly leave their native countries to begin a new life, refugees have been forced out of their homes and often face tremendous resentment or opposition to their resettlement from the citizens of their new country. They are left feeling unwanted and unsafe in the home they left behind as well as in their new home. These psychological and emotional issues can make acculturation more difficult (Kupzyk et al., 2016).

One of the keys to successful integration and acculturation in the U.S. is learning to speak English (Fix, et al., 2017). In order to work, shop, get medical care, or communicate with schools, it is essential to speak English. The women refugees arriving from war-torn countries, like Afghanistan, face many obstacles to achieving English language skills and to acculturating successfully. They are likely to have had little or no formal education, and they may not be literate in their own languages (even though many will be bilingual). Estimates of illiteracy among Afghan women run from about 86% to about 90% (Andersen & Kooij, 2007). Furthermore, for cultural reasons, these women's movements outside their homes may be limited. While women's freedom to move about and socialize outside the home has varied throughout Afghan history, since the Taliban took control of the country in about 1996, women have been quite restricted in their ability to move freely outside the home (Robson, Lipson, & Center for Applied Linguistics, 2002). The Taliban's extreme interpretation of Islam does not allow women to leave the home or have contact with non-family members outside the presence of a male family member (Robson et al., 2002). Even after arriving in the United States, these

practices linger and, along with the household and childcare responsibilities, make it difficult for the women to attend English classes outside the home and to practice English language skills with native speakers.

I have worked with an Afghan family through NOLB for about two and a half years. I meet once a week with the wife, teaching her English and basic life skills. At the same time that I began volunteering with NOLB, I began the coursework for my Teaching English as a Second Language credential. This meant that I was learning teaching skills, as well as about culture shock and acculturation, while working with someone who was facing these challenges. I have seen how difficult it is for my mentee to navigate everyday life, including shopping, medical appointments, communicating with her children's teachers and other administrators at school, and at the same time manage her household duties and try to attend English classes. In addition, there is constant worry about her family members who remain in Afghanistan, some of whom have recently been severely injured in bomb attacks. My TESL training helped me to be more sensitive to the stages of culture shock she has passed through and allowed me to offer her an emotionally supportive learning environment.

Without properly trained mentors or teachers, these Afghan refugee women are the ones who are in danger of being left behind. Their husbands come to the United States speaking fairly good English and obtain jobs, where they often work 5 or 6 days a week. Their children are enrolled in school, where they learn English and make friends. These women, on the other hand, come to the U.S. speaking little or no English. They are largely housebound, by culture as well as because of their limited language skills, and have little contact with Americans (Riggs et al., 2012). Thus, the husbands and children have a much smoother and faster acculturation process than the women, who can be increasingly isolated. This isolation can lead to mental health

problems, like depression (Riggs et al., 2012), especially with the constant worry about family and friends who remain in Afghanistan. As my mentee expressed to me, when she can go out to English classes during the day she is much happier. When she sits at home by herself, she dwells on the dangers that her family in Afghanistan face every day and worries.

This project includes a handbook that describes Afghan history and culture in order to give the volunteers a context to the women with whom they work. It also touches on the effects of past and ongoing trauma on the learning and acculturation process. Additionally, the handbook provides tips and guidelines for teaching women who may be illiterate in their native language and who may lack any formal education. Finally, sample lessons are provided that can be used as a model for teaching ESL and life skills to Afghan women refugees. With a deeper understanding of these women's cultural backgrounds, and their ongoing challenges, it is hoped that the volunteers can more effectively teach English and help these women adjust to life in the United States. Because they have no option to return home, it is essential that these Afghan refugees learn to adapt to their new home in the United States and learn English as quickly as possible.

Purpose of the Project

Afghan women refugees in the U.S. face significant hurdles to learning English and acculturating. These hurdles include the traumatic events that they have experienced which led to their becoming refugees in the first place (Schulz, Resick, Huber, & Griffin, 2006), and the fact that many are illiterate or lack formal education (Andersen & Kooij, 2007). Because they are often home-bound, unlike their husbands and children, they are in danger of being left behind as their husbands and children learn English and learn to adapt to their new home.

Upon resettlement, volunteer organizations, such as NOLB, provide mentors to help these women learn English and essential life skills. Unfortunately, many of these volunteers are not trained to teach ESL or to work with trauma victims. They also know little about Afghan culture or history. This makes the job of teaching these women effectively more difficult.

The purpose of this project is to create a handbook that can be used by volunteers working with Afghan women refugees to help them adjust to life in the U.S. culturally, socially, and linguistically. The handbook teaches volunteers important information about Afghan culture in particular, and Muslim culture in general, that will allow volunteers to interact with Afghan women in culturally sensitive ways, in order to make them feel safe and respected. A deeper appreciation of the culture that these women come from will give the volunteers a better understanding of how to connect with their mentees, to form bonds and encourage trust. This should create more social solidarity, and, thus, enhance language learning (Schumann, 1976). By creating a safe and supportive environment for these women, it is hoped that their affective filters will be lowered (Krashen, 2009), meaning that they will learn English and acculturate more easily.

In addition, the handbook attempts to educate volunteers about the trauma that these women may have experienced, and its lingering effects (Neuner, Schauer, Klaschik, Karunakara, & Elbert, 2004). It is hoped that this will allow the volunteers to recognize symptoms of depression or other mental health problems that the women may be experiencing, and to better serve the women by helping them receive treatment for these problems. Again, by being more understanding of these issues, it is hoped that the volunteers can work with the women in a way that will help to lower their affective filter (Krashen, 2009), making them more receptive to learning English, and also making their acculturation process smoother and less threatening.

The third aspect of the handbook is a series of sample lessons that can be used to teach life skills and English to the Afghan women refugees. Many of these women have little formal education, and many are illiterate in their own language (Andersen & Kooij, 2007), which presents special challenges in teaching English. Because most of the Afghan women NOLB works with no or low literacy, the lessons are life skill focused rather than grammar focused. The women will learn English as they learn essential life skills, like writing their name and address, telling time, counting money, and calling 9-1-1. Once they are more comfortable in the U.S., it is anticipated that they will be able to go to community English classes. The lessons provided in the handbook can be adapted to be used with women with different levels of education and different degrees of literacy. There are many resources available for teaching ESL and life skills, but it is hoped that these sample lessons will be a useful starting place for volunteers with no formal training in teaching ESL.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this project is based on the idea of social distance affecting language learning, proposed by John Schumann (Schumann, 1976), and the affective filter hypothesis of Stephen Krashen (Krashen, 2009). Both of these theories promote the idea that certain psychological or emotional issues for the learner must be addressed for effective second language acquisition.

Social Distance Theory

John Schumann proposed the idea that a second language learner's ability to acquire the target language will be influenced by the "social distance" between the culture of the learner and the culture of the target language (Schumann, 1976). In assessing the distance between the

cultures Schumann suggests that we need to consider the six factors: dominance, integration, cohesion, congruence, attitude, and permanence.

The first factor, dominance, asks if the second language learner's (2LL) social group is dominant over, subordinate to, or non-dominant to the target language social group. If the 2LL group is dominant over the target language group, that is, it has higher income or education levels, a higher degree of technical development or more political power, social distance between the groups will be great and the 2LL group will have little interest in acquiring the target language (Schumann, 1976, p. 136).

If the 2LL group is subordinate, the target language group will have the higher income and education levels, and social distance will also be great. There will likely be little contact between the two groups and little opportunity or motivation for the 2LL group to learn the target language (Schumann, 1976, p. 136).

In an ideal situation, neither group will be dominant, a situation that Schumman (1976) refers to as non-dominant (p. 136). In this case, the social status of the groups will be about the same, and this should facilitate social contact between the groups (Schumann, 1976, p. 136). With more social contact, acquisition of the target language should be easier. Schumann (1976) points out, however, that the degree of dominance, subordination, or non-dominance may be perceived differently by each group, so it is important to look at the dominance question from both points of view (p. 136).

The second factor that Schumann (1976) says contributes to social distance is the degree and pattern of integration of the 2LL group (p. 136). Schumann (1976) identifies three patterns of integration that a 2Ll group may adopt: assimilation, acculturation, and preservation. When a group assimilates, it gives up its own culture and values and adopts those of the target language

group (Schumann, 1976, p. 136). In acculturation, the group adapts, rather that adopts, meaning that the group will maintain some its culture and values, but also adopt some of the target language group culture (Schumann, 1976, p. 136). Schumann defines preservation as an integration strategy where the 2LL group rejects the culture and values of the target group and chooses to maintain its own culture and values (Schumann, 1976, p. 136).

According to Schumann (1976), assimilation minimizes social distance and, therefore, should result in enhanced language learning for the 2LL group (p. 137). On the other hand, preservation results in maximal social distance, and, as a result, would be expected to have to worst outcome for language learning by the 2LL group (Schumann, 1976, p. 137).

As with dominance, Schumann (1976) cautions that integration must be looked at from the points of view of both groups (p. 137). Each strategy has different, sometimes conflicting, goals, and each may create hostility on the part of one group or the other (Schumann, 1976, p. 137).

Next, Schumann (1976) says that cohesion is an important factor to consider (p. 137). If the 2LL group is large, it will tend to be more cohesive. A high degree of cohesion will mean that the 2LL group is more likely to have contact with members of the 2LL group than with the target language group (Schumann, 1976, p. 137). In fact, Schumann (1976) points out that a high degree of cohesion may exclude that possibility of contact with the target language group (p. 137). This lack of contact creates greater social distance and hinders language learning.

The fourth factor that Schumann (1976) looks at in assessing social distance is the degree of congruence between the 2LL group and the target language group (p. 137). The higher the degree of similarity between the culture of the 2LL group and the target language group, the smaller the social distance should be (Schumann, 1976, p. 137). Schumann (1976) notes,

however, that congruence is a relative term and that we need to consider how similar the two groups are relative to other groups (p. 137).

Schumann (1976) points out that the attitudinal orientation of each group toward the other is another important factor in social distance (p. 138). By this he means what are the cultural expectations or stereotypes each group holds about the other, both positive and negative (Schumann, 1976, p. 138). If both groups view each other positively, and both see that it is beneficial for the 2LL to learn the target language, then the social distance will be smaller, and learning will be greatly enhanced. If one or both groups hold negative views of the other, or if either or both believes it is undesirable for the 2LL group to learn the target language, then language learning will be considerable impaired (Schumann, 1976, p. 138). It is important to keep in mind that one group could have positive attitudes toward the other, while the other group has a negative attitude. It is always important to closely observe and consider each side.

The final factor that Schumann (1976) says must be considered is the 2LL group's intended length of stay in the target language area (p. 138). For example, if a 2LL group is intending to stay permanently, that group will have more extensive contacts with the target language group and is more likely to close the social distance than if the 2LL group perceives itself as merely passing through, or on a temporary stay (Schumann, 1976, p. 138).

The last point that Schumann (1976) makes is that these factors do not exist independently of each other (p. 138). Each factor will interact with and influence the other factors. For example, a group that has a very low level of congruence may be more likely to seek preservation as an integration strategy, leading to higher levels of cohesion. Also, he notes that the categories are not discreet, but rather continuums (Schumann, 1976, p. 138). That is, a

group can be dominant, subordinate, non-dominant, or anywhere in between those discreet points on the spectrum (Schumann, 1976, p. 138).

According to Schumann (1976), it is necessary to close the social distance between the language learner and the target language in order to facilitate language learning. Although there is some debate about the exact degree of closeness or distance that is optimal for language learning, it is generally accepted that there is a connection between the two. Muslim refugees in the United States face tremendous social distance and closing this distance with trained, supportive mentors will be advantageous to the learning outcomes of Afghan women refugees.

Affective Filter Hypothesis

Stephen Krashen (2009) proposed five hypotheses for second language acquisition: the acquisition/learning hypothesis; the natural order hypothesis; the monitor hypothesis; the input hypothesis; and the affective filter hypothesis (pp. 10 – 30). The hypothesis that most informs this project is the affective filter hypothesis (Krashen, 2009). Krashen (2009) maintains that input is the most important aspect of language acquisition or learning (p. 20). Input, however, can be blocked, according to Krashen (2009) by affective conditions that act as a barrier to the input (p. 31). Three variables contribute to the affective filter – motivation, self-confidence and anxiety (Krashen, 2009, p, 31). When any of these three variables is not optimal, the affective filter will prevent the input from reaching the part of the brain responsible for language acquisition, "the language acquisition device" (Krashen, 2009, p, 31). In this way, the affective filter interferes with the learner's ability to acquire language (Krashen, 2009, p, 31). Learners who have PTSD, or are experiencing ongoing trauma or anxiety, may experience a high affective filter. Addressing these emotional or psychological factors, and creating a safe and anxiety free learning environment, will facilitate English language acquisition.

Given the high degree of incongruence between Afghan culture and American culture, and the current climate of hostility toward Muslim refugees, one would expect that Afghan refugees experience a high degree of stress and anxiety in the United States. As will be explored in Chapter III, refugees also exhibit high levels of PTSD. This is another factor that can be expected to raise the affective filter and hinder language learning for Afghan refugees. Finding ways to reduce social distance and lower the affective filters of Afghan women refugees is imperative.

Significance of the Project

The number of Muslim refugees worldwide is likely to continue to rise, as the conflicts in predominantly Muslim countries (such as Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Yemen) show no likelihood of being resolved any time soon. As these numbers rise, successfully integrating these refugees into their new countries will be increasingly vital. A handbook such as this will be an important tool that volunteers and teachers can use to improve outcomes for the women with whom they work by smoothing their acculturation process and making them less isolated in their new communities.

Additionally, this handbook has the potential to be adapted for use in refugee camps around the world. Of the 22.5 million current refugees, approximately half live in refugee camps, and are awaiting resettlement or repatriation (UNHCR 2017). Many of these people live for several years in these camps, without education, job training or other useful occupation (Jolis, 1993). The boredom, frustration and sense of hopelessness that refugees experience under these conditions can create discouragement, depression and even violence.

A culturally sensitive English language program in these camps would provide a useful diversion for many of people living in refugee camps and prepare them for life after resettlement

as well. It has been reported that once their basic needs (clothing, shelter, food, and medical care) are met, refugees clamber for education. Learning English will give refugees a useful job skill, making resettlement more likely and more successful. It will also give refugees a goal to achieve, making the seemingly endless wait for resettlement less unendurable. Because even the few education programs that exist in refugee camps lack trained teachers (Jolis, 1993, p. 4), this handbook could be quite useful.

In addition to a lack of trained teachers, there is a question of what should be taught in refugee camps. UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) and UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) have identified "life skills" as a subject that should be taught in refugee camps (Jolis, 1993, p. 4). There is no doubt that a program that teaches life skills would be extremely useful.

The handbook can also be adapted to teach children in refugee camps. Approximately half of the refugees worldwide are children (UNHCR 2017). These children are often stranded in refugee camps for years, even decades, with no educational opportunities (Jolis, 1993, p. 2). A consultant for UNICEF Education for Development described children in refugee camps as "numbed by boredom and surrounded by anxiety" (Jolis, p. 3). Refugee children need an education, and a culturally sensitive, emotionally aware and supportive one is ideal.

Finally, the question has been raised as to the appropriate language to use to teach refugees. Many refugees have a strong desire to return to their home countries when it is safe to do so (Jolis, 1993, p. 4). Consequently, they do not want to learn, or have their children learn, a different language (Jolis, 1993, p. 4). They prefer to be taught in their native tongue. The reality, however, is that many of them will never be able to return, or will have to resettle at least for the foreseeable future in another country. It is not unreasonable, therefore, to teach refugees

in English. English has the advantage of being the language of commerce worldwide. Knowing how to communicate, even if only rudimentarily, can be an advantage when it comes to resettlement and to employment, wherever a refugee settles.

This project, then, has significance for Afghan women refugees in the United States, but also for refugees worldwide. With some adaptation it may be useful for teaching life skills and English language in refugee camps around the world.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are used throughout the project:

1. **NOLB** – No One Left Behind. A volunteer organization that provides support to refugees from Iraq and Afghanistan that have been admitted on Special Immigrant Visas.

2. **PTSD** – Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. A psychiatric disorder that can occur in people who have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event such as a natural disaster, a serious accident, a terrorist act, war/combat, rape or other violent personal assault. Individuals with PTSD may relive the event through flashbacks or nightmares; they may feel sadness, fear or anger; and they may feel detached or estranged from other people. PTSD can also occur in an individual who learns that a close family member or friend has died accidentally or violently. (American Psychiatric Association. Retrieved from https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/ptsd/what-is-ptsd).

3. **SIV** – Special Immigrant Visa. These visas are issued to individuals who worked with the U.S. Armed Forces or under Chief of Mission authority as a translator or interpreter in Iraq or Afghanistan. This program offers visas to up to fifty persons a year. U.S. (Department of State, Department of Consular affairs. Retrieved from https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/immigrate/siv-iraqi-afghan-translators-interpreters.html).

4. **UNHCR –** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. An arm of the United Nations that works on behalf of refugees around the world.

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Refugees arrive in this country fresh from trauma that follows them in the form of PTSD and other psychological symptoms. As will be seen in this review of literature, a well-trained, sensitive mentor can be the best chance a refugee has for successful integration into her new culture. In the United States, refugees have the best chance for success if they are also able to learn English (Fix, et al., 2017). Afghan women refugees who come to the United States present special challenges in this regard. These women are largely illiterate in their native languages (Andersen & Kooij, 2007), and have been mostly housebound in Afghanistan for cultural reasons. The mentors provided for the Afghan women by organizations like NOLB are warm-hearted and well-intentioned, but largely untrained in teaching English and in working with victims of trauma.

The purpose of this project is to teach volunteers, untrained in ESL, to support and teach Afghan women refugees. The project gives them a historical and cultural context for the women they are working with, gives them advice on working with victims of trauma, and gives them sample lessons to use. This section reviews the literature on theories of acculturation and its effect on second language acquisition; the lingering psychological effects of pre-migration trauma, and studies that suggest methods for mitigating the lingering trauma in order to facilitate positive acculturation strategies; and the role of Afghan women in their culture. These themes are important to this project because the Afghan women the volunteers work with are likely to lag far behind their husbands and children in acculturation since they are more likely to be at home, having contact mostly with other Afghan refugees and immigrants (Robson et al., 2002, p. 57). With little contact with Americans on a daily basis, American culture is likely to remain

mysterious and threatening. Without a sensitive, trained mentor to help them adjust to their new home, these women are in danger of falling into (a deeper) depression and of feeling isolated from their husband and children (Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2012).

First, I review the literature on the stages of culture shock and acculturation. The literature shows a link between the stages of culture shock and the learner's ability to acquire a second language (Brown, 2007). Related to this are the idea, explored in the Theoretical Framework, that social distance can create a barrier to acculturation (Schumann, 1976) and the importance of lowering the affective filter for effective language acquisition (Krashen, 2009).

Next, the following section reviews the degree of trauma and the symptoms that refugees exhibit, and how it differs from voluntary immigrants. The exceptionally high occurrence of PTSD and other trauma related symptoms are well documented in the literature. What this means for their long-term prospects in adapting to their new home seems to depend on many factors, including having well trained mentors (Renner, Laireiter, & Maier, 2012).

Finally, I review the literature on the status of Afghan women in particular. What is their role in Afghan society and how does it change when they arrive in a new country, such as the United States? There are a handful of studies that look at these issues and the special acculturative stress this places on Afghan women refugees. (Lipson & Miller, 1994; Robson et al., 2002)

Acculturation

Individuals find themselves, more and more these days, coming into contact with people of cultures different from their own. Whether for study, for work, or as a result of voluntary or involuntary migration, people are on the move more than ever before. When two people of different cultures come into contact, they are forced to somehow reconcile their differences.

How this occurs is the focus of the study of acculturation. As Brown (2007, p. 194) points out, having to learn a new language at the same time that one is adjusting to a new culture can make the process even more difficult.

