

# **An Introduction to ESL in the Workplace**

## **A Professional Development Packet**

*A Publication of*

**Building Professional Development  
Partnerships for Adult Educators Project**

**PRO-NET 2000**

**May 2002**

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**Sponsored by:**

*U.S. Department of Education*  
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## **Acknowledgements**

Special thanks for this publication are extended to Diane Ninke, Coordinator, Northwest ABLE Resource Center, who provided ideas for content and contributed to the development of the packet. Thanks also to Miriam Burt, Associate Director, National Center for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE), and Inaam Mansoor, Director, Arlington Education and Employment Program, whose work in the area of ESL and the workplace formed the basis for much of the content in this training packet. Our thanks also to these individuals for reviewing the publication and providing thoughtful feedback.

**Note:** There are two sessions in this workshop series. Each session is approximately 6 hours. Facilitators may choose to divide these sessions into shorter sessions of approximately 3 hours each.

**Availability of this professional development packet: *An Introduction to ESL in the Workplace* (Sessions 1 and 2 with interim activities)**

To obtain a copy of this professional development packet, go to [www. PRO-NET2000.org](http://www.PRO-NET2000.org) and click on publications.

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## **Handout Masters for Session 1**

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H-3	Why ESL in the Workplace
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H-5	Comparison of ESL and ESL Workplace Education
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H-8	Qualifications of Workplace ESL Instructors
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## **Transparency Masters for Session 1**

T-1	Objectives
T-2	Agenda
T-3	Some Basic Principles of Adult Learning
T-4	Basics of Workplace Education Programs
T-5	Principles of ESL Instruction
T-6	Tasks Involved in Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating Workplace ESL programs
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T-8	Basic Steps for Establishing an ESL Workplace Program (Summary of Session 1)

## **Facilitator's Supplement**

F-1	Comparison of ESL and Workplace Education
F-2	Tasks Involved in Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating Workplace ESL Programs

## **Appendices**

A	References
B	Instructor Workplace Readiness Assessment Instrument
C	Workshop Series Evaluation Form

# Overview: An Introduction to Workplace ESL

**Objectives:** By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Identify at least three unique characteristics of workplace ESL
2. Describe the steps involved in developing a workplace ESL program
3. Identify the basics of planning, implementing and evaluating workplace ESL programs
4. Design an ESL workplace education program

## Time Requirements:<sup>1</sup>

Total time required for Session 1 is approximately 6 hours

## Materials Checklist:√

**Hardware:** \_\_\_\_\_ Overhead projector, screen and flip-chart stand (if used)

**Software:** \_\_\_\_\_ Session 1 Handouts  
\_\_\_\_\_ Session 1 Transparencies  
\_\_\_\_\_ Blank transparencies and transparency pens  
\_\_\_\_\_ Flip charts, pens, masking tape, and name tags

## Preparation Checklist: √

\_\_\_\_\_ Duplicate handouts  
\_\_\_\_\_ Check equipment to be sure it is working properly  
\_\_\_\_\_ Set-up the room(s) where training activities will take place<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Regarding suggested times: Agencies should feel free to adjust the suggested times to meet the needs and experience levels of the participants. In addition, it is important to be familiar with the materials prior to the workshop in order to select specific activities to present or delete if sufficient time is not available or some activities take longer than anticipated. Familiarity with the materials also will enable presenters to personalize the materials by adding anecdotes when appropriate.

<sup>2</sup>Regarding room set-up: Session activities include both large and small groups. Therefore, the room should be arranged so participants can move about easily. Try to make certain that all participants can see flip charts and overheads.

## Outline for Session 1

<b>Materials</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Estimated Time</b>
H-1, H-2 T-1, T-2	I. Introduction, Overview, Objectives	15 minutes
H-3,	II. Why ESL in the Workplace?	20 minutes
H-4, T-3, T-4, T-5	III. Knowledge Foundation for Developing a Workplace ESL Program	45 minutes
F-1, H-5, H-6, H-7, H-8	IV. Comparison of ESL and Workplace ESL	65 minutes
<b>BREAK</b>		15 minutes
F-2, H-9, H-10, H-11 T-6, T-7	V. Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating a Workplace ESL program	90 minutes
<b>LUNCH</b>		60 minutes
H-12, T-8	VI. Summary of Points for Developing and Delivering a Workplace ESL Program	15 minutes
H-13, H-14, H-15	VII. Interim Assignment	15 minutes
	VI. Wrap-Up of Session 1	10 minutes
	<b>Total Time Required</b>	<b>5 hours and 50 minutes</b>