The concept of acculturation assumes that when two groups of people with different cultures come into prolonged contact, either one or both of them will undergo a change (Berry, 2008). This can be a difficult and painful experience for an immigrant, as it involves letting go of a worldview and self-identity and can result in a phenomenon known as "culture shock" (Brown, 2007). People going through culture shock can experience feelings of estrangement, anger, hostility, sadness, frustration and loneliness, among other feelings (Brown, 2007).

Brown (2007) set out four stages of culture shock. It is important for people working with immigrants to be aware of these stages, because a second language learner's ability to learn can be negatively affected by where the learner is in this process. Stage 1 is a stage of excitement and euphoria. Stage 2 is the period most often thought of as culture shock. It is the time when the differences between cultures is most strongly and negatively felt by the immigrant, and the time when they may seek to limit their social contact to people from their own country. Stage 3 is a period of recovery. During this time the individual may vacillate between negative outlooks and tentative acceptance of the new culture. Stage 4 is the near or full recovery stage, where the person has adapted and accepted his or her new culture (Brown, 2007, p. 195).

Figure 1. Stages of culture shock. This figure shows the stages that an individual moves through when adapting to a new culture

As an individual moves into stage 4, different factors will affect what acculturation will look like for that individual. John Berry (2008) identifies four distinct strategies for acculturation. These strategies depend on whether one has a preference for maintaining one's native culture, and whether one seeks relationships with the other group, or prefers to remain separate (Berry, 2008). First, is the Assimilation strategy. Assimilation exists when the individual decides not to maintain his or her cultural identity and seeks daily interactions with the other culture. The second strategy, Separation, is where there is an interest in maintaining one's native culture and also a desire to remain separate from the other culture, avoiding daily interactions. Integration, the third strategy, occurs when there is a desire to maintain aspects of one's native culture, at the same time that there is a desire to participate as a part of the larger, new culture. The final strategy is Marginalisation, where there is little interest in maintaining the native culture (often because of forced culture loss) and little interest in having relations with the other culture (usually because of exclusion or discrimination) (Berry, 2008, p. 331).

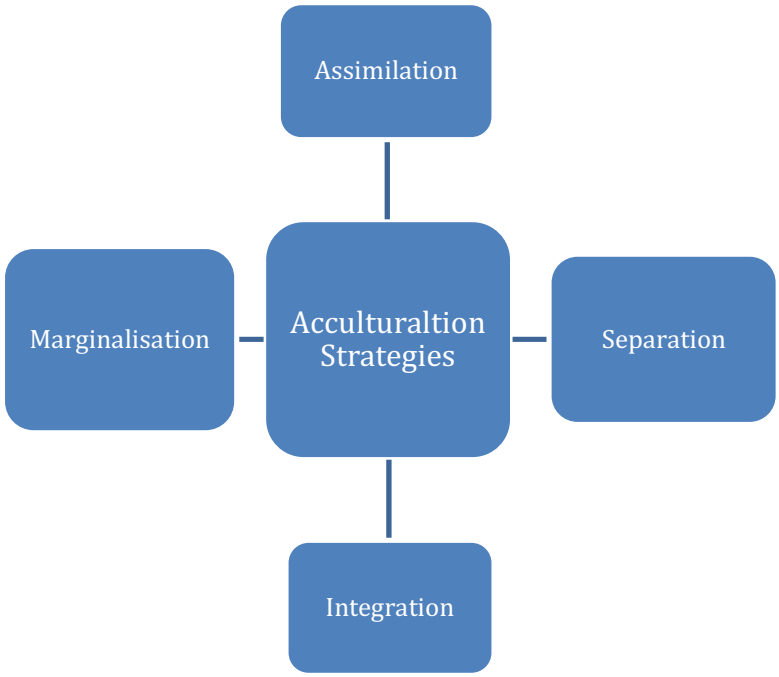

Figure 2. Acculturation strategies. This figure shows Berry's four acculturation strategies

Expanding on Berry's framework for acculturation, Ward (2008) sought to explain how or why an individual "chooses" one strategy over another. ("Chooses" is in quotes because, in fact, Marginalisation or Separation may be less a choice than a strategy one is forced into.) One factor she identified is ethno-cultural identity conflict (EIC) (Ward, 2008, p. 107-109). EIC arises when an individual experiences conflicting definitions of self. Ward (2008) found that EIC was greater when migrants originated in a country whose culture, language, and ethnic composition are significantly different from the host country, and one of the most powerful predictors for EIC was perceived discrimination. Thus, one might expect that immigrant individuals or groups with high EIC are more likely to show poor adaptation to their new home, resulting in adoption of Separation or Marginalisation strategies.

These theories of acculturation and culture shock inform the teaching of ESL in important ways. If Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis is correct (Krashen, 2009), that is, if affective factors interfere with language acquisition, then we would expect that language learning would be most negatively impacted in Stage 2, the culture shock stage. At this point in his or her development, a language learner has mostly negative attitudes towards the new culture and, by extension, the new language. This hostility is likely to raise the affective filter and cause language acquisition to come to a grinding halt. On the other hand, one can see that the first stage of euphoria, and the third stage of gradual acceptance can be excellent times to acquire a new language. When one is feeling more open to the culture and the language, the affective filter will be lower, and one will more easily acquire the new language.

Additionally, if an individual has chosen (or been forced into) a Separatist or Marginalisation acculturation strategy, there will be little motivation to learn the new language. This is especially true where there is a large community of people from the non-dominant culture

in the new country, allowing individuals to socialize primarily with those who share their language or culture. Individuals who see Integration or Assimilation as the best strategy will be more likely to learn the language as they would be expected to be highly motivated.

One can also see how Schumann's theory of social distance may come into play here. Schumann measured social distance by looking at five factors: the dominance of the Target Language (TL) group relative to the Language Learning (L2) group; the acculturation strategy individuals in the L2 group typically adopt; the cohesiveness of the L2 group; the degree of similarity between the TL and the L2 cultures; and the L2's intended length of stay in the TL country (Schumann, 1976, p. 136). When both groups have a positive view of each other, the social distance will be much smaller, and, accordingly, one would expect that the degree of culture shock would also be much less. At the same time, positive views of each other would more naturally lead to successful acculturation, rather than to separation or marginalisation. As Acton noted, it is the *perceived* distance that is most important to language learning (Brown, 2007, p. 198), and so a volunteer mentor who is well-versed in the language learner's culture and history may be able to give the learner the perception of a smaller social distance and, therefore, encourage learning and a positive acculturation outcome.

Schumann (1976) gave us a set of criteria by which to measure social distance, and Brown (2007) outlined the expected stages of culture shock, while Berry (2008) and Ward (2008) explained the different acculturation outcomes that can be expected. These present objective standards by which to measure and predict cultural adjustment and language learning. Personal factors, not included in these analyses, however, can complicate the already complex process of acculturation and second language acquisition. In the next section, we will look at

studies that examine the effect of pre-migration trauma on refugees and consider how that may affect acculturation and language learning.

Trauma Among Afghan Refugees

Refugees are different from other immigrants who move to a new country voluntarily. Refugees are forced from their homes by some traumatic event and seek safety and shelter in a new country. The dire situation that may precipitate a refugee's move creates psychological conditions that can have serious implications for the individual's ability to adapt to his or her new home. In fact, one study found that PTSD is probably the most prevalent serious mental disorder in refugees who resettle in Western countries (Smid, Lensvelt-Mulders, Knipscheer, Gersons, & Kleber, 2011, p. 743). Berry (1989) recognized refugees as a "special category of people," (p. 2) who would have psychological and social characteristics that would affect their acculturation. He goes on to suggest that how an individual acculturates is influenced both by the nature of the dominant society and by the individual's precontact experiences and psychological characteristics (Berry, 1989). Acculturating is, by itself, a stressful process, where people frequently experience confusion, depression, anxiety and embarrassment. Add to this, the stress, anxiety, depression and other psychological problems that can be a result of a refugee's preflight trauma, and one can easily see that acculturation, and language learning, may be far more difficult for refugees than for voluntary migrants (Renner et al., 2012, p. 130).

Millions of Afghans have fled war and violence in their country since the Soviet invasion in 1979 (Robson et al., 2002, p. 25). The pre-migration traumatic events they have endured are wide ranging, and not unexpected. They report having experienced the death or disappearance of family members, torture, sexual violence, threats, separation from family, bombardment and long term hiding (Lipson & Miller, 1994; Neuner et al., 2004; Nickerson, Bryant, Steel, Silove, &

Brooks, 2010; Renner et al., 2012). In addition, many of them have had to wait for prolonged periods in refugee camps under substandard conditions, sometimes for years, which also contributes to their trauma (Alemi, James, Cruz, Zepeda, & Racadio, 2014, p. 1256; Neuner et al., 2004, p. 579). As can be seen in the studies done over the last 20 years, the effects of the pre-resettlement trauma they have experienced has remained somewhat steady over time. Data from multiple countries show that Afghan refugees report poorer mental health than economic migrants and the general population in their host countries (Alemi et al., 2014).

For example, a study of 30 Afghan refugees in the San Francisco Bay Area found that 50% of respondents met the criteria for a PTSD diagnosis (Malekzai et al., 1996, p. 896). In that study, PTSD incidence ranged from 10% in the 19-30-year-old age group to 100% in the 61-75 years old age group, and was seen in 52% of the male participants and 44% of the female participants (Malekzai et al., 1996, p. 896). Moreover, a subsequent study of Afghan refugees in Seattle found nearly half reporting major depression and one-third reported PTSD (Mghir & Raskin, 1999). In that study, Pashtun ethnicity, the amount of English spoken by the mother, and the total number of traumatic events experienced were significant predictors of depression and PTSD. Additionally, a more recent study in the Netherlands found that asylum seekers (as opposed to those who had been granted refuge and permanent residence) reported significantly higher levels of depression, anxiety and PTSD, and that female gender, post-migration stress, lower social support and one's status as an asylum seeker increased the risk for depression and PTSD for Afghans (Gerritsen et al., 2006). Finally, a study of Chechen and Afghan refugees in Austria found that 50% of them suffered from severe symptoms of traumatization (Renner et al., 2012 p. 130).

In addition to the trauma these refugees faced before fleeing Afghanistan, they face new difficulties and continued trauma in their new homes. For example, Afghan culture places a very high value on family, and families form the core of psychological well-being (Lipson & Miller, 1994, p. 174). Afghans socialize almost exclusively with extended family and recognize serious family obligations that are at odds with United States culture (Lipson & Miller, 1994, p. 174; Robson et al., 2002, p. 34-35). The decision to seek refuge in a different country usually necessitates leaving some family members behind who will continue to face the trauma and hardships of war (Lipson & Miller, 1994; Nickerson et al., 2010). A study of Iraqi refugees found that fears for the safety of the family members left behind compounded the refugee's trauma and created additional acculturation difficulties (Nickerson et al., 2010). The Afghan woman refugee I mentor has similarly reported to me that anxiety over her family's well-being in Afghanistan leaves her depressed and sleepless many nights. These concerns for the family left behind contribute to increased psychological symptoms, such as depression and anxiety (Alemi et al., 2014, p. 1247) (Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2012). Other identified sources of maladaptive acculturation are unemployment and underemployment, changing gender or family roles, financial concerns and lack of English skills (Alemi et al., 2014, p. 1255).

Although the psychological difficulties are clear, how to address them is less so. Psychotherapy and anti-anxiety or depression medications are not ready answers to the problems Afghan refugees face for cultural, financial, and practical reasons (Alemi et al., 2014, p. 1257) (Renner et al., 2012, p. 132). On the other hand, some studies have indicated that two strategies may be effective at easing the entry to their new lives, especially for Afghan women refugees: social support in the form of well-trained mentors and effective English language training (Alemi et al., 2014, p. 1257-58) (Renner et al., 2012, p. 132).

A small scale, controlled study conducted in Austria set out to determine whether social support could alleviate the symptoms of pre-migration stress and acculturative stress exhibited by Afghan and Chechen refugees (Renner et al., 2012). A control group was given no intervention, while a second group was assigned to a sponsor. Sponsors attended training that consisted of four workshops at the University of Innsbruck, where they were given basic information about counseling techniques and the psychosocial background of refugees and asylum seekers in Austria. Sponsorships were to last a minimum of six months. The study involved Chechens and Afghans, men and women (Renner et al., 2012, p. 135-137). The study concluded that "social support by sponsors significantly and consistently reduces anxiety, depression and psychological problems over time" (Renner et al., 2012, p. 141). The study further found that women were helped more than men, and Afghans more than Chechens (Renner et al., 2012, p. 139). The authors concluded that lay sponsors can be effective in alleviating the symptoms of PTSD and acculturative stress, but that the sponsors must be properly trained and closely supervised and must take time to build trust and avoid unrealistic aspirations (Renner et al., 2012, p. 143).

In addition, it has been recognized that a lack of English language skills (in English speaking countries) causes refugees to be more isolated and increases psychosomatic symptoms such as depression and anxiety (Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2012). In order to find employment, access health care, communicate with their children's schools and carry on the tasks of everyday life, refugees need to have English skills. Not surprisingly, then, learning English has been cited as a top priority for refugees, by those working with them and by the refugees themselves (Alemi et al., 2014, p. 1257-58) (Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2012).

Unfortunately, there are several obstacles to learning English for Afghan women refugees, as we shall see in the next section. Well-trained volunteers can help to overcome some of these obstacles, and, consequently, this training manual is vitally important.

Afghan Women and Their Obstacles to Acculturation

Afghanistan has a long and complicated history. It is a country of more than seven distinct ethnic groups and at least five distinct languages (Robson et al., 2002, p. 19). Although the overwhelming majority of Afghans are Muslim, they are split between Sunni and Shi'a (Robson et al., 2002, p. 30). In a country as diverse as this, it is dangerous to make generalizations, but their Muslim faith and their shared history does create a culture that is distinctly Afghan.

Women's place in that culture has varied over time. During the rule of Daud Khan, from 1953 to 1963, women were granted the freedom to dispense with the veil if they wanted, and they were no longer required to be secluded from public view (Robson et al., 2002, p. 25). This allowed women the opportunity to be educated and to join the workforce. Before the Soviet invasion, there were many well-educated, professional women in the urban centers of Afghanistan (Lipson & Miller, 1994, p. 173). During the Soviet occupation, and even more so during the civil war and the Taliban rule in the 1990's, many schools were closed, and education became dangerous and even prohibited for girls (Robson et al., 2002, p. 50). Some estimate that only one-third of Afghan children attended school at all during the 1980's (Robson et al., 2002, p. 50). Consequently, although early refugees from Afghanistan tended to be affluent and educated, more recent refugees, having grown up during the 1980's and beyond, have had little access to education, and this is especially true for the women.

Afghan culture is highly patriarchal, traditional and home-centered (Robson et al., 2002, p. 57). Marriages are often arranged, and women are discouraged from having contact with unrelated men. In fact, most of their socializing is with female relatives (Robson et al., 2002, p. 57). Whatever strides toward independence or social equality women had made earlier, the years of civil war and Taliban rule washed away.

Because Afghan culture places a high value on home, family and hospitality, Afghan women are expected to maintain high levels of cleanliness in the home and to prepare traditional meals for the many visiting relatives they may receive on the weekends (Robson et al., 2002, p. 58). When Afghan women migrate to the United States, they are expected to conform to the same cultural norms. Again, this has changed over time, with refugees in the early 1980's being more educated and urban, and recent immigrants uneducated and less affluent. Educated Afghan women who came to the United States speaking English and with work experience, had a very different acculturation experience than the more recent refugees. It is those recent women refugees for whom this project has been developed.

Afghan women refugees experience culture shock in many ways. They find themselves suddenly thrust into a culture that values independence, rather than tight knit families, and they are often expected to work outside the home or attend English classes, something that they would not have done in Afghanistan (Alemi et al., 2014; Lipson & Miller, 1994). They often find that their sense of self-identity is challenged, and they are not sure how they fit into the new culture (Alemi et al., 2014; Lipson & Miller, 1994).

Even women who want to attend English classes find substantial obstacles to doing so. These women are expected to maintain the same high levels of home cleanliness as they did in Afghanistan, to cook traditional Afghan food and to attend to all their children's needs. This

leaves little time for English classes (Lipson & Miller, 1994, p. 177). Moreover, with a tradition of being homebound and secluded from public contact, there can be resistance from husbands or other family members to having women attending classes with strangers. This makes it very hard for the women to learn English and to learn to make sense of their new cultural milieu.

The result is that Afghan women refugees are often isolated and have little opportunity to escape from the recurring thoughts and memories that trigger PTSD, depression, and anxiety. A study of Afghan and Kurdish refugees in Australia and New Zealand found that the main stressor for women was "thinking too much" (Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2012, p. 9). By this, they meant that they spent too much time at home introspecting; that current events triggered memories of old traumas; and that they were generally sad, unhappy or depressed (Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2012, Table 3). This sentiment was echoed by the refugee I mentor when she told me that she is much happier when she can go to English classes because when she cannot, she sits at home and thinks.

Summary

Adapting to a new culture and learning a new language are stressful endeavors under the best of circumstances. For refugees, coming to a new country with a background of traumatic experiences, suffering from depression, anxiety, fear, and guilt, acculturative stress is just one more thing. In order for refugees to make a successful transition to their new lives, it is important to make the perceived social distance as small as possible, and to offer sensitive, well-trained social support. By making refugees feel accepted and safe, their stress can be lessened, and language learning can be enhanced. Learning English has been cited as the most important factor in successfully mitigating the stress of resettlement for refugees (Alemi et al. 2014, p. 1257), but learning cannot happen when the learner is traumatized, depressed and anxious.

Afghan women have particular additional obstacles to learning English. Because most of them have been denied education for almost 40 years, they come to this country illiterate and unprepared for learning. Moreover, many of them continue to observe their traditional gender roles, meaning substantial household duties and prohibitions on contact with strangers, especially men. These factors make it difficult for the women to go out to attend English classes. Lack of English language skills, and lack of contact with the society within which they are living, leaves them isolated, leading to greater depression, anxiety and trauma (Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson 2012).

In order for Afghan women refugees to achieve a successful acculturation strategy, they need to address their traumatic past and to learn English. It is hoped that this project will train volunteers to provide the sensitive social support they need as well as giving them some tools for teaching beginning English skills.

CHAPTER III
THE PROJECT AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

Brief Description of the Project

This project is a handbook for volunteers who work with Afghan women refugees in the United States. It has three basic parts. The first chapter is an overview of Afghan history and culture. Afghanistan has a long history and a rich culture that can only be touched on in the scope of this project, but the purpose is to give volunteers working with Afghan refugees a better understanding of the culture and traditions of the people with whom they work. This section of the handbook begins with a brief history of Afghanistan and the recent military conflicts that have plagued it since 1979. It is followed by a description of the importance of Islam in the lives of Afghan people, and some of the important pillars of Islam. Next, related to religion, is a section explaining some of the most significant holidays for Afghan people. Following that is a section describing the importance of family and cultural values related to family, as well as a description of family roles. The final part of this first chapter of the handbook is a review of the status of women in Afghan culture, a complex and problematic issue, especially for Afghans trying to fit into American society.

The second chapter of the handbook is a discussion of the incidence and impacts of trauma on refugees. As was discussed in the literature review, PTSD and other psychological effects of trauma are extremely prevalent in Afghan refugees. Unfortunately, most of the mentors who volunteer with NOLB are not trained in working with victims of trauma, and yet the lingering effects of trauma can seriously hamper Afghan women's attempts to learn English and to acculturate. This section seeks to give volunteers an understanding of the psychological barriers faced by the women with whom they work. It also explains how trauma can affect a

student's ability to learn a new language, and some of the ways studies indicate that mentors can help to relieve the psychological distress of refugees.