## **Preparation for Session 1**

- Send out flyers announcing the professional development series. **Stress that participants are expected to attend both sessions and participate in an interim activity between sessions.**
- Run-off handouts from Handout Masters (H-1 through H-15).
- Make transparencies from Transparency Masters (T-1 through T-8).
- Order all equipment (e.g. overhead projector, screen, and flip-chart stands) and make sure they are operating correctly. Also check screen for size and clarity of print from a distance.
- Have available such materials as flip charts, pens, masking tape, blank transparencies, and name tags.
- Arrange for a place to hold Session 1 and make sure the location has sufficient space and movable chairs for breakout activities. Consider which room arrangement style will best suit communication and activities. Try to make certain all participants will be able to see the flip charts, and overheads.
- Arrange for participant parking, if necessary, and for any refreshments that will be made available.
- Review training packet including all handout and transparency masters. Give special attention to the Facilitator's Notes.

# Facilitator's Notes: Session 1

Minutes

## I. INTRODUCTION, OVERVIEW, OBJECTIVES

15 minutes

T-1, T-2  
H-1, H-2

### A. General Questions for Participants:

5 minutes

1. How many are: currently working in an ESL program? As instructors? As managers? How many have had experience in workplace education programs? How many are familiar with adult learning theory?
2. How many are from a community college? School district? Independent consultants?
3. How many have been in adult education less than 3 years? 5 to 10 years? Over 10?
4. If the group is small, ask participants to go around the room and provide their name, agency, and position.

**Note:** Facilitators should make some notes about the make-up of the group. Be alert to participant's situations (e.g., community colleges, school districts, independent consultant hired by a company) and roles (e.g., curriculum development but no planning responsibilities) and knowledge levels. Tailor the workshop to accommodate the diversity. Also encourage participants, throughout the workshop, to reflect on their own roles and speak from their own perspectives.

### B. Introduction

5 minutes

Facilitators should introduce themselves, providing only information pertinent to their roles as facilitators of this "ESL in the Workplace" module.

### C. Objectives

5 minutes

Using T-1 and H-1 (Objectives), quickly note the purpose and objectives for Session I. Follow with T-2 and H-2 (Agenda) and briefly summarize the day's activities and their relationship to the agenda.

**Note:** Facilitators should explain that sometimes the term ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) is used in states because so many participants are fluent in two or more languages already so that English is not their second language but could be their third or fourth language. However, in this module, we will be using the term ESL.

## II. WHY ESL IN THE WORKPLACE?

20 minutes

### A. Overview of Growth of ESL in the Workplace

5 minutes

1. Ask participants why they think ESL in the workplace is becoming more prevalent.  
Suggested reasons are presented in the box at the top of page 2. Facilitators can add these points to the discussions.

#### Suggested reasons for increased ESL in the workplace:

- Changes in the census and national demographics: e.g., states with increased numbers of non-native speakers, English as a minority language.
- ISO/quality demands require a more educated workforce than in the past.
- Mixing of various languages increases need for all to understand English.
- A safe, informed workforce leads to improved production and quality goods and services.
- Due to an ever changing workplace, lifelong learning is a necessity in all roles for individual and company success.
- Non-English speaking workers are needed in all types of work, particularly in service industries such as food, hotel, etc.
- There is a need for ESL to help non-English speaking workers keep their jobs and advance on the job.
- English language learners may need more English to get a GED needed for promotion on the job or to keep the job.

H-3

2. Ask participants to read quotes from H-3, Why ESL in the Workplace? as examples of statements from the literature that support the need for ESL workplace programs.

5 minutes

**Note:** Facilitators may choose to select 3 quotes from the handout to highlight. The choice should be based upon the knowledge of participants and the amount of time for discussion.

### B. Impact of Growing Numbers of Non-native Speakers in the Workplace.

10 minutes

1. Ask participants: As the number of non-native speakers increases in the workplace, what is the impact on the setting? Other workers? Production?

Sample responses are included in the box below.

**Implication of increased numbers of non-native speakers in the workplace:**

- Communication problems with colleagues and supervisors can slow production if workers do not understand what is expected of them.
- Lack of understanding of U.S. culture can impact how workers behave on the job.
- Lack of understanding of safety issues can cause harm to themselves and to other workers.