The third chapter of the project is an overview of how to teach English to beginning students. The chapter begins with an introduction to the importance of learning English for Afghan women refugees and some of the difficulties that can be expected. Next, I provide some basic information for teaching beginners. The last part of this section is a series of eight one-hour lessons that volunteers can use to begin teaching life skills and English to Afghan women refugees. The lessons are focused on teaching these women important skills and basic English phrases that they need right away to navigate their new lives in the United States. They are designed for students with no, or very limited, literacy in their native language, given the reality that most Afghan women are not literate. The following chart, included in the handbook, shows the sequence and topics of each lesson:

Lesson	Topic, Life Skill, Vocabulary	Grammar
1	Greetings; Name; Numbers 1 - 10	"Be" verb
2	Alphabet (introduction for writing name); Writing name, address and phone number; Family members	"Be" verb
3	Rooms in the house; 911; Asking "where"	"Be" verb, location preposition ("in the ---"); subject pronouns
4	Numbers 11 - 20; Naming objects in the home	Questions and short answers with "be," (what is this? where is the---?) preposition "on"
5	Numbers 21 - 30; Naming Objects in the home; Days of the week, today, yesterday, tomorrow; Stop	Preposition "next to"
6	Naming food; Asking for food in the grocery store	Questions: Where is? Where are? Do you have?
7	Money (coins, bills): Reading prices	Asking "how much?"
8	Time - hour, half hour	Asking about time

Figure 3. Sequence of lessons. This chart shows the suggested sequence of lessons for teaching Afghan women refugees

Finally, I have included a list of references for volunteers who want to do some further reading on their own about Afghan history and culture or about the effects of trauma on refugees. There are also some alphabet flash cards that can be used during the lessons.

Development of the Project

For the last three years, I have been a volunteer with No One Left Behind (NOLB), an organization that pairs volunteers with Afghan families who have been admitted on Special Immigrant Visas (SIV). These visas are issued to people who have worked for the American military during our war in Afghanistan. When these people's lives are threatened, they can apply

for an SIV to come to the United States. Thus, they share the status of refugee because they have had to flee their homes, under threat of violence and cannot return.

Most of the people that apply for SIV status and are accepted are men. They are allowed to bring their wives and minor children with them. Once in the United States, they receive some resettlement assistance from the government for about 90 days. Often the men, who usually speak English, are able to get, usually low-paying, work. The children enroll in school. The women, however, typically do not speak English, have little or no education, and are home all day on their own.

NOLB serves these families by providing assistance with housing, job seeking, and basic necessities like clothing and household furnishings. In addition, NOLB provides a volunteer mentor to work with the women to help them learn English and to adjust to life in the United States. These volunteers are typically not trained in teaching ESL, or in working with victims of trauma. In fact, NOLB has no training program of any kind for its volunteers beyond instructions on the importance of confidentiality. Volunteers are reminded not to post any information about their Afghan clients on social media because doing so could expose them and put their lives at risk.

NOLB has offered infrequent, informal meetings where volunteers can share tips and insights, and can ask questions or bring up problems they have encountered. Additionally, I participated last year in a workshop for volunteers to talk about techniques for teaching ESL.

It was my experience as an NOLB volunteer that motivated me to write this handbook. I have tremendous empathy for the plight of refugees all around the world today, but feel so helpless to actually make a difference. My work with NOLB allowed me to take a small step toward making life better for at least one refugee. I saw, however, that in order to be truly

effective, the volunteers needed more training. Most of us have never been to Afghanistan, have never met an Afghan person before, and know very little about what kinds of challenges are faced everyday by these grateful, but involuntary, immigrants.

My training in Second Language Acquisition opened my eyes to the enormous difficulties faced by even the most willing of immigrants. Studies of culture shock and the work of J.W. Berry on acculturation made me think more deeply about the difficulties that are faced by people who would rather stay in their native countries, but are forced out by circumstances beyond their control. When they are met with hostility and hatred in their country of supposed refuge, these problems are compounded. This caused me to realize that a supportive and caring mentor could make a real difference in the lives of refugees.

This project began to take shape in the summer of 2017, when I took the Methodology of Research class as part of my Master's in TESOL. At that time, I realized that I wanted to make my work with Afghan refugees the focus of my project. Consultation with Dr. Sedique Popal helped me to see how the project could be shaped. After initially thinking that it would be a handbook of lessons for teaching English, I realized that what was needed was a more comprehensive handbook providing historical and cultural background so that volunteers would know more about their clients. Doing research on the effects of trauma on refugees convinced me that this was also important information for anyone working with refugees to be aware of.

The last part of the handbook, the eight one-hour lessons, came out of several factors. First, the volunteers are asked by NOLB to commit to meeting with their client once a week for one hour, for as long as possible. NOLB asks for a one year commitment, but has no way of enforcing this and does not currently track how long a volunteer typically spends working with a family.

Second, I have discovered that most of the women arriving from Afghanistan have had no, or very little, formal education, and are not literate in their native language. For this reason, I shifted my focus from teaching ESL to teaching life skills. The first eight lessons I have designed seek to teach important life skills to these women before really teaching English. During the course of the lessons, they will, of course, be learning English, but they will not be learning English grammar, per se. The lessons focus on important skills like writing one's name, address and phone number in English (a possibly difficult feat for someone with no literacy in their native language); how to call 9-1-1 for emergency help; and how to tell time and read prices. These are skills that are important to any person suddenly finding themselves in the United States.

I have noted in the handbook that the women NOLB works with are each unique. Some will have had more education than others. Some will learn faster than others. The lessons, therefore, can be speeded up or slowed down depending on need. Moreover, after two months of meetings with a mentor, it is hoped that these women will have the confidence to go out to ESL classes in their communities. Meeting with a mentor once a week for an hour is not sufficient for real language learning - especially because this is often the only contact they have with an American all week. Getting these women out into their communities is the only way they will really learn English and begin the difficult acculturation process.

I envision this handbook as being used by NOLB to inform and guide their volunteers going forward. The service NOLB volunteers provide is invaluable for the women they mentor. With more background and a deeper understanding of the challenges these women face, it is hoped that the volunteers can be even more effective in providing support and education for the Afghan women they serve.

The Project

The project in its entirety can be found in the appendix.

CHAPTER IV
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

There are over 22 million refugees in the world, people who have been forced from their home countries due to violence or the threat of violence (UNHCR, 2017). More than half of these refugees come from South Sudan, Afghanistan and Syria, all predominantly Muslim countries (UNHCR, 2017). The number of refugees from these countries shows no sign of abating in the near future, as war continues to rage on in all three countries.

In fiscal year 2016, the United States admitted 38,901 refugees from Muslim countries (Connor, 2016). That number is being reduced by the current administration, but refugees will continue to arrive here for some time to come.

When refugees are resettled in the United States, they are given about 90 days of assistance from a resettlement agency (Fix, et al., 2017). This includes help obtaining housing, jobs, Social Security cards and social services, as well as help enrolling children in school and finding ESL classes (Fix et al., 2017). After these 90 days are up, refugees are either on their own, or dependent on other voluntary organizations for further assistance.

One such organization is No One Left Behind (NOLB). NOLB, and organizations like it, provide additional support for refugees. NOLB in particular provides a volunteer mentor for the family. This volunteer usually works with the wife in the family to help her learn English and acculturate in her new surroundings. This is invaluable work and is a significant lifeline for these women; however, most of the volunteers at these organizations are not trained in teaching ESL or in working with victims of trauma (Clark-Kasimu, 2015).

One group of arrivals from Afghanistan consists of recipients of Special Immigrant Visas and their immediate families. These visas are issued to people (mostly men) who have worked with and assisted the United States military in Afghanistan, often as translators (United States State Department of State. Section on U.S. Visas). SIV recipients are allowed to bring with them their spouse and minor children. NOLB works exclusively with SIV families.

Like refugees, these SIV holders have fled violence and traumatic conditions. They are involuntary immigrants who cannot return home and have left behind extended family and friends whose safety may also be at risk. They face the same difficulties in resettlement that other refugees face. Refugees suffer from PTSD and other lingering effects of trauma in numbers far beyond what is seen in economic, voluntary immigrants and in the general population of their country of resettlement (Alemi et al., 2014). The result is elevated levels of anxiety, depression and anger (Alemi et al., 2014; Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2012).

This psychological stress makes the adjustment to a new life more difficult and complicated. According to Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (Krashen, 2009), being in a state of anxiety, depression, anger and confusion will make learning English a more difficult, if not impossible, task for the Afghan women refugees. Moreover, it can also be expected that healthy acculturation cannot take place in these circumstances (Berry, 2008). A person who is suffering from anxiety and depression, and who does not speak the language, will likely be increasingly isolated from their community. Furthermore, it has been shown that a lack of English skills increases anxiety and depression for refugees and leads to their greater isolation (Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2012). This can result in marginalisation or separation as an acculturative strategy, neither of which is a healthy outcome for the individual (Berry 2008).

Studies have shown, however, that one of the best ways to help traumatized Afghan refugees adapt to their new surroundings is to provide a trained mentor to work with the refugee for a minimum of six months (Renner et al., 2012). Such mentors have been seen to alleviate the symptoms of PTSD and acculturative stress, resulting in much better outcomes for Afghan refugees (Renner et al., 2012). Once they are more relaxed in their new environment, they should be more open to learning a new language as well.

Another complicating factor for teaching English to Afghan women refugees, however, is that many of them have never been to school, and the overwhelming majority are not literate in their own languages (Anderson & Kooij, 2007; Robson et al., 2002). Teaching English to women who lack literacy in their native languages is quite challenging. Moreover, for practical and cultural reasons, it is often difficult for Afghan women refugees to leave their homes to attend community ESL classes (Lipson & Miller, 1994).

Perhaps the most important role that volunteer mentors can play in the lives of the Afghan women they serve is as a cultural ambassador and trouble shooter. By presenting a friendly and familiar face over time, the refugee can begin to feel that she has someone in this new country that she can trust. The refugee will feel less isolated and should begin to see her anxiety and depression lessen. Feeling more relaxed and comfortable eases the symptoms of PTSD and allows the refugee's affective filter to lower, thereby making her more receptive to learning English. Moreover, once trust is established, the refugee may be more likely to ask for help in other areas, whether it is extra tutoring for her children, who may be suffering in school, or seeking help if she is experiencing domestic violence.

For these reasons, I have created a handbook which can be used to train volunteers who work with Afghan women refugees. The handbook gives cultural and historical background

information about Afghanistan. It also has a section that describes the extent and impact of trauma on Afghan refugees who resettle in the United States. Finally, the handbook contains some tips for volunteers with no experience in teaching ESL and eight sample lessons they can use in their first meetings with their clients. Because of the low literacy that most Afghan women refugees have, the first eight lessons focus on important life skills rather than beginning with English grammar. These lessons will necessarily teach some English, but their primary focus is on crucial life skills for recent immigrants. Over time, these lessons will create a bond between the volunteer and the refugee that is so important to her successful adaptation to her new home.

Recommendations

This project is designed to be used to train volunteer mentors with an organization like NOLB to work with Afghan women refugees in the United States. These mentors are expected to help their clients learn English and to acculturate. Coming from a country which has seen 40 years of nearly non-stop war, Afghan refugees have high levels of PTSD and other psychological problems. In addition, Afghan women have been denied the opportunity to receive even basic education for most of that time. Consequently, many of them arrive in the United States with no formal education and limited or no literacy in their native language. For volunteers untrained in working with victims of trauma and teaching ESL, this is a challenging assignment.

The handbook contains eight one-hour lessons that focus on teaching life skills to recent immigrants of low literacy. The reason for this format is that NOLB volunteers commit to spending one hour, once a week, with their clients. This is not sufficient time for a student to learn English, especially since the women refugees usually have no other contact with English speaking Americans during the week. It is sufficient, however, for the mentor to begin teaching

basic skills, such as how to write one's name and address, how to dial 9-1-1, etc. Over the course of the approximately two months that the lessons will take, it is hoped that the mentor and client will begin to build a relationship that helps the client feel more relaxed in her new environment.

As the Afghan woman begins to feel more comfortable in her new home, and around her mentor, it is hoped that she will be more open to learning English and more comfortable leaving her home on her own. She will need to venture out into the world around her to find and attend ESL classes, which will be necessary for her to really learn English. She will only achieve successful acculturation with contact with the culture around her.

The handbook can be given to each volunteer who works for NOLB (or a similar organization) before she begins her work with her client. In addition, it would be beneficial for NOLB to institute regular training sessions for volunteers. The handbook could serve as a spring board for these training sessions, and volunteers could bring questions and feedback to share in the training sessions. Feedback could be used to update and revise the handbook as necessary. Also, the handbook could be expanded over time to include more lessons in teaching English, if future refugees arrive with more education and literacy.

There are many other countries from which refugees are fleeing throughout the world. A handbook such as this would be helpful for volunteers working with any of these refugees. The section on the incidence of trauma in refugees would largely remain the same, but a new section on the history and culture of each country could be added. Similarly, the eight one-hour lessons would be appropriate for any new arrival, and could be adapted for refugees who arrive from countries where they have not been denied education. The handbook could be adapted for use with men as well as women, too.

As is pointed out in the handbook, the women refugees that are being taught come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. They will have different exposure to formal education, and differing degrees of literacy. For this reason, the volunteers are encouraged to adjust the lessons as necessary. Lessons can be sped up and consolidated or slowed down and repeated depending on a student's needs.

Finally, this handbook can serve as a reference for establishing classes in refugee camps for refugees awaiting resettlement. Most camps offer no classes of any kind for refugees, and refugees can spend years in these camps awaiting resettlement or return to their home country. (Jolis, 1993). While not all refugees will end up in English speaking countries, any education is better than none for them. A handbook for volunteers working in the camps could offer guidance on working with refugees suffering from PTSD and provide a framework for beginning lessons.

English classes or life skill classes in refugee camps would serve two vital functions. First, the classes would provide a useful diversion for the refugees. With nothing to do all day, often for years at a time, refugees become depressed and anxious, compounding the symptoms of trauma they already exhibit. Also, the idleness of camps can lead to violence as boredom and frustration combine with PTSD to create explosive situations. This idleness can be replaced with the opportunity for refugees to learn skills that will help them in their eventual resettlement. Even in a non-English speaking country, having English language skills helps one find work.

Second, more than half of the 22.5 million refugees in the world are children (UNHCR 2017). Living in refugee camps, sometimes for years, denies them the opportunity to get an education. A handbook such as this can be adapted to teach children as well. Children are eager learners and it can be expected that they would welcome the opportunity to learn a new

language, especially one that will be almost universally useful for them later in life. In any event, just the experience of learning will be good exercise for their brains and will help them to adjust better once they are resettled.

I look forward to sharing this handbook with NOLB and seeing how the volunteers use it. As I receive feedback, I will adjust and refine the handbook. I hope to add additional lesson plans for volunteers in the future.

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APPENDIX

A Handbook for Teaching English to Afghan Women Refugees

credit: 1 Aga Khan foundation: Sandra Calligaro

By
Deborah de Lambert

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This handbook is intended to give volunteers working with Afghan women refugees some background information about the women with whom they are working, and some ideas for introducing English to these women. It is not intended to be, nor could it be, exhaustive. Afghanistan has a long history with a deep and enduring culture. Moreover, the Afghan women who eventually resettle in this country are complex and varied, with a variety of backgrounds, making generalizations sometimes oversimplified. It is important to remember that Afghan women refugees, like American women, are not a monolith. Their education, family situation and past experiences are unique to each of them. That said, simply by virtue of the fact that they are refugees from a long, intractable war, or series of wars, there are some traits that they will share, and which can be addressed in this handbook.

When refugees are resettled in the United States, they are given about 90 days of assistance from a resettlement agency. This help includes help obtaining housing, jobs, Social Security cards and social services, as well as help enrolling children in school and finding English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. After these 90 days are up, refugees are either on their own, or dependent on other voluntary organizations for further assistance. One such organization is No One Left Behind (NOLB). NOLB gives assistance to Afghan families who have been admitted on Special Immigrant Visas (SIV). These visas are reserved for people (usually men) who have worked for the U.S. military in Afghanistan (often as translators), and whose lives are threatened as a result of this work. These people are allowed to bring their spouses and their minor children with them.

SIV immigrants share many characteristics with other refugees. They have been targeted for violence because of their work, and they come from conditions which are likely to cause trauma. They are reluctant immigrants who are unable to return home due to the threats to their physical safety, and they leave behind family and friends whose lives may also be threatened.

NOLB, and organizations like it, provide additional support for refugees. NOLB in particular provides a volunteer mentor for the family. This volunteer usually works with the wife in the family to help her learn English and acculturate in her new surroundings. This is invaluable work and is a significant lifeline for these women; however, most of the volunteers at these organizations are not trained in teaching ESL or in working with victims of trauma. This handbook is intended to give volunteers some background information that will be useful in working with Afghan women refugees and to provide a framework for early English lessons.

This handbook has three parts. The first part is a brief history of Afghanistan and an overview of Afghan culture, with emphasis on women's role in that culture. The second part of the handbook explains the trauma that most refugees have endured; the prevalence of PTSD among refugees; how that interacts with the culture shock or acculturative stress that they encounter after arriving in their new home; and what volunteers can do to better help the Afghan women refugees. Finally, the last part of the handbook is a series of sample lessons that volunteers can use to begin teaching life skills and English to Afghan women refugees who are true beginners and who may not be literate in their native language.

AFGHANISTAN: AN OVERVIEW

A BRIEF HISTORY OF AFGHANISTAN

credit: 2 U.S. State Dept.

Afghanistan, geographically, lies in south-central Asia, bordered by Iran to the west, Pakistan to the east and south, and Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to the north. It is a rugged, mountainous, landlocked country with hot summers and extremely cold winters. The Hindu Kush mountains run through central Afghanistan, with peaks averaging 15,000 - 16,000 feet high. While there are a number of passes through these mountains, most are closed in the winter, and only a few are paved. Horses, mules and camels remain the best means of transportation in the mountains.

credit: 3 U.S. Dept. of Defense

Evidence of humans living in what is now Afghanistan goes as far back as 50,000 B.C. Artifacts indicate that these were probably farmers and herdsman, organized into tribes. This area saw its share of conquerors and empires march through during its history. Darius the Great in 500 B.C.; Alexander the Great in 329 B.C.; the Kushans, a group of central Asian nomadic tribes, in the 1st century B.C.; and Genghis Khan is 1220, were a few of the notable groups to control the region.

In the 18th century, native Pashtun tribes began to consolidate control over areas of Afghanistan. Eventually, the Durrani group was granted authority over areas around present-day Kandahar. Ahmad Shah Durrani established a Muslim empire, but after his death the empire faced rebellion from local tribes. In 1793, power was seized by Ahmad Shah's grandson, Zaman, who was himself later imprisoned and overthrown by his brother.

Amidst these tribal feuds, the British and the Russians saw the possibility to take control over an area that was of strategic importance to both of them. This long era of power struggles, known as the Great Game, ultimately ended in Britain's defeat. Afghanistan was recognized as an independent country in 1919.

In 1921, Afghanistan became one of the first countries to recognize the new Soviet government, marking the beginning of a special relationship between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union. This relationship lasted until the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in 1979.

In 1964, the National Assembly approved a new constitution, which opened up a number of seats to direct election by the people. This had the unintended consequence of polarizing national politics. In 1973, Daud Khan seized power in a coup and abolished the 1964 constitution. In 1977, two leftist parties joined together to control the government, and instituted several Marxist reform programs. These programs ignited rebellions throughout the country, and, as a result, the Soviets invaded in December of 1979 to prevent the overthrow of a government they regarded as a client.

The Soviet invasion was fiercely resisted by groups of Afghan mujaheddin, who were supported by the United States, seeing this as a proxy war during the Cold War era. The United States provided the mujaheddin with supplies and weapons, including U.S. made Stingers, hand-held anti-aircraft missiles that were a key factor in defeating the Soviet Union. The struggle against the Soviet Union was seen as a jihad, or religious war, and attracted many conservative Muslims from outside Afghanistan to the cause, including Osama bin Laden, who became famous later as the leader of al Qaeda.

When the Soviets invaded in 1979, most of the Afghans in the United States were people who were educated and who had been employed in government or education. After the invasion,

many of those people were stranded here, unable to return home, and were resettled as refugees. Between 1979 and 1989, most of the Afghan refugees who were resettled in the United States were family members of Afghans who were already living here.

In 1989, the Soviet Union, facing domestic problems of its own, admitted defeat and withdrew from Afghanistan. Once the Soviets withdrew, so did the United States, and the various Afghan factions were left to sort things out on their own. A civil war ensued between Afghan rebels and the remaining Communist government. Although in 1992 the Communist government was thrown out, and a provisional Islamic republic took control, fighting among rebel groups continued and so did the civil war. The economy was in shambles, the government had no real power, and rebel groups went about seizing anything of value to fund their fights, including people's homes and personal belongings.

The civil war destroyed many cities and towns. Life was dangerous, especially for educated or affluent people who were perceived as having perhaps worked with or for the Soviet Union or its client government, or, conversely, for the Americans. Many, if not most, professional Afghans fled, usually to Pakistan. Some (about 1500 a year) were resettled in the United States as family sponsored immigrants. This U.S. resettlement came nearly to a halt in 1994.

As life was becoming increasingly dangerous for educated professionals in Afghanistan, it was even more so for women of all stations. The conservative Islamic bent of many of the rebel groups made going out in public especially dangerous for women, and attending school, when schools still operated, was nearly impossible for girls.

It was from this chaos that the Taliban emerged and took control of the government. The Taliban developed in religious schools in Pakistan and were mostly young, poorly educated

Pashtuns, who had been forced to take refuge in Pakistan during the Soviet invasion. Many lost their fathers or other family during that war. When they returned to Afghanistan, they fought off other rebel groups and eventually took control of the government in 1996. They enjoyed popular support because they were able to restore order after so many years of chaos.

The dark side of this restoration of order, however, was the price at which it came. The schools the Taliban attended in Pakistan were heavily influenced by Wahhabism. Wahhabism teaches that any practices acquired in Islam after about the 10th century are corrupt and must be eradicated. Many Islamic scholars have criticized the Taliban for their apparent lack of knowledge of Islamic law and history. The Taliban imposed an extreme interpretation of Islam, not previously seen in Afghanistan. Women's movements and freedoms were severely restricted, and girls and women were forbidden to attend school. In addition, extreme punishments, including public floggings and stoning, were instituted for a range of crimes.

In October, 2001, the United States invaded Afghanistan because of the Taliban government's refusal to hand over Osama bin Laden after the attack of September 11, 2001. The Taliban government quickly fell, and a provisional government was established. Although elections have been held, and an elected government is now in place, war continues to plague Afghanistan. The Taliban retreated to Pakistan, regrouped, and is now resurgent in Afghanistan. Al Qaeda continues to fight U.S. and Afghan troops, and the Islamic State has emerged as a new force in the region. A recent New York Times article asserts that Russia is beginning to show a renewed interest in Afghanistan and is now arming Taliban fighters. Bombings are daily events, and scores of civilians continue to be killed. For this reason, refugees continue to swarm into Pakistan, and many are resettled in the United States each year.

RELIGION

credit: 4 M. Hasan Miremadi

Perhaps not surprisingly, given the geography of the area and the numerous foreign invaders, there are more than 8 different ethnic groups speaking more than 5 different languages, and several more dialects or minor languages, that make up current day Afghanistan. What unites them, beyond their mythologized fierceness and tenacity, is their religion. Islam was brought to Afghanistan in the 7th century, A.D., and is a pillar of Afghan culture to this day. The Afghan constitution states that "no law shall contravene the tenets and provisions of the holy religion of Islam." Afghanistan has been called one of the most solidly Muslim countries in the world. While there is a Shi'a minority, the overwhelming majority of Afghans are Sunni. In order to understand Afghan people, one must understand their religion.

All Muslims recognize five basic religious principles, often called "pillars of Islam." These are profession of faith, constancy in prayer, giving of alms, fasting, and pilgrimage to Mecca. The most important of the pillars is the requirement that Muslims pray five times a day: sunrise, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset and night. Before praying, Muslims must wash their hands, feet and face. They must face Mecca when praying, and often carry a small prayer rug with them to ensure a clean spot for prayer. Anyone working with Afghan refugees must be respectful of the need to pray and should be sure to schedule visits that do not conflict with prayer time.

The fasting pillar is observed during the month of Ramadan (or Ramazan) when all adult Muslims must fast from sunrise to sunset. Ramadan falls in the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. In addition to not eating, Muslims must refrain from drinking and smoking during this time. Children are not required to fast, nor are pregnant and menstruating women. If you are meeting with a client during Ramadan, be aware that they often rise very early, in order to have a bite to eat and something to drink before sunrise, and they may be quite tired during the day. In 2018, Ramadan will be observed from May 16 to June 14.

The central religious text of Islam is the Quran (Koran). It is believed that the Quran was a revelation from God to the prophet Muhammad, dictated by the archangel Gabriel. It was written in Arabic. Many Muslims can read the Quran in Arabic, although they speak not a word of Arabic. The Quran contains 114 "suras" which touch upon all aspects of human life. These suras of the Quran guide Muslims in their everyday life.

HOLIDAYS

There are several holidays, or celebrations, common to Afghan people. The end of Ramadan, Eid al Fitr, is one of the most important. In 2018, in the United States, Eid al Fitr will be celebrated beginning in the evening of June 14 to the evening of June 15. Eid al Fitr is celebrated with families taking turns visiting one another's homes, and lots of eating, music and laughter. If a woman is engaged, she will visit her prospective father-in-law's home to spend time with the family. Many women and girls paint henna patterns on their hands as part of the celebration as well. This is a very joyous occasion for Afghan people.

Another important celebration for Afghan people is Nowruz, the new year, which happens on March 21, the spring equinox. This holiday is celebrated in Afghanistan and Iran. This is a festive occasion, celebrated with many elaborate dishes and with lots of family. Women often spend several days preparing food for the Nowroz celebrations that will be shared with extended family. The photo shows Afghan children dressed for the New Year celebration.

credit: 5 U.S. Dept. of Defense; Children dressed for Nowroz

There are several other popular holidays celebrated by Afghan people. Eid al Qurban, marks the beginning of Haj, the Muslim pilgrimage that is one of the five pillars of Islam, and occurs around August. This holiday commemorates Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son for God. Afghan Independence Day on August 19, celebrates the end of British control. Finally, Mawlid al Nabi commemorates the birth of the prophet Muhammed. It falls in the third month

of the Islamic calendar. In 2018 Mawlid al Nabi will begin on the evening of November 20, and end in the evening of November 21.

Because many of the Islamic holidays are controlled by the Islamic (lunar) calendar, the dates of these celebrations will vary from year to year. The following chart shows when these will occur in the next couple of years.

Year	Ramadan	Eid al Fitr	Nowruz	Eid al Qurban	Afghan Independence Day	Mawlid
2018	May 15 – June 14	June 15	March 21	August 22	August 19	November 21
2019	May 6 – June 4	June 5	March 21	August 12	August 19	November 10
2020	April 24 – May 23	May 24	March 20	July 31	August 19	September 29

FAMILY VALUES

credit: 6 SRA Bethann Hunt, USAF; Afghan family in Kabul 2002

In Afghan culture, the family is the very center of life, and Afghans typically have large families. Even in cities, people often live in extended family units. These extended families include sons and their wives and children. A woman is expected to join her husband's family upon marriage.

The family is also a matter of privacy. It is breach of manners, or a grave insult, depending on how liberal or conservative one is, for a man to express any interest in any female relative of another man. An extreme extension of this family privacy was the Taliban's insistence that women remain at home, and that she be completely covered if in public.

On the other hand, it is polite to inquire, generally, after the family of someone. You will find that your student will often ask after your family before you start your session, if she has enough English to do so. Moreover, you should always inquire about the well-being of her

family. Although, in the beginning, lack of English skills and a certain reserve around strangers may make her unwilling to share, the continuing and wide-spread violence in Afghanistan makes her family's safety a very real concern. If there has been a bomb blast or missile attack that has affected her family, you can be sure that she will have trouble concentrating on her lessons that day. You do not need to pry, but you should gently inquire each time you visit about the health and well-being of her parents, siblings and other family.

Afghans tend to socialize with close and extended family - aunts, uncles, cousins. Weekends and holidays are often spent visiting family all day. This also involves a serious commitment to hospitality. Afghan women must maintain very high standards of cleanliness in their homes so that their homes are ready to receive guests at any time. Afghan hospitality also requires elaborate food preparation, another responsibility that falls to the women in the family. When one visits an Afghan home, one will usually smell food cooking,

Family obligations are taken very seriously in Afghan culture. Family members are expected to fulfill responsibilities to parents, grandparents, and even older siblings, and often at the expense of oneself. Some people who work with refugees have reported that this sense of obligation sometimes conflicts with American values and expectations. One person reported an Afghan man who lost his job in the United States because he repeatedly failed to show up for work because his mother required attention from him.

Most Afghan families maintain traditional gender roles. Generally, Afghan women do not work outside the home, and the husband is the leader of the family, making most important decisions. When it comes to marriage, most Afghans adhere to arranged marriages, although there is variation on how much input the prospective bride and groom are allowed in the

process. It is quite common for Afghans to marry within their family - a first cousin, for example.

These values often conflict with American cultural values, and the conflict is most commonly seen in the children of a refugee family. The conflict can also arise, however, when the wife in a family needs to work in order to help support the family, or when the husband cannot find work. Moreover, the necessity to attend English classes outside the home, with strangers, can cause conflict and anxiety.

STATUS OF WOMEN

credit: 7 Public Domain, Rural Women in Afghanistan, 2012

credit: 8 Wikimedia.org/by ninara; Women in Kabul 2013

The photos above illustrate the very different lives women lead in Afghanistan. One depicts women in rural Afghanistan in 2012, while the other shows women in Kabul in 2013. As you can see, how women are faring in Afghanistan depends a great deal on where they live.

Much has been written about the status of women under the Taliban. During Taliban rule (1996 - 2001), women were rarely allowed out of their homes, and when they did leave, it was usually in the company of a male - a father, a husband or even a son. Women were required to be completely covered by a burqa, or chador, a tent like robe that covers the body, head and face, with a screen to allow the wearer to see out, as shown in the top photo. Girls were forbidden to attend school, and women did not work outside the home.

Before the Taliban, women enjoyed varying degrees of freedom in Afghanistan. In urban areas, before the Soviet invasion, there were many educated and professional women. During the war with the Soviet Union, and the civil war that followed, life became more dangerous for women and girls. Although the Soviets were in favor of expanding education, many rebel groups held more conservative Islamic views and forced the closure of schools and did not allow the opening of new ones. Under Taliban rule, girls were strictly forbidden to attend school. As a result, illiteracy rates for Afghan women are estimated to be as high as 80 - 90 percent in recent years.

Since the American invasion, and the overthrow of the Taliban government, women have seen some advances, but conservative religious groups continue to fight against real progress for women's rights. The 2004 constitution extends equal rights to men and women, and the civil code gives women the right to inherit or own property, sets a minimum age for marriage and codifies a women's right to choose her partner or to initiate a marital separation. Women are guaranteed the right to vote and to participate in elected bodies.

credit: 9 U.S. Air Force/Tech. Sgt. Kevin Williams, Girls in Kabul school

In education, reforms can also be seen. In the 2011-12 academic year, almost three million girls were in enrolled in school (about 39 percent of all those enrolled). This is a significant improvement from the Taliban days when girls could only attend school underground, and very few dared to do so. Still, estimates of illiteracy among Afghan women are 86 – 90 %.

Many of the legal protections, however, exist only on paper. In May, 2014, it was reported that the Afghan Ministry of Public Health estimated that 21 percent of all women were married by age 15, and 53 percent by age 18. Female victims of sexual violence are often seen as perpetrators rather than victims and are prosecuted for moral crimes. Enforcement of the economic and social rights of women is weak, and so women remain very dependent on their husbands or families.

Furthermore, the Taliban and other extreme Islamic groups hold tremendous power in some parts of rural Afghanistan. Women's ability to move about outside the home is still quite restricted, and access to education is not readily available for girls and women, and in fact, can be quite dangerous.

One problem that women face is the fact that Islamic law is the supreme law in Afghanistan, and there are differing interpretations of Islamic law. Many argue that Islam does not require the severe restrictions placed on women, that it dictates that women be treated as equals and with respect, and that is values education of males and females. This interpretation, however, is not the most popular one in Afghanistan, especially among many of the groups

(Taliban, al Qaeda, ISIS) that are fighting the government and that control areas outside of the capital. Women press for their legal rights at their own risk. Those who preach a more progressive or liberal interpretation of Islamic law can find themselves the victim of violence, or even assassination.

TRAUMA IN REFUGEES

Unlike voluntary immigrants, refugees, by definition, are people who have been forced from their homes by some traumatic event and seek shelter in a new country. Many refugees have witnessed or experienced war, torture, death of a loved one, rape, or other extreme hardships before fleeing, and sometimes during their journey to safety, including in refugee camps. Adding to this trauma, many refugees find that they are unwanted, and face hostility and hardships, in their new home, the one that is supposed to be a safe haven for them.

Nearly forty years of war have left many Afghans traumatized. Data collected in several countries show that Afghan refugees report worse mental health than the economic migrants or general population in the host countries. A 1996 study of Afghan refugees done in the San Francisco Bay Area found that 50% of the respondents met the criteria for PTSD, ranging from 10% in the 19-30-year-old group to 100% in the 61-75-year-old group. Moreover, a study in the Netherlands found that being female, post-migration stress, and low social support increased Afghan refugees risk for depression and PTSD.

credit: 10 S.F. Sentinel.com|Cecila

In addition to the trauma that these people have endured in Afghanistan, and en route to their new homes, resettling in a new country is also a traumatic event for most. The term "culture shock" is familiar to most of us, but few have experienced it in its most extreme form. When a person has been forced to flee his or her home and family and to resettle in a country with an unfamiliar culture and language, he or she may first experience a feeling of relief. Soon, however, when the realities of his or her new life begin to settle in, these feelings give way to depression, anxiety, loneliness, anger, and guilt over the family left behind. Adapting to a new culture often involves letting go of one's world view and one's sense of self identity, resulting in an extreme sense of loss and confusion. These feelings are compounded by untreated and unresolved PTSD.

In order to make a successful transition, it is necessary for an immigrant to move through culture shock to a state of recovery and acceptance. Once this happens, an immigrant can begin to adapt, or acculturate, to his or her new home. Researchers find that acculturation can take four forms: Assimilation; Separation; Integration; and Marginalization. Neither separation nor marginalization are healthy outcomes for the immigrant or for the society. Assimilation is the model many immigrants chose earlier in United States history. This occurs when an immigrant decides to abandon his or her native culture and language and to fully adopt the culture and language of the new home. Although often held up as an ideal, this can have negative mental health effects on the immigrants. The model that is now considered ideal is integration. The integration model allows the immigrant to maintain some aspects of his or her native culture, while, at the same time, choosing to participate in the new culture as well. To achieve this, however, the immigrant must overcome the mental health problems that often accompany refugees to their new homes.

Additionally, it has been found that learning a new language happens most easily when the learner has a lowered affective filter, that is, when one is feeling relaxed and has positive feelings about the culture and country whose language the student is trying to learn. A student who is suffering from depression, anxiety, fear and anger is going to have a much more difficult time learning a new language. Yet, these are the emotions that most refugees are experiencing upon arrival in their new homes, and these psychological problems can persist for several years after resettlement.

So, what do we know about the best way to help these refugees? First, it has been noted that psychotherapy and anti-anxiety or anti-depression medications are not ready answers to this problem for Afghan refugees for cultural, financial and practical reasons. As was noted earlier, Afghans are very family oriented, and the family is a private matter. Discussing these feelings with a stranger is highly unlikely to be accepted by an Afghan woman, even if the lack of language skills were not an obstacle to therapy. Moreover, the cost of therapy and medication is prohibitive for most refugees, who arrive with nothing and often end up in low paying jobs with few benefits. Finally, it is not practical to expect an Afghan woman refugee, who may have a husband and children to care for, who probably does not speak English, and who is probably uncomfortable navigating outside the home on her own, to rush off to a therapist once a week.

On the other hand, some studies have indicated that there are other strategies that can be successful for helping these women. The two most effective methods that have been documented are providing social support from well-trained mentors and effective English language training. These two together can ease the feelings of isolation and help Afghan women refugees feel welcome and safe in their new country.

A small-scale study of Chechen and Afghan refugees in Austria trained mentors about counseling techniques and the psychosocial backgrounds of refugees. The mentors committed to spend at least six months with their assigned refugee. Six months was found to be the minimum amount of time needed to establish a trust relationship between the refugee and the mentor. At the end of the study, it was found that the social support of these mentors significantly and consistently reduced depression, anxiety and other psychological problems over time. These results were more profound for Afghans than for Chechens, and for women more than for men. For this reason, a volunteer mentor program should be recognized as vitally important to the lives of the Afghan women it serves.

In addition, it has been found that a lack of English skills causes refugees to be more isolated and increases psychosomatic symptoms such as depression and anxiety. Afghan women refugees quickly realize that they need English to access health care, communicate with their children's schools and teachers, find a job, and to carry on the normal activities of daily life in the United States. Their lack of English makes their successful acculturation impossible. In fact, learning English has been cited as a top priority for women refugees by those working with them and by the refugees themselves.

There are challenges to teaching English to Afghan women refugees, however. First, many Afghan women refugees are not literate in their first language. Some studies have estimated that illiteracy rates among Afghan women are as high as 86 - 90%. It is also important to realize that most Afghan women, at least those who grew up after the Soviet invasion, have never attended school, so have no educational experience at all. This can make teaching them challenging. Finally, there can also be cultural obstacles to learning English. Family responsibilities are the first priority of most Afghan women, who must clean, cook and care for

the children before they can think of attending English classes. Moreover, venturing out into public on their own to attend classes may be psychologically very difficult for women who have been required to stay home and have been forbidden to leave home without a male escort. For these reasons, a volunteer mentor may be the only source of English language education that a woman has for some time after arriving in the United States.

AN INTRODUCTION TO TEACHING ENGLISH TO AFGHAN WOMEN REFUGEES

credit: 11 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Poland; Women in Khwaja Omari district

Afghan women refugees often come to the United States with no previous formal education, no literacy in their native language, and no prior exposure to English. The women that are served by organizations like No One Left Behind typically come as spouses to men who have qualified for a Special Immigrant Visa due to their work on behalf of the American government in Afghanistan. This means that the men typically have adequate English language skills, and find work, albeit often low paying, outside the home. Many of these women also have children who enroll in school and spend their days interacting with American children and

teachers in English. The result is that the husbands and children of the Afghan women refugees acquire English skills and adjust to American culture more quickly than the women who often are left at home all day, conversing with no one but their family. These women become increasingly isolated, and psychological problems they may have had when they arrived are exacerbated. As has been expressed by my client, as well as by Afghan women refugees in studies, sitting at home alone makes her think too much, and her anxiety about her family remaining in Afghanistan, and over her situation here, increases. She loses sleep and her physical and mental health suffer.