2. Ask participants if they can provide specific examples from their own experiences.

**III. KNOWLEDGE FOUNDATION FOR DEVELOPING A WORKPLACE ESL PROGRAM** 45 minutes

**A. Overview** 5 minutes

To design and deliver quality workplace ESL programs, the key professionals—instructor, program developer, and administrator/manager should have some knowledge of :

- Adult learning theory
- Basics of workplace education
- Principles of ESL instruction

**Note:** Most individuals will not be knowledgeable in all three of these areas, however, familiarity and knowledge of at least one or two will be very helpful in the process of designing and delivering workplace ESL programs. Most participants will probably be familiar with one or two of the three. This knowledge should have been evidenced by the responses during the introduction. More than likely, the group will be a mixture from different backgrounds. Facilitators should tailor their comments based on the background of the group and recognize the expertise of group members.

**B. Small Group Activity** 10 minutes

Divide participants into three groups. Tell them that you are going to draw on their knowledge and experience to review the three key areas of knowledge necessary to implement a workplace ESL program. Facilitators may want to provide examples for each group, depending on the level of knowledge and expertise of participants.

- Ask **Group A** to write 5 things that contribute to adult learning. (e.g., Adults are self-directed in their learning).
- Ask **Group B** to write 5 principles or basics of workplace education programs. (e.g., Involve all stakeholders).
- Ask **Group C** to write 5 principles of ESL instruction. (e.g., A mix of instructional approaches is usually necessary).

Provide each group with flip chart paper and markers or a blank transparency and pens.

**Note:** If there are large numbers of participants, have multiple groups of A, B, and C.

Ask each group to write their responses on the flip chart or blank transparencies. Allow 10 minutes for the activity. Ask each group to choose a presenter or presenters to report back to the larger group.

Ask each group to present its principles. Allow 10 minutes for report back and discussion of each set of principles for a total of 30 minutes. If there are multiple groups, shorten the report back time for each group to 5 minutes.

30 minutes

T-3

**Group A** -- Principles of adult learning. After the group(s) has presented, ask for additional comments. Emphasize that these principles are relevant in any setting where there are adult learners. Facilitators may show T-3, Some Basic Principles of Adult Learning, to reinforce findings from the literature.

T-4, H-4

**Group B** -- Principles of workplace education programs. After the group(s) has presented, ask for additional comments. Show T-4 and refer to H-4, Basics of Workplace Education Programs, to reinforce findings from the literature. Facilitators indicate to participants:

- Regardless of the setting, ongoing staff time at the work site is required to maintain communications among work site stakeholders -- learners, supervisors, labor, and management.
- Development of trust and understanding among all stakeholders in the partnership is important for program success and future contracting opportunities.

- T-5** **Group C** -- Principles of ESL instruction. After the group(s) has presented ask for additional comments. Show T-5, Principles of ESL Instruction to reinforce findings from the literature. Discuss similarities between the group presentation and findings from the literature.

**Note:** Remind participants that the principles identified by all groups form the basis of ESL workplace programs

#### IV. COMPARISON OF ESL AND WORKPLACE ESL

65 minutes

##### A. Group Activity

This activity is designed to build on the expertise of the group and focus participants' thinking on similarities and differences between ESL and ESL Workplace Education.

- H-5**
1. Divide participants into teams of 3 – 5 depending on the number of individuals in the workshop. Instruct participants to locate the chart on H-5, A Comparison of ESL and Workplace ESL. Ask each group to select a presenter or presenters for a report back. 5 minutes
  2. Ask participants to identify the differences between ESL and ESL in the workplace. The purpose is to ensure that everyone is “on the same page”. Ask them to complete the columns of this worksheet for ESL and ESL Workplace Education programs. Everyone in the workshop should have some knowledge of workplace education or ESL education so they should be able to complete most of the chart on H-5. Depending on the level of experience and expertise, facilitators may take one example from H-5 and look through the example as a group.
  3. Give each group a blank transparency or flip chart to record their responses. Allow about 10 minutes for groups to complete the two columns in the chart. 10 minutes

**Note:** Depending on the time allotted for this session, facilitators may want to assign each group three items on the comparison chart to complete.

4. Following the exercise, ask each group to report their responses. Assign each group a different item to report back and let others add their comments to the group report back. 20 minutes

F-1

**Note:** Facilitators' Supplement, F-1 lists potential responses on the comparison chart. It is important for facilitators to listen carefully to the participants' responses. Discuss items that were not included in participants' responses. Section B below, provides additional discussion points for facilitators.