Many studies have reported that one of the best remedies for the isolation, depression and anxiety that these women face is to learn English. While English classes are offered throughout the Bay Area, attending classes outside the home is challenging for many of these Afghan women refugees. First, finding her way to class in a strange country where she doesn't speak the language is often psychologically overwhelming for a woman who has previously been required to stay home, or forbidden to leave home without a male escort. Second, the household responsibilities of these women often conflict with classroom attendance. If they have young children at home, they usually do not have child care, and most classes do not allow children to attend. Moreover, the house cleaning and cooking duties these women have are very time-consuming, and don't always leave time for (possibly long) bus trips to a class that may be 2 or 3 hours long. Additionally, these women have to be home to pick up their school age children from school, or to care for them when they get home. Third, it can be extremely uncomfortable for Afghan women to be in a class where there may be many strange men, with whom they may be expected to interact. Finally, it has to be acknowledged that PTSD can make otherwise routine tasks very difficult to accomplish. PTSD often leaves sufferers with short attention spans

and poor memory, making learning difficult, and also can cause sudden panic or anxiety attacks in unfamiliar surroundings. All of these factors make learning English more difficult for Afghan women refugees than it might be for other immigrants.

For this reason, volunteer mentors serve as a vital link between these women and American society at large. You are not only teaching your client English, you are also her contact with American culture. Through your interaction with your client, you can make her feel safe and welcome in her new home, and make this new culture less threatening. By establishing a trusting relationship, a volunteer has the opportunity to teach her client enough English to allow her to begin to navigate outside the home more comfortably.

When teaching English, however, it is important to keep in mind that many, if not most, of these women may not have had a chance to attend school before, and they may not be able to read and write in their native language. Additionally, the experience of going to school teaches a way of learning that must be learned. Our American way of learning is not universal, and someone who has not been to school at all has not had the habits of school instilled in her. This makes teaching more challenging and means that volunteers must adjust their expectations of what can be accomplished in each session.

For example, a life skill that is very important to teach new immigrants is how to talk about time in English. In order to make appointments, to arrive on time, to get children to school on time, etc., it is important for these women to know how to tell time in English. This may seem like a simple task, after all, everyone uses time, right? The way we talk about time in the United States, however, requires one to know the numbers on the clock, the difference between noon and midnight, the difference between a.m. and p.m., and fractions (half, quarter). If a learner has never been to school, she may not have had any exposure to math or fractions. Thus,

when told that school starts at "a quarter to eight," this will be bewildering. Even more so because, when talking about money, a quarter is 25 cents, but in time, a quarter refers to 15-minute segments. It is important when teaching women with no formal education to rethink even the most basic assumptions.

Another important thing to take note of is that a student does not necessarily understand, even when she says she does. Your student may nod her head and indicate she understands because she wants to be polite, or she may think she understands, but does not. Make sure to ask questions to test understanding. Do not simply ask "do you understand," and take her assent as proof that she does.

Finally, there are a few tips to keep in mind to make you and your student more comfortable. Many Afghan homes may have only floor cushions for seating and no couch or chair; therefore, be prepared for the possibility that you may be sitting on the floor during your lesson. Second, remember that Afghans dress quite modestly. In order to make your student more comfortable it is considerate to dress modestly as well. While you do not have to wear a headscarf, try not to wear shorts, or low-cut tops. Also, it is expected that you will remove your shoes upon entering the home. You are not expected to entirely conform to your student's culture, but in order to make her more relaxed and comfortable during the lesson, it is recommended that you be sensitive to these simple aspects of culture that are relatively easy to respect, especially as a guest in her home.

The Basics of Teaching English as a Second Language

This handbook cannot be a complete guide to how to teach English, especially to low-literacy students. It is hoped, however, that it will provide a framework for volunteers who have no previous experience in teaching ESL in how to approach their work with Afghan women refugees. Think of this as a guide to teaching life skills that are necessary for your student to acquire to navigate everyday tasks in the United States. Once she is comfortable doing that, she will be more likely to participate in ESL classes outside her home.

In teaching ESL, there are four domains that are considered - reading, writing, speaking, and listening. When working with a person who is not literate in her native language, speaking and listening are the first skills that should be taught. It will be important, however, to give these women the ability to recognize certain words quickly (like, "danger" or "stop"), as well as the ability to write their names, the names of their children, and their phone number and address. Consequently, it will be necessary to teach these women to sight read a number of important words, and at least enough of the alphabet and numbers for them to be able to give basic information about themselves when needed.

Students come in many varieties. They each have different life experiences. Some learn faster than others. Make sure that you are not going too fast for your student. Take it slow, especially in the beginning, and find out how she learns. Do not overwhelm your student with material. When teaching vocabulary words, start with no more than ten words in one lesson. If this is too much, cut it back to five. It is more important to make sure that your student is able to process the material, and that she does not feel overwhelmed, especially in the beginning of your relationship. If she is learning quickly, then you can move through the lessons more quickly. If

not, you may have to cover the same material many times before she has adequate control over it. This is normal, especially for students who face the psychological hurdles that many of these women do.

Volunteers often wonder how important it is to correct pronunciation. Especially in the early stages, focus only on correcting mistakes that will make the student difficult to understand. Most adult learners speak a foreign, or second, language with an accent. As long as the mispronunciation does not prevent you from understanding your student, it does not have to be corrected. Obviously, it is important to be able to distinguish between words like "stop" and "step" or "mad" and "mat," but if you spend too much time trying to correct pronunciation errors, you will frustrate your student and discourage her.

You may feel frustrated at times. There will be days when you feel like nothing is being learned, or that your student is not really trying. Be assured that, even when you cannot see results, your patient attention to your student is making a difference.

What follows is a sequence of topics that should be covered with your student. You will notice that the lessons are not geared toward teaching grammar, although some grammar inevitably will be taught. The topics have been chosen because they are some of the most important life skills she will need in her new home. Once she has acquired these basic skills, she can begin to learn English from a more grammatical standpoint. It is preferable that the topics be covered in this order, but if your student has a particular need to learn something different, or out of order, then go ahead and teach it. Be aware of your student's limitations, however.

Sequence of Lessons

The following outlines the first eight sessions (approximately the first two months of lessons) you have with your student. It might seem to you that this is very basic, or that it moves too slowly, but if your student has had no prior experience with English, no formal education, and is not literate in her native language, then this sequence will not be too slow. If you find that your student has more English than you thought, or she learns very quickly, you can cover two lessons in one session. The most important thing to remember, however, is that you must not go too fast for your student, especially in the beginning. She is adjusting to a very different life and will be struggling on many fronts. Take it easy!

Lesson	Topic, Life Skill, Vocabulary	Grammar
1	Greetings; Name; Numbers 1 - 10	"Be" verb
2	Alphabet (introduction for writing name); Writing name, address and phone number; Family members	"Be" verb
3	Rooms in the house; 911; Asking "where"	"Be" verb, location preposition ("in the___"); subject pronouns
4	Numbers 11 - 20; Naming objects in the home	Questions and short answers with "be," (what is this? where is the ___?) preposition "on"
5	Numbers 21 - 30; Naming Objects in the home; Days of the week, today, yesterday, tomorrow; Stop	Preposition "next to"
6	Naming food; Asking for food in the grocery store	Questions: Where is? Where are? Do you have?
7	Money (coins, bills): Reading prices	Asking "how much?"
8	Time - hour, half hour	Asking about time

SAMPLE LESSONS

What follows are sample lesson plans you can use for the first eight one-hour lessons. Feel free to supplement with your own visual aids. Realia (real life objects, or photos of them) are especially useful when teaching beginners. Use her home to teach her about common objects, or the rooms in the house. Getting up and moving around often makes the lessons less awkward, especially in the beginning, and may help her learn. Many students learn better by engaging their whole body. This can include just standing up to practice greetings and introductions, or walking through the house naming objects and rooms. (Respect her privacy by asking first and not intruding into bedrooms or private spaces until you have developed a rapport.) Use your imagination and have fun!

Lesson One

Greetings; Name; Numbers 1 - 10

MATERIALS:

- Whiteboard
- Dry erase pens (at least two colors)
- Whiteboard eraser
- Notebook (so you can take notes)
- Pen or pencil
- Flashcards with numbers (optional)
- Plastic magnetic numbers (optional)
- Pictures (from magazines, for example) of groups of people or items for counting (optional)

OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the lesson, your student should be able to:

- Say hello and introduce herself
- Answer the question "What is your name?"
- Ask someone their name
- Identify the numbers 1 - 10

In this lesson, you will be teaching your student how to greet people and how to introduce themselves. Most importantly, you will be beginning to build a relationship with your student. You will be teaching her that she is safe with you and that she has at least one person in her new country that she can depend on to help her and to explain what she should expect and what is expected of her. You are a cultural ambassador as well as an English tutor. This begins

right away, as once you enter the house you will introduce yourself to the student. Begin by saying hello to your student. She will probably respond with hello.

1. You should point to yourself and say "My name is _____. What is your name?" (pointing to the student). This can be repeated several times.
2. Then try to get her to say, "My name is _____. What is your name?" This may need to be repeated several times. If there are other people present (children, for example), you can ask "What is her/his name?"
3. If this goes well, you can ask, "How are you?" If she does not know how to answer this, model the answer for her. "I'm fine, thank you."
    a. Repeat this several times, indicating that she should provide the answer, "I'm fine, thank you."
    b. When she has understood and successfully answered your question, try to get her to switch roles. She should ask, "How are you," and you will provide the answer.
4. Next, you will want to introduce the numbers 1 - 10 in order to prepare for teaching your student how to say and write her phone number and address. (You can leave out zero for now and address it later.)
    a. To begin - hold up one finger and say "one." Repeat two or three times.
    b. Have her repeat after you. "One"
    c. Next, hold up two fingers and say "Two." Repeat as for number one for all the numbers through ten.
5. If you have flashcards, or index cards with numbers written on them, you can use those. Otherwise you can write the numbers on the whiteboard. Do not write the word for the number, just the numeral. (That is, write 1, not one.)

a. Write the numerals 1 -10 on the whiteboard or use your flashcards.
b. Point to each number and say the number. Have your student repeat the number after you.
c. Once she can say each number, try pointing to different numbers and have her identify the number. Mix up the order.
d. Next, you say a number and have her say the name of the number.
e. If you have the plastic magnetic numbers, pick some at random and ask her to identify them. Then, try telling her which one to choose and see if she can find it.

6. Once your student seems to be comfortable with the numbers, you can try playing a game to practice. A simple game is for you to clap your hands a number of times (between 1 and 10) and have her identify the number of claps. You can also have her count pens or pencils, or show her pictures of people or objects and have her practice counting them.
7. If time permits, have your student practice writing the numbers on the whiteboard. You can say a number and have her try to write it, or clap and have her count and write.
8. This will likely take most of an hour. Before you leave, review the introductions from the beginning of your session. Point to your student and say her name. Point to yourself and ask, "What is my name?"
9. Most students appreciate having some homework to do during the week. You can leave her with simple instructions to practice writing the numbers 1 - 10 and to practice counting items.
10. Say "goodbye" and prompt her to repeat after you.

Lesson Two

Alphabet (introduction for writing name); Writing name, address and phone number; Family members

MATERIALS:

- Whiteboard
- Dry erase pens (at least two colors)
- Whiteboard eraser
- Notebook (so you can take notes)
- Pen or pencil
- Flashcards with numbers (optional)
- Flashcards with letters of the alphabet (optional)
- Plastic magnetic letters and numbers (optional)
- Pictures (from magazines, for example) of families

OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the lesson, your student should be able to:

- Recognize the letters of her name
- Write her name
- Write her address and phone number
- Identify family members

In this lesson, you will be teaching your student how to write her name, address and phone number. If possible, you can teach her to write the names of her children as well. She needs to be able to do this because she will have to fill out forms for school, doctors, banks, etc. You will also teach her the English words for the members of a family (mother/wife, father/husband, son, daughter).

1. Begin by reviewing the material that you covered in the last session. This should be done every week.
    a. Introduce yourself again. Say, “Hello, how are you?” Wait for an answer. If she cannot remember, prompt her by giving her the answer.
    b. Ask the names of her children, if any are present, by pointing and asking, “What is her name?”
    c. Review the numbers 1 - 10. Check to see if she practiced the numbers during the week. You can do this with flash cards, the whiteboard, or by playing the clapping game again. Depending on her home situation, she may not have had time to do this. If not, this will give you a good idea of what to expect going forward.
2. Introduce the alphabet. At the end of this lesson are flashcards that can be used for this, or you can purchase or make your own. You can also use the whiteboard to write the letters on, but having pictures to go with the letters is helpful because this will help to expand her vocabulary as well. At this point you can choose to introduce only the letters of her name and those needed to write her address if you want.
    a. Show her the letter and say the name, “A”. Have her repeat after you.
    b. Repeat with the remaining letters that you have chosen to present for this session.
    c. Point to letters and see if she can name them.
    d. Next, practice having her write the letters on the whiteboard. Try calling out a letter and see if she can write it.
3. Write your student’s first name on the whiteboard.

a. Read it to her and say, “This is your first name.” Ask her “What is your first name?” and have her repeat her name to you. Do the same for her last name. Make sure she understands “first name” and “last name.” (Many Afghan people do not have last names, and when they come to the United States this poses a problem for them. Sometimes their green card will say FNU or LNU meaning “first name unknown” or “last name unknown.” Try to find out ahead of time what your student’s name situation is.)

b. Have her copy what you have written

c. You can also use plastic magnetic letters and have her spell her name with them, but make sure she practices writing her name because she will need this skill as well.

4. If this goes well, ask her to try writing the names of her children or husband and have her practice spelling it with plastic letters and writing it on the board. This may be too much for some students. If so, stick to just her name for now.

5. Ask her “What is your address?”

    a. If she cannot answer this, tell her what her address is while you write it on the whiteboard. (Stick to her street address for now.) (Say “My address is _____.” She may recognize it when she sees it. (Remember that you have only taught the numbers 1 - 10, so if there is a zero, you will have to teach that. Also, you must recite the address as “3 - 5 - 6 - 8.” Do not say “thirty-five sixty-eight.”)

b. If she is comfortable doing so, you can walk out to the street and show her the numbers on her building and the street sign with the name of the street. (Make sure to take the key so you can get back in!)
c. Write the question so that she can see the word "address" so that she will recognize it on a form.
d. Have her read her address out loud to you.
e. Have her write her address, copying what you have written.
f. Practice asking her what her address is and having her answer, saying "My address is _____." Repeat three or four times.
g. Now erase the whiteboard and see if she can write her address.

6. If your student knows her street address, or learns very quickly, add her city, state and zip code. If not, save this for a future lesson.
7. Use the same procedure for her phone number.
8. Bring pictures of your family, or a generic family. Point to the mother/wife/woman, father/husband/man, son/boy, daughter/girl. Say the name as you point. I begin with woman/mother and man/father because they are used on many forms. You can add husband and wife a little later.
    a. As you say each name, have her repeat after you. Do this at least three times.
    b. Point to your student and say "mother" (assuming she has a child). Point to her child, if nearby, and say "son" or "daughter." Have her repeat.
    c. Point to the pictures again and have her try to recall the correct word for each family member.

9. Before you leave, ask her what her address and phone number are to see if she can remember. Tell her that her homework is to practice writing her name, address and phone number.

Lesson Three

Rooms in the house; 911; Asking "where"

MATERIALS:

- Whiteboard
- Dry erase pens (at least two colors)
- Whiteboard eraser
- Notebook (so you can take notes)
- Pen or pencil
- Flashcards with letters of the alphabet (optional)
- Plastic magnetic letters (optional)
- Photos from magazines or a picture dictionary of rooms of a house
- Photos of emergency situations, like a fire, or a medical emergency

OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the lesson, your student should be able to:

- Identify the rooms of her home
- Ask "Where is _____?"
- Answer the question "Where is?" with the preposition "in"
- Use subject pronouns

In this lesson, you will be teaching your student the names of the rooms in her home. You will also teach her to ask, "Where is _____?" She will learn to answer the question using subject pronouns, such as "It is in the kitchen" or "She is in the bedroom." Finally, your student will learn how to call 9-1-1 for an emergency.

1. Review the material that you taught last week. Ask her what her name is and have her write it. Do the same for her address and phone number.
2. Begin teaching the names of the rooms of the house.
    a. You can show her photos of different rooms, pointing to them and saying "kitchen" or "bedroom." Have her repeat after you. Do this several times, naming all the different rooms that are in your student's home.
    b. You can ask her to follow you and walk to the kitchen, point into it and ask her "what is this?" If she doesn't say "kitchen," say it for her and then have her repeat after you. Walk to the living room and do the same.
3. Once she can identify the different rooms in the house, point to a person in a room in photos and ask, "Where is she?" (or "the woman," "the man," "the child,' "the dog," etc.)
    a. For the first one or two, you can role model the answer. After that, she should be able to provide the answer, but if not, keep modeling the answer until she gets it.
    b. Repeat this with several different rooms and different people. You can ask "Where are we?" or "Where are you?" point to her.
    c. Try to have her take a turn asking you questions as well. (This is teaching many skills - how to ask where, using subject pronouns, names of rooms, etc.)
    d. Repeat as necessary to make her feel confident in asking "where" and in using the names of the rooms.
4. You may want to spend a little more time with the subject pronouns. You can use pictures of people to help her connect "he" with a man, "she" with a woman, etc. A dog or other animal can be used for "it." Don't forget to use "they" and "we" as well.

5. The last thing you will teach in this session is how to use 9-1-1- to call for emergency help.
    a. It may be helpful to have photos of emergencies, like a fire or medical emergency to help her understand the concept of "emergency."
    b. Show her how to dial 9-1-1 to call for help. If she has a landline, she does not even need to give her address, as it will automatically display. If she has a cell phone only, have her practice giving her address over the phone. (It is often very hard to recall one's English in a real emergency. Practicing repeatedly will help to reinforce this.)
    c. You might also make sure she can say "I don't speak English." This will be helpful for the 9-1-1 operator. Also, "I am from Afghanistan" would be useful phrase, or "I speak Pashto" or whatever language she speaks.
    d. A few other useful words might be "fire," "police," or "EMT."
    e. It can be useful to put a sign up in the kitchen or elsewhere with the number 9-1-1 written on it so that she will not forget which numbers to dial if there is an actual emergency.
6. Wrap up by reviewing some of the material you have covered.

Lesson Four

Numbers 11 - 20; Naming objects in the home; Asking "where"

MATERIALS:

- Whiteboard
- Dry erase pens (at least two colors)
- Whiteboard eraser
- Notebook (so you can take notes)
- Pen or pencil
- Flashcards with numbers (optional)
- Plastic magnetic numbers (optional)
- Photos from magazines or a picture dictionary of rooms of a house with common objects

OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the lesson, your student should be able to:

- Recite and recognize the numbers 11 – 20
- Name some common household objects
- Ask and answer questions about the location of common household objects using the prepositions "in" and "on"

In this session, you will teach your student the numbers 11 - 20. You will also teach the names of some common household objects. She will learn how to ask and answer questions about the location of these objects using the prepositions "on" and "in."

1. As always, you will begin by reviewing previous material. By now, she should be able to say hello, ask "how are you?" and answer the question. Make sure you have her write

her name, address and phone number. Ask her about the rooms in her home. It is also important to make sure she can remember what number to call in case of emergency.

2. To teach the numbers 11 - 20, you can use most of the same techniques you used for 1 - 10, except that you cannot hold up your fingers to indicate the number. Instead, you can use something like beans, or pencils, or whatever you like.
    a. Ask her to count them from 1 - 10. Then add one more and say "eleven." Add one more and say "twelve." and so on until 20.
    b. Do this again, but this time have her repeat each number after you.
    c. Write the numbers on the whiteboard as you say them and have her repeat them after you. Then point to the numbers at random and have her say the number. You can switch it up by calling out numbers and having her point to them.
    d. If you have plastic numbers, you can use these instead of, or in addition to, the whiteboard.
    e. Once she seems to have these numbers, you can call out numbers 1 - 20 to make sure she remembers all the numbers she has been taught.
3. Next, you will start teaching the names of some common household items. I like to start with the kitchen because it is so central to everyday life. You can use pictures, or you can go into her kitchen and use her items.
    a. Choose at least five but no more than ten items to teach. Good words to start with:
        i. refrigerator
        ii. stove
        iii. oven

iv. microwave

v. pot

vi. pan

vii. counter

viii. sink

ix. table

x. chair

b. Point to the item and name it for her. Have her repeat the name several times.

c. Next, point to different items and ask her "What is it?" See if she can answer. If not, ask again, and then give her the answer. "It's a stove." Ask again - "What is it?" and have her answer the question.

d. Next you can ask "Where is the _____?" Then she should be able to point to it. This should help to teach the difference between "What is _____" and "Where is _____. "

e. Next you want to have her answer the question "Where is _____" with words. You can ask her "Where is the microwave?" and if she points to it, you can say "It's on the table" (or wherever). You want to ask about something that is ON something else or IN something else. Perhaps the pot is in the sink.

f. Finally, you can go into the other room and ask her, "Where is the refrigerator?" If she does not say, "It's in the kitchen," you can model that answer for her, then ask again. You want her to begin to see the difference between ON and IN. You will have to practice saying these words with her so that she can hear and say the different vowel sound in ON and IN.

i. You can also help her see the difference by putting something on the stove or counter and in the oven or refrigerator then repeating “The pot is on the stove.” “The pot is in the oven.”

ii. You can also use photos of objects to illustrate “on and “in.”

4. Before you leave, review the numbers 1 - 20 and the names of the objects.

Lesson Five

Numbers 21 - 30; Naming Objects in the home; Days of the week, today, yesterday, tomorrow; Stop

MATERIALS:

- Whiteboard
- Dry erase pens (at least two colors)
- Whiteboard eraser
- Notebook (so you can take notes)
- Pen or pencil
- Flashcards with letters of the alphabet and numbers (optional)
- Plastic magnetic letters and numbers (optional)
- Photos from magazines or a picture dictionary of rooms of a house with common objects
- Photos of stop signs
- Calendar

OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the lesson, your student should be able to:

- Recite the numbers 21 – 30
- Name more common household objects
- Name the days of the week and understand "today," tomorrow," and "yesterday"
- Identify "stop" and "danger" signs

By now, you may have a good idea how quickly your student learns, and what background knowledge she is likely to have. You can pace the lessons better now to accommodate her learning style and speed. In this lesson, you will teach your student the numbers 21 - 30. You will also continue teaching more common objects around the home. You will teach her the days of the week, and "today," "yesterday," and "tomorrow." Finally, your student should be able to identify and understand the word "stop."

1. Begin by reviewing previous lessons. By now, your student should be able to greet you and ask and answer the question "How are you." Check to see if she remembers how to call in an emergency and whether she can name the emergency (show pictures again of different scenarios). She should be able to say at least "fire," "police," or "EMT." (This is very important, so review it often until you are sure she can do this.) Review the vocabulary words you taught last week, as well as "on" and "in" by asking questions about the items. (From time to time you might also check to see that she is practicing writing her name, address and phone number still.)
2. Teach the numbers 21 - 30 in the same way that you taught the other numbers. This should be a bit easier if she has a solid foundation with 1 - 9 as the numbers repeat. You can show her this on the whiteboard. From here, it should be easier for her to pick up the remaining numbers up to 100.
3. Today you should pick another room to explore. The bathroom or living room are good choices since there a lot of common objects to name in them. You can use the same techniques that you used for teaching the objects in the kitchen. You may find that your student has learned a few English words along the way. She may already know T.V. and telephone (or phone), for example. Practice with the objects in the room you choose.

a. While in the new room (bathroom or living room) try asking her "where is the stove?" or some other object from the kitchen. See if she can tell you "It's in the kitchen." If not, model it for her, and then ask about another object in the kitchen.
b. Repeat for different objects in both rooms.
c. Review the prepositions "on" and "in" by asking where an object is and prompting her to use "on" or "in."
d. Now you should introduce another preposition, such as "next to." Ask about objects that are next to something else. You can also stand next to your student and say, "I'm next to you."

4. Using a calendar, point to the days in order and say each name. (Don't point to the date, as this may be confusing.) Then point again, say the name and have her repeat after you. Do this several times. Point again and ask her what day it is. It may take a while for her to memorize the days of the week. Just keep practicing. (And review often.)
    a. If she isn't familiar with a calendar, this will be much more difficult. You can try to learn the name of at least one day of the week in her language, and then translate that. That will help her get the idea.
5. Using the calendar again, show her the date and tell her "today is (day of the week)."
    a. Say "Today" and have her repeat after you.
    b. Then say "Monday" (or whatever day it is) and have her repeat after you.
    c. Then say, "Today is _____" and have her repeat as needed.
6. Next you can point to the next day and say "Tomorrow is _____ ."
    a. Just as you did for "today," say "tomorrow" and have her repeat after you.
    b. Then say "Tuesday" (or whatever day it is) and have her repeat it.

c. Finally, say “Tomorrow is _____ “and have her repeat the sentence.

7. Repeat this technique for “yesterday.”
8. If your student isn’t overwhelmed, and you haven’t run out of time, this is a good time to help her learn to sight read some important signs, like “stop.”
    a. Using photos of actual stop signs, show a stop sign and say “Stop.” Have her repeat after you.
    b. Stand up and walk across the room. As you walk, say “stop” and stop walking. Do this again.
    c. Try to have her tell you to stop as you are walking. When she says “stop,” stop.
9. This will probably finish your hour. Before you leave, quiz her briefly on a couple of things you covered. Ask her what day it is, and what day it is tomorrow. Ask her where the shower is, or the T.V.

Lesson Six

Naming food; Asking for food in the grocery store

MATERIALS:

- Whiteboard
- Dry erase pens (at least two colors)
- Whiteboard eraser
- Notebook (so you can take notes)
- Pen or pencil
- Plastic magnetic letters and numbers (optional)
- Plastic food, actual food (or empty containers), photos of food and photos of grocery stores (aisles)
- Photos of danger/warning signs
- Calendar

OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the lesson, your student should be able to:

- Name food items she commonly buys
- Ask where to find food in the store
- Identify "danger" or "warning" signs

In this lesson you will be teaching your student the names of food items that she buys often. Try to use no more than ten items to start, especially if she does not read, as she will be memorizing the list. Afghans eat a lot of chicken, rice and vegetables. On special occasions they will eat beef or lamb. They also use almonds, pistachios, pasta (spaghetti) and spices. These are some items that you may want to start with. She will also learn how to ask for

help in finding these items in the store. Finally, your student should learn to identify the words "danger" and "warning" on signs for her and her children's safety.

1. Review last week's lesson. Ask her what day it is, what day it is tomorrow, what day it was yesterday. Look at the calendar and see if she can say the days of the week. (Even if she can't read them, looking at the calendar may help her remember.) Ask her questions about where certain objects are and have her answer with "in" or "on." Make sure she uses those prepositions in her answers. Make sure to review several objects from the last two lessons to reinforce them.
2. Tell your student that today you will learn about food. If she does not understand the word "food," show her pictures, or the real or plastic food you brought. Make sure to show her that all together it is "food." There is no single item called "food."
3. You can start with the food or photos that you brought. Show her an item and ask her if she knows the name of it. If so, praise her and move on. If not, say the name and have her repeat the name. Do this several times until she can say the name.
    a. You can write the name on the whiteboard so that she sees it. Even if she does not read, she may learn to recognize the names of food that she normally buys.
    b. Move on to the next item and repeat.
4. If you feel comfortable, and have a good rapport with your student, you can ask to see what is in her refrigerator or cupboard. You can use those items in your lesson since they are obviously ones that the family eats.
5. After you have run through ten items, display them again randomly and say the name of an item. See if she can point to it. Do this for each item.

6. Next, point to the items and see if she can recall the names. This is a more difficult task, so she may need help. Repeat until she has good recall of the names.
7. You can write a list of the foods and leave it with her to study. It is especially helpful if the list has pictures to prompt her to recall what it is. Knowing what the name looks like will help her find the correct item at the grocery store.
8. Now you will practice how to ask where the food is. Ask her, "Where is the rice?" She will point to it, or she may say something like "It's in the kitchen."
    a. Now have her ask you where something is.
    b. Practice this several times, using count and non-count nouns so that she practices using "where is" and "where are." (But do not try to explain the difference to her at this point.)
9. Now show her a photo of a grocery store, with aisles. A photo that shows the aisle numbers is best. Have her ask you where something is, and then you can say "It is in Aisle 2" and point to Aisle 2 when you say that. This may not be clear to her right away, but keep practicing. Have her practice asking you several times.
    a. If she is up for a field trip to the grocery store with you someday, this is a great lesson for that. You can even turn it into a sort of scavenger hunt.
10. Now move on to teaching your student to identify the words "danger" and "warning" on signs. This is especially important for her if she has young children.
11. If you brought photos of signs saying "danger" or "warning" they may also have a picture on them that identifies the danger. If not, make sure to have photos of dangerous things or actions.

a. Point to a dangerous thing or action and say “Danger.” Have her repeat after you. Repeat with other photos so that she gets the idea that it is the dangerous part that you are talking about, and she doesn’t think that the thing itself is called “danger.”
b. Show her signs that say “Danger” and “Warning” and say “Danger” to her.
c. Point again to the dangerous thing and then to the “Danger” and “Warning” signs. Repeat “danger.” You will need to have several photos of dangerous things or situations in order to get the point across.
d. This is a very good time to use a Pashto or Dari/English dictionary, or Google translate on your phone. You can show the translation to your student to make sure that you are not being misunderstood.

12. Before you leave, make sure to review some of what you have taught. Ask her where a few things are. See if she can identify food items. Lastly, show her the dangerous photos and warning signs and see if she can say “Danger.”

Lesson Seven

Money (coins, bills): Reading prices

MATERIALS:

- Whiteboard
- Dry erase pens (at least two colors)
- Whiteboard eraser
- Notebook (so you can take notes)
- Pen or pencil
- Plastic magnetic letters and numbers (optional)
- Money – coins and bills
- Newspaper advertisements showing prices for food items
- Calendar

OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the lesson, your student should be able to:

- Identify different bills (from $1 to $20) and coins
- Be able to read a price and count out the proper amount of cash

This lesson will teach your student how to identify American money and how to read prices. This is very important for shopping for food, so you will use newspaper ads for food to teach this. This can be a difficult lesson depending on your student's math skills and familiarity with American money. For this reason, you will focus only on money in this lesson. If your student catches on quickly, you can add in additional material, such as naming more household objects.

1. Review what was taught last week, asking her to name food items. Ask her what day it is, and what day yesterday was. See if she can name all the days of the week.
2. Using whiteboard or plastic numbers, ask her to identify numbers 1 through 30. (Not necessarily every number, but several chosen at random.) Next ask her to write numbers that you randomly call out. This will review the numbers for her before you begin talking about money.
3. Bring out the money. Show her a one, five, ten and twenty-dollar bill. (Play money doesn't work well because it doesn't look like real money.)
    a. Show her the number on the bill that identifies it.
    b. Then take the money away and bring out one bill at a time. Ask her to identify it by the number. As she does this, you can write the amount on the whiteboard ($20, $5). This will help her see how we write prices using the dollar sign.
4. Once she is very comfortable with bills, bring out the coins. If she has not gone to school, or has not learned fractions, this may be difficult. (In Afghanistan there are bills and coins, but the coins are one, two and five afghani denominations. The bills are in denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, etc. The coins are equal to the one, two and five afghani bills.) In any event, take it slowly and see how she does.
    a. Show her pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters. Tell her the value of each coin. You will need to find out how much she already knows. Show her that five pennies are the same as one nickel. Two nickels are the same as one dime, etc. Go slow to make sure she understands. Then show her that the penny, nickel and dime are not the same as the bills. You may need a picture of a pile of pennies, or bring enough dimes and nickels to add up to a dollar.

5. Take out the newspaper ad you brought and have her identify something that she buys. You can name it for her and then show her the price. Show her how to read $3.99 as three dollars and ninety-nine cents, for example. Then pick other ads and have her read the prices to you.
6. See if she can count out the money to match the price of several items.
7. Next ask her "How much is/are _____?" and see if she can answer it. Repeat with several items, then switch roles. Have her ask you "How much?" and you answer. When you tell her the price, have her try to put this together with the money. This will also reinforce the names of food she learned the week before.
8. This should take the whole hour. Leave her with the newspaper ads so she can practice looking at them and trying to understand the prices.

Lesson Eight

Time - hour, half hour

MATERIALS:

- Whiteboard
- Dry erase pens (at least two colors)
- Whiteboard eraser
- Notebook (so you can take notes)
- Pen or pencil
- Clock – real or made from a paper plate
- Calendar

OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the lesson, your student should be able to:

- Tell you the time
- Write the time
- Read the time

In this lesson you will teach your student how to tell time in English. Telling time requires a knowledge of numbers, multiples of five, and fractions. This can be difficult for someone who has not had a formal education. Make sure the clock you are using has numbers on it and also lines for each minute. Don't be concerned about the second hand for now. Your student will have a concept of time, but she will have to learn the difference between a quarter of an hour and a quarter of a dollar, and that 1 means 1:00, but also 5 minutes after the hour, so be patient and take it slow.

1. Begin by reviewing the lesson from last week. Look at the newspaper ads again and ask her how much different items cost. If you have money with you again, see if she can put

the price together. This is also a good review of the names of food items. Ask a few questions about where things are in her house. Make sure to ask her what day it is, and what day tomorrow is. Review the days of the week often. Also, review "danger" and "stop."

2. Begin by reviewing the numbers 1 - 12. You can show the clock and point randomly at numbers asking her what they are. She should be able to name them.
3. Show your student the clock (set for 1:00), and ask "What time is it?" If she cannot answer, tell her "It is 1:00." Ask her again and see if she can give you the answer this time.
    a. Move the hands to 1:15 and ask her what time it is. If she can answer this, you will have no trouble teaching her to talk about time in English. If she cannot answer, then this is probably going to take more than one lesson.
    b. Tell her it is 1:15. Show her the minute lines on the clock and have her count them so that she sees that there are 15 lines (or minutes) from the 12 to the 3 on the clock face. Show her that the small hand shows the hour and the big hand counts the minutes.
        i. Set the clock to 1:00. Tell her it is 1:00. Move the big hand to the 1 and tell her it is 1:05. Count the minutes with her. Move the big hand to the 2 and tell her it is 1:10. Count the minutes with her. Do this for the whole half hour, up to 1:30.
        ii. Start over at 2:00. Ask her what time it is and see if she can answer. If not, tell her "It is 2:00." Then, move the big hand to the 1 and ask her what time it is. She may be able to tell you it is 2:05. If she gets confused

about which hand is the hour hand and which the minute hand, you can cover the minute hand until she names the hour and then uncover the minute hand for her to say the minutes. Continue to 2:30.

iii. You can do this same procedure all the way around the clock, up to 12:00. This may be all she can do in one lesson. If your student is a quick learner, or has a good grasp of the numbers, you may be able to go faster, and you can have her tell you the time up to 1:55, 2:55, etc.

4. Write the 1:00 on the whiteboard and ask your student to tell you what time it is. Show her how to write 1:05, 1:10, 1:15, 1:20, 1:25, and 1:30. Point to different times and ask her what time it is. See if she can read the written time. Use different hour and minute combinations and ask her to tell you what time it is. This is an essential skill for reading bus schedules, school schedules, doctor appointment cards, etc.
5. Next, tell your student the time, and have her write it.
6. This may be as much as you can do in an hour with your student. In future lessons, you will want to teach her how to understand the way that people talk about time. Teach her "quarter to," "quarter after," and "half past," as well as "half an hour." You may have to review time with her every week for several weeks before she really knows how to talk about and understand time and time expressions.

Conclusion

These eight lessons are just a start. You will continue to teach your student important aspects of life in the United States, and you will incorporate more English instruction as you go. There are many good books out there for teaching beginners. You can use one to help you build the best sequence for your student.

In the appendix to this handbook there are flashcards that you can use to teach the alphabet to your student. You will also find a list of books and articles that you can refer to if you want more information about what you read in this handbook.

Enjoy your time with your student. If you are open to it, you will learn from her while she learns from you. This is an incredible opportunity for both of you. Have fun!

Helpful Resources

The following books and articles were helpful in amassing the information contained in this handbook. If you are interested in more information about Afghanistan, these references are a good place to start.

Andersen, S., M., & Kooij, C., S. (2007). Adult literacy education and human rights: A view from Afghanistan. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 5(3), 315–331.

Gentilini, Fernando, *Afghan Lessons: Culture, Diplomacy, and Counterinsurgency,* EBSCO Publishing: eBook Collection (2013)

Hozyainova, A. (May 2014), *Sharia and women's rights in Afghanistan.* United States Institute of Peace, Special Report. www.usip.org.

Kramer, A.E., (2018, March 25). One more twist in an Afghan saga. *New York Times,* p 6.

Lipson, J., & Miller, S. (1994). Changing roles of Afghan refugee women in the United States. *Health Care for Women International*, *15*, 171–180.

Robson, B., Lipson, J., & Center for Applied Linguistics, W., DC. Language and Orientation Resource Center. (2002). *The Afghans: Their History and Culture. Culture Profile, 2002.*

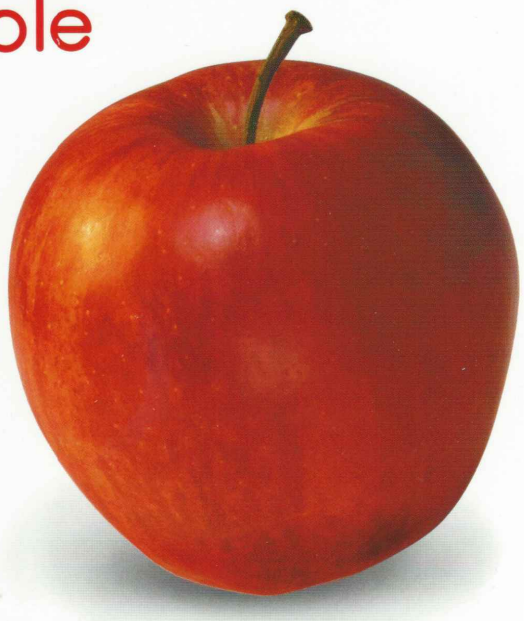
If you are interested in more information about post-traumatic stress in refugees, these articles will give you a start.

Alemi, Q., James, S., Cruz, R., Zepeda, V., & Racadio, M. (2014). Psychological distress in Afghan refugees: A mixed-method systematic review. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, *16*(6), 1247–1261

Renner, W., Laireiter, A.-R., & Maier, M., J. (2012). Social support as a moderator of acculturative stress among refugees and asylum seekers. *Social Behavior and Personality*, *40*(1), 129–146.

Sulaiman-Hill, C. M. R., & Thompson, S. C. (2012). "Thinking too much": Psychological distress, sources of stress and coping strategies of resettled Afghan and Kurdish refugees. *Journal of Muslim Mental Health*, *6*(2).

apple



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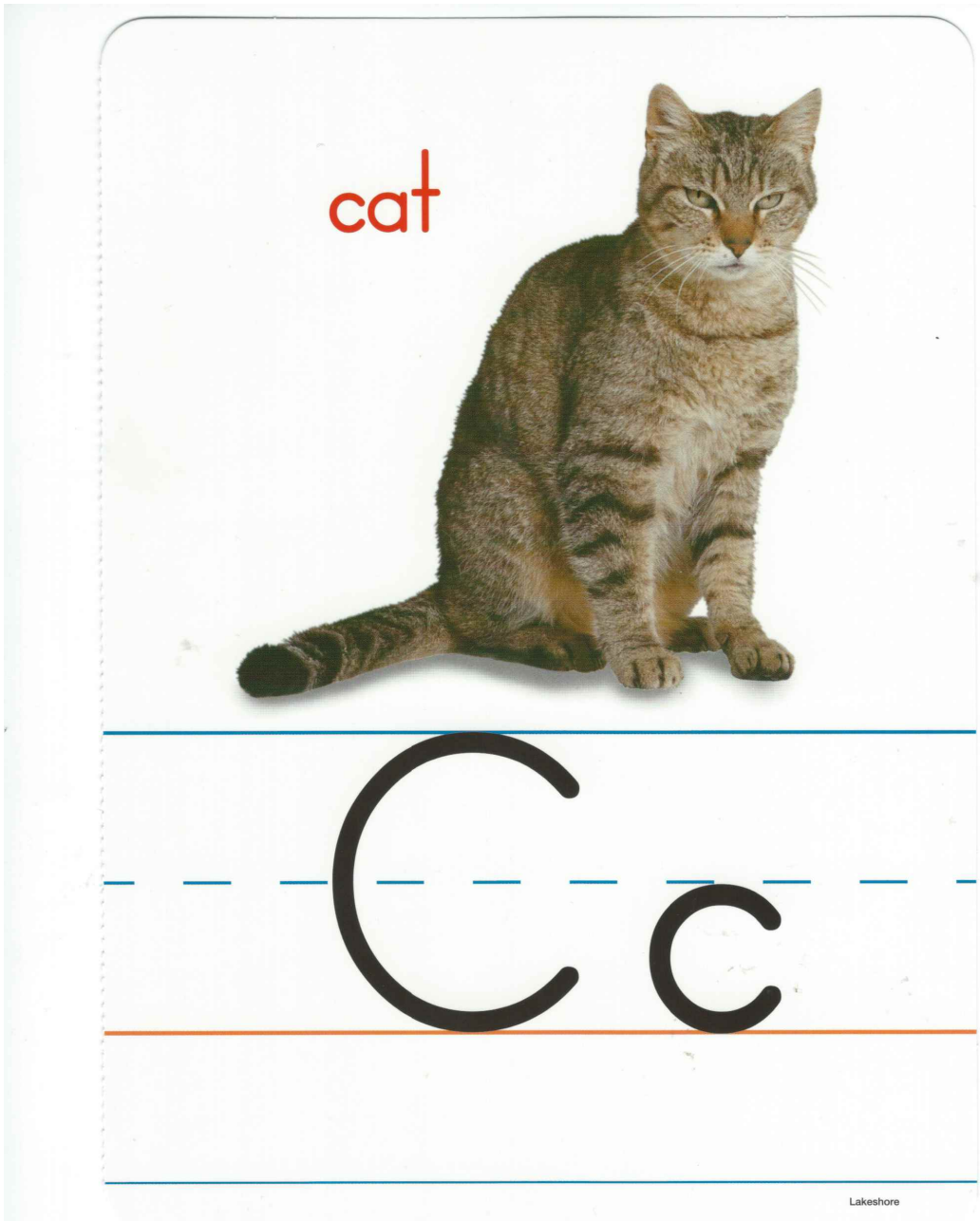
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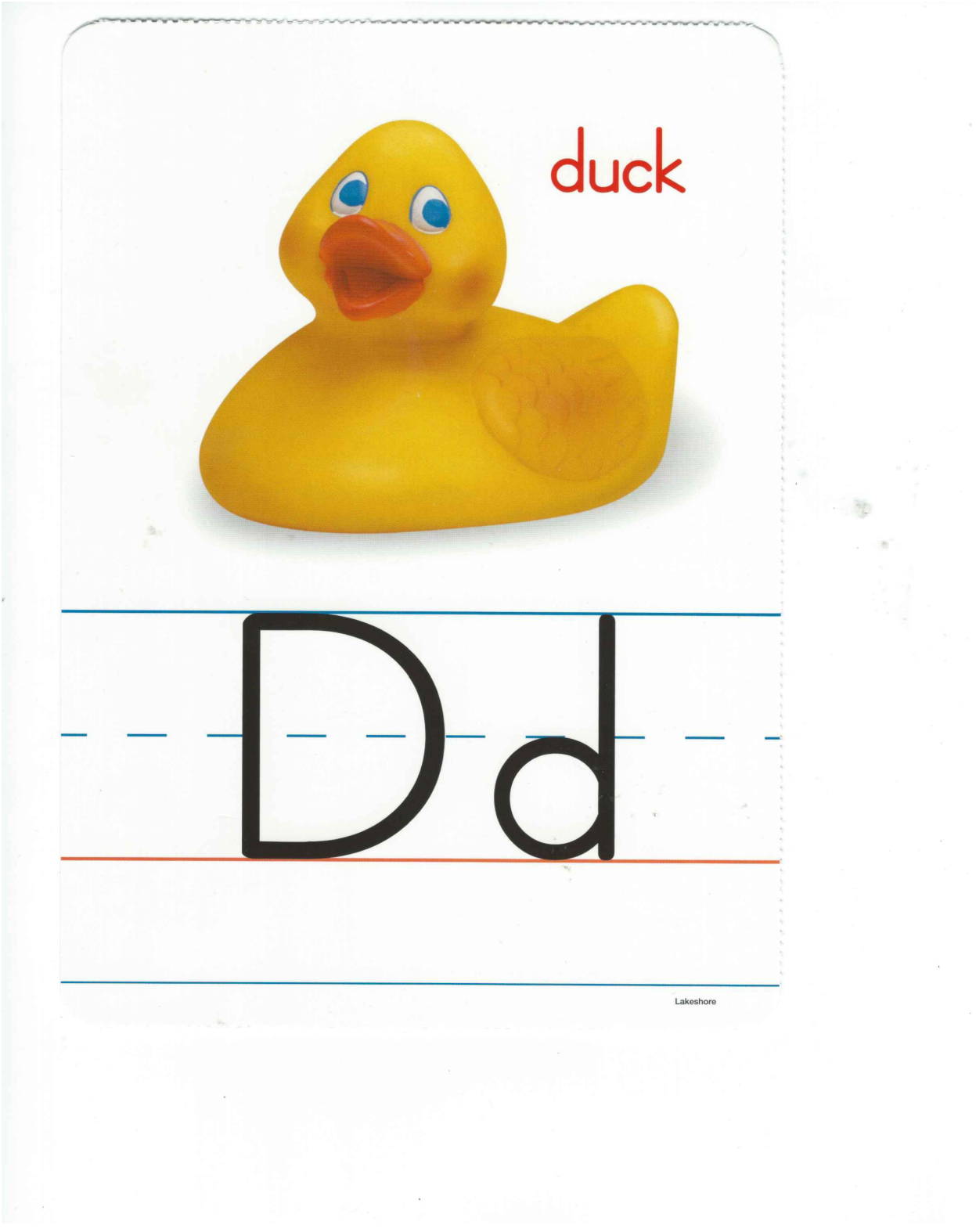
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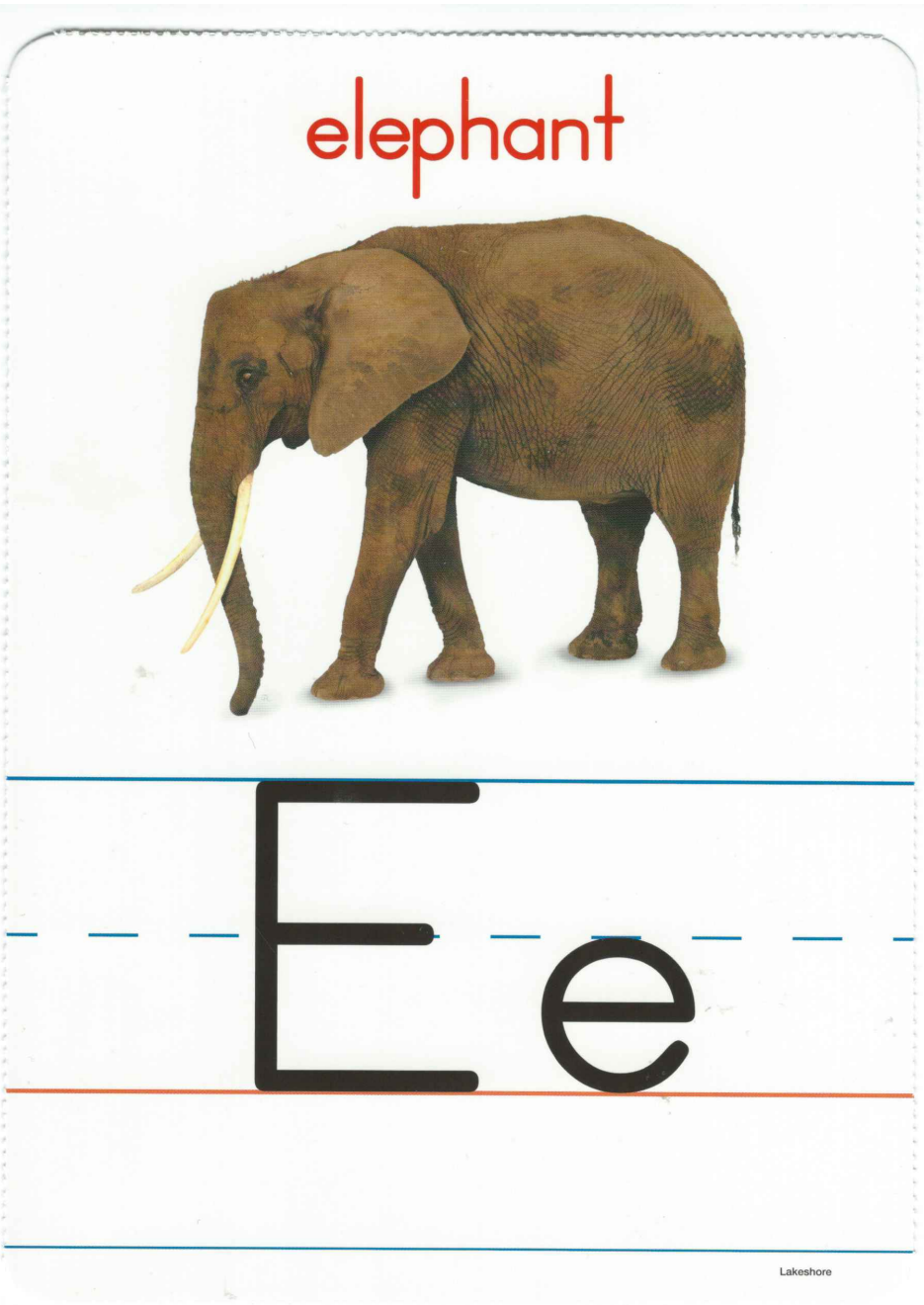
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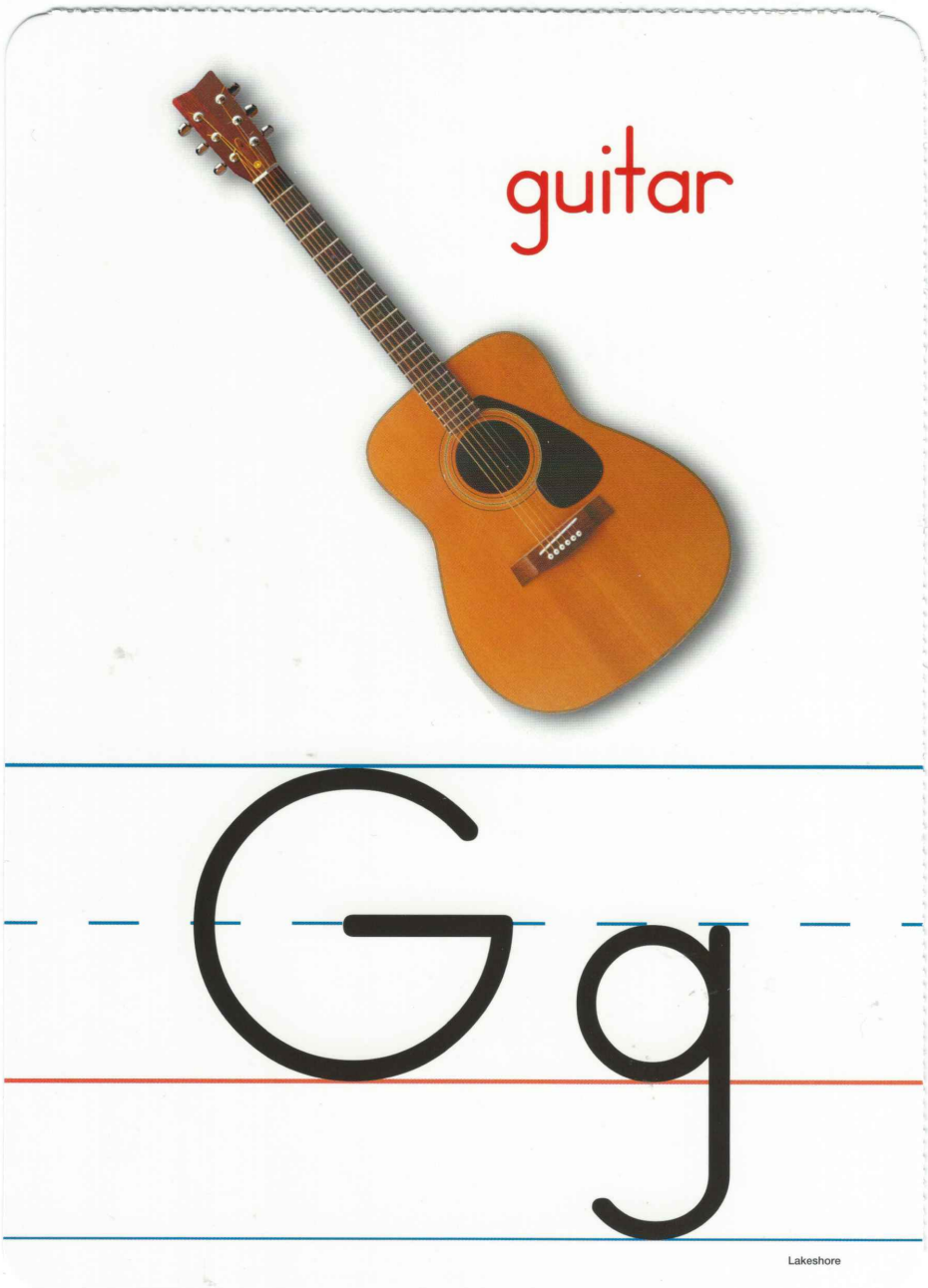
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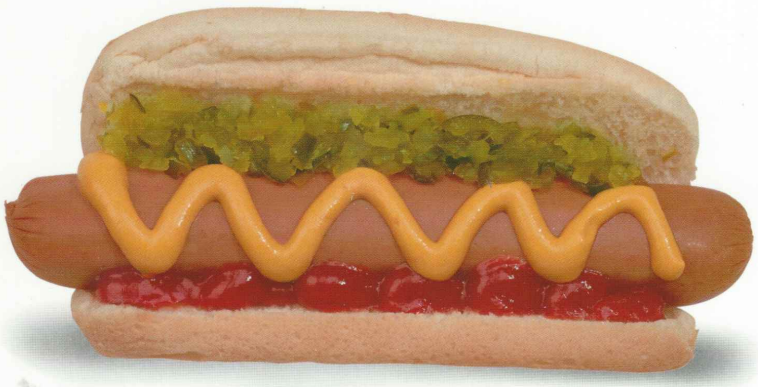

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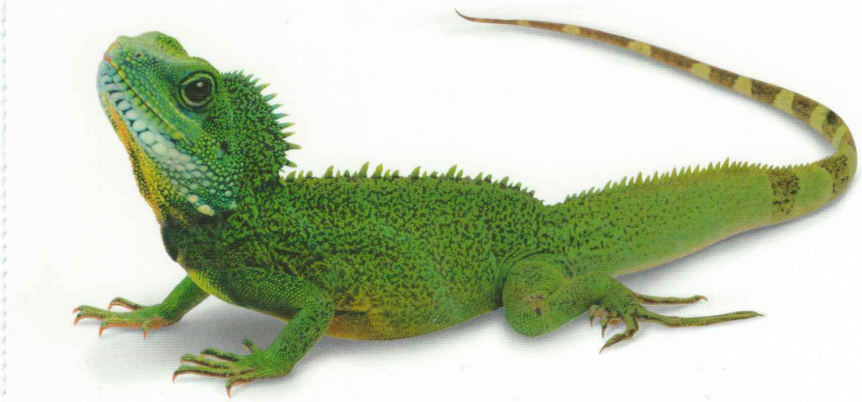

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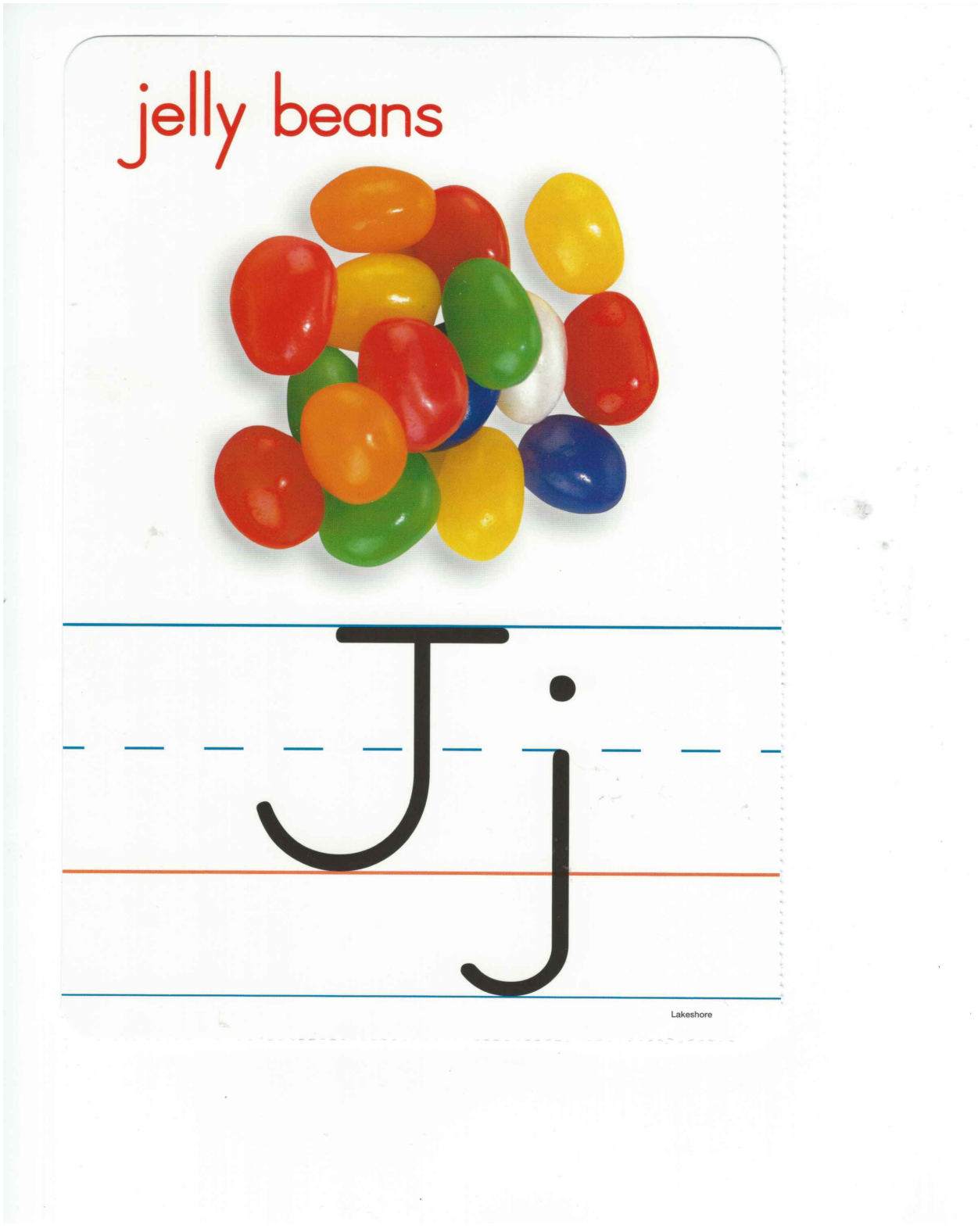
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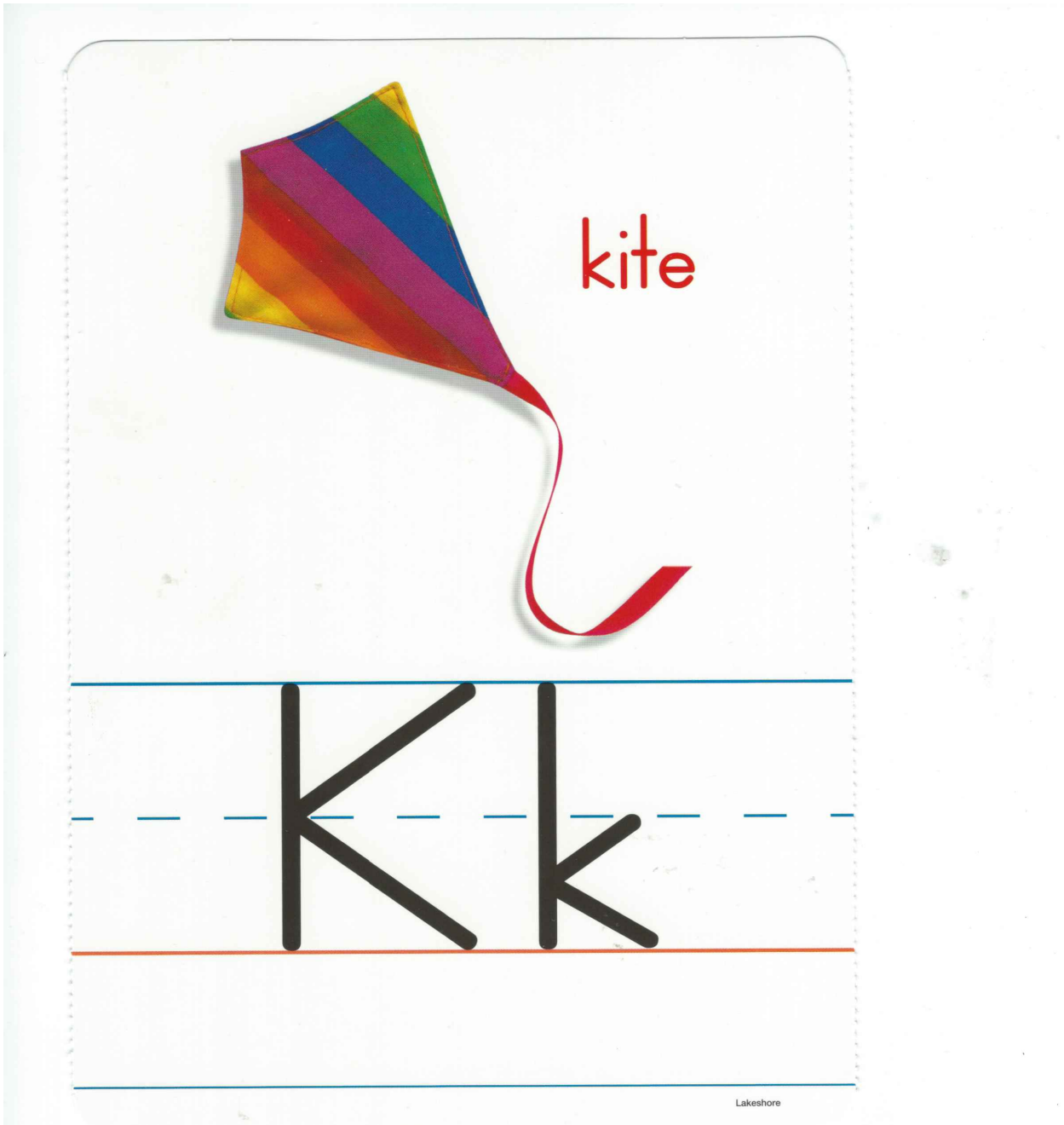
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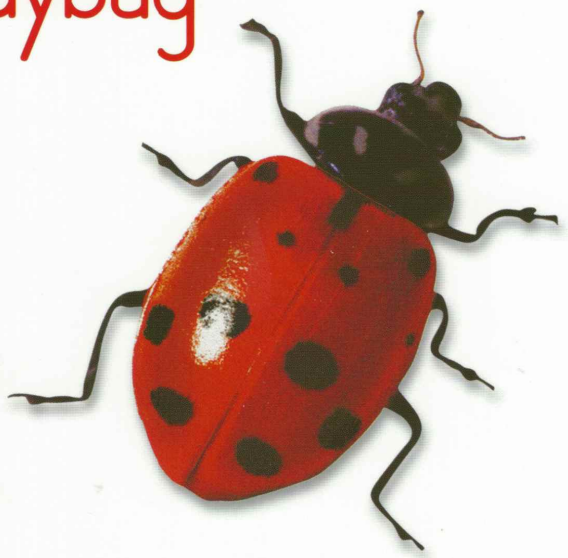

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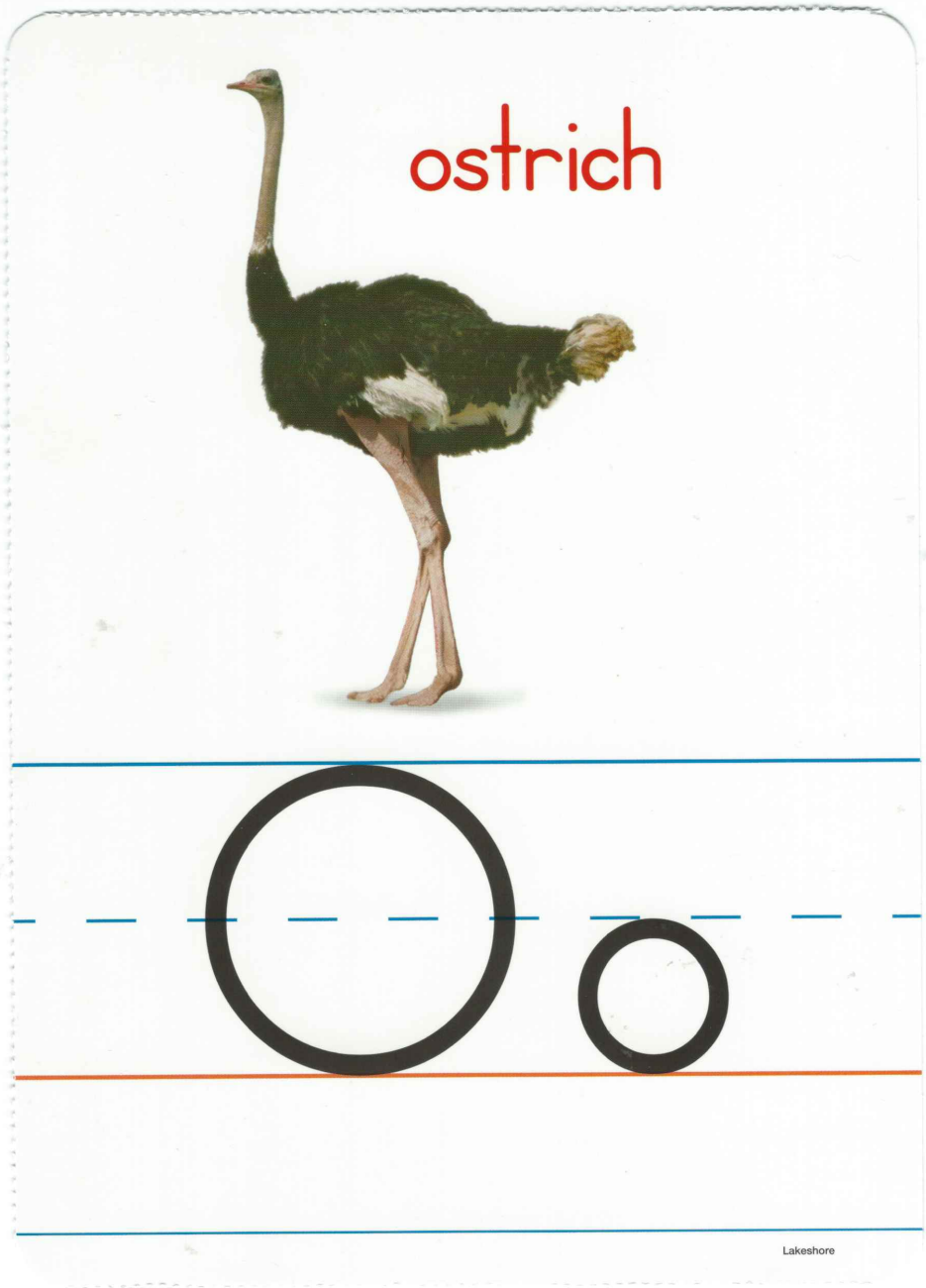
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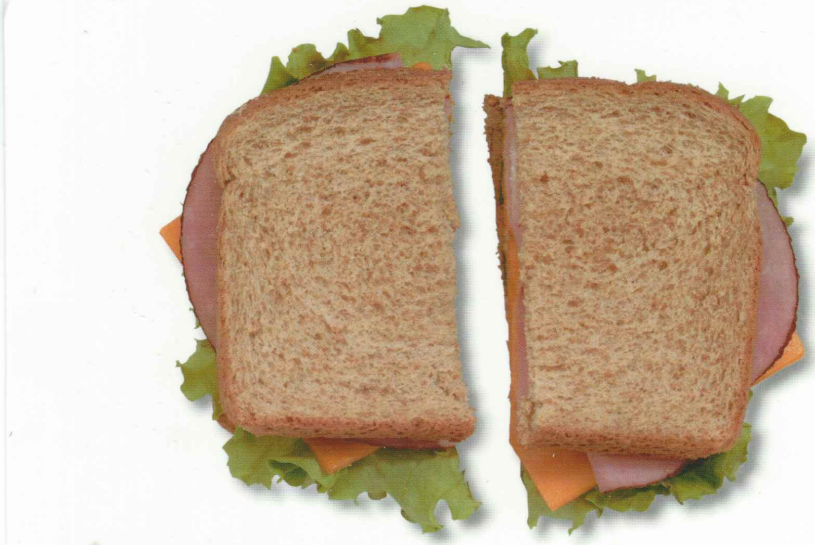

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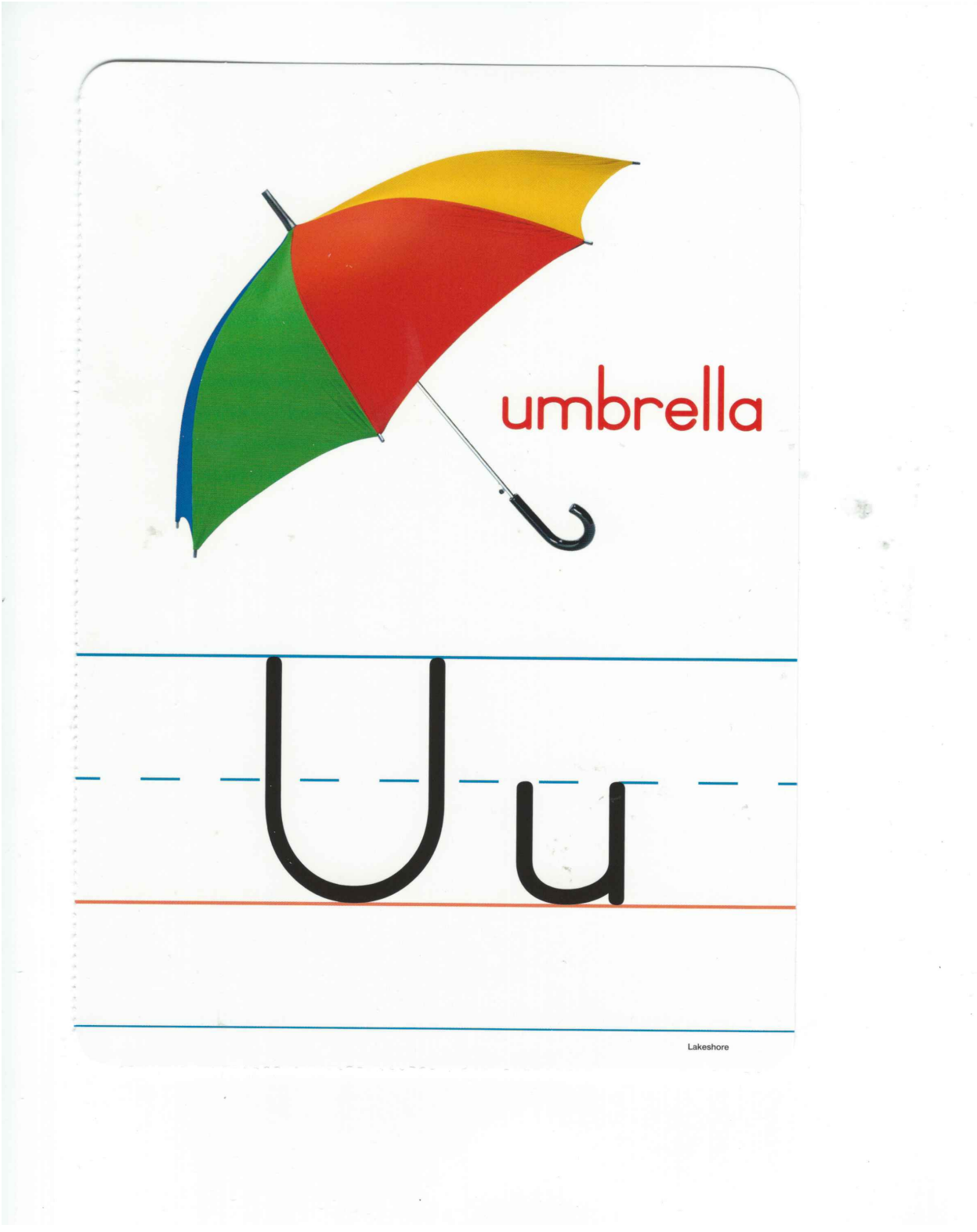
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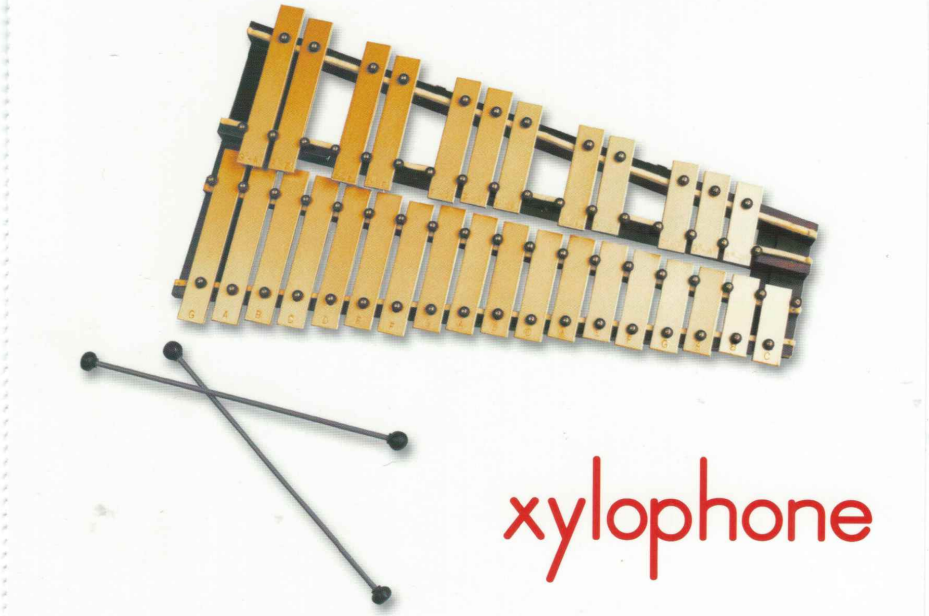

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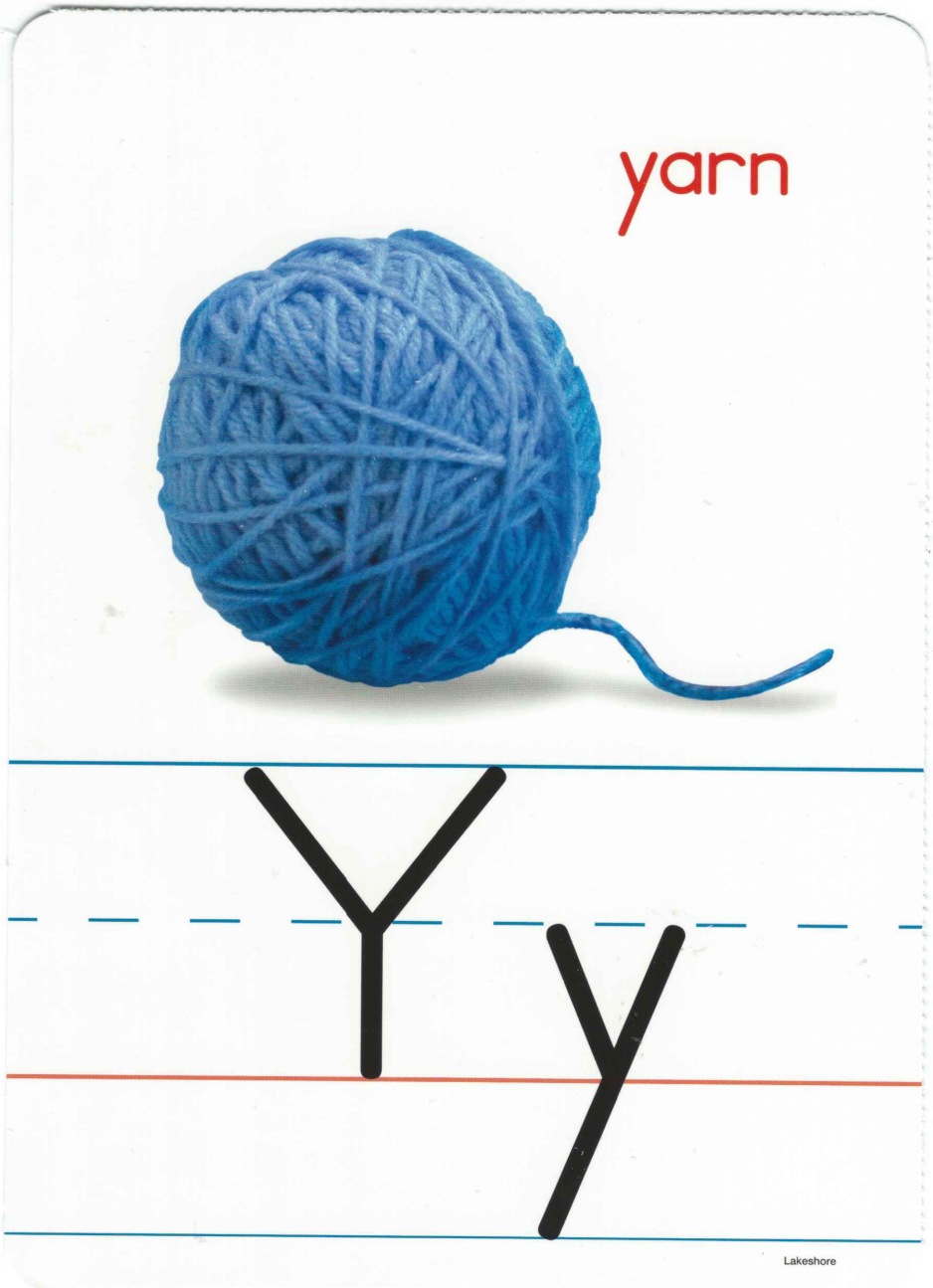
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