### Break

15 minutes

#### B. Key Discussion Points

30 minutes

Facilitators select points that are most appropriate to participants' level of expertise and experience in each of the three areas below — setting goals, factors affecting ESL learner success, and staffing. This discussion reinforces the responses participants provided on the above activity.

1. Setting goals in an ESL workplace program.
  - Understanding the difference between the goals in an ESL program and a workplace ESL program is important to a successful program.
  - The goals of the program influence the selection of content, use of resources, and program design.
    - a) Introduce terms: Work-centered and worker-center.
    - b) Ask: "Can anyone clarify the differences between the two?"
    - c) Refer to H-6, Work-Centered vs. Worker-Centered, and ask participants to silently read the definitions. Ask participants why they think it is important to distinguish between the two.

H-6

**Points that may be made include:**

- Employers and employees often do not have the same goals. (e.g., Employers are driven by certain demands/needs in the workplace that often are self-serving. Workers' goals such as returning to school, helping children with homework, or job advancement are motivators for the individual.)
- Recognition and inclusion of worker's goals help to empower the learner in the workplace ESL program and contribute to a transfer of learning to other settings.
- Employees must see the relevance and usefulness of the learning not only in relation to work, but also in relation to other personal goals/needs. Preparing learners to be successful on the job will prepare them to be successful in other roles.

These definitions should be considered and every effort should be made to address both concerns when setting goals for the program.

**Note:** Remind participants that workplace ESL requires an understanding of the basics of workplace education and also ESL. It is important to involve individuals with this expertise when planning a workplace ESL program.

Mention to group that references in Appendix A provide more detailed information about basic and ESL workplace education programs and could be helpful resources when designing a workplace education program.

## 2. Factors affecting ESL learner success in the workplace.

H-7

Refer to H- 7, Factors Affecting ESL Students' Success in the Workplace and compare these comments with participant responses from the chart that compares ESL and ESL workplace education (H-5)

Ask participants if there are other factors, based on their experiences that affect success in the workplace.

Ask for other examples or personal experiences with some of these factors in their own teaching.

**Responses may include:**

- Often stakes are higher in ESL programs than other workplace education programs. ESL students often are nervous about job retention. If mastery of the skills and knowledge are related to job retention and advancement, students often become anxious and this interferes with learning.
- Learners are concerned about others judging their lack of knowledge or skill.
- Assessment/placement data could be made public.
- Once ESL students begin to experience success in learning, they want to accelerate the learning and attend class more often even when it means being on the job less.

**Note:** Stress the importance of recognizing the cultural differences and how they might influence classroom performance.

**H-8**

## 3. Staffing a workplace ESL program.

Ask participants to review H-8, Qualifications of Workplace ESL Instructors. Tell participants that this handout summarizes recommendations from the literature based on observations and studies of successful ESL workplace programs.

An awareness of these qualifications and training experiences is important for program planners and managers.

Ask participants if they have other suggestions based on their experiences.

**Note:** The items listed for instructors in the “Workplace Readiness Guide” provide a listing of preferred skills for a workplace instructor. These should be considered along with the knowledge of ESL as ideal skills for the workplace ESL instructor. See Appendix B for the Instructor Readiness Tool.

**V. PLANNING, IMPLEMENTING, & EVALUATING A WORKPLACE ESL PROGRAM** 90 minutes

**A. Introduction to Modified Jigsaw Activity**

Facilitators read quote below and stress importance of awareness of this fact. It is not a quick fix, but a slow process depending on the entry skill level of the participants. 10 minutes

“Development of ESL instructional programs for the workplace is a complex and long-term process.” McGroarty & Scott, (1993)

The following activity will help us to identify the various steps in the development of a workplace ESL program.

**B. Modified Jigsaw Activity**

The purpose of this activity is to learn aspects of planning, implementing, and evaluating workplace ESL programs. 35minutes

**Note:** Facilitators should have read all the articles and be aware of points introduced in each article.

Divide participants into three groups A, B, and C and assign each group a reading or readings. (Participants should take their handouts with them when they move into their groups.)

**H-9** Allow a few minutes to read through instructions on H-9. Review directions with the group. Ask for any questions.

**T-6** Distribute a blank transparency with grid, T-6, or flip chart paper and pens.

**H-10a** **Group A:** Grognet, Allene Guss. (1996). *“Q & A Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating Workplace ESL Programs.”* ERIC Q & A, Washington, DC: National Center for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE)  
<http://www.cal.org/ncle/digests/PLANNINGQA.HTM>

H-10b

**Group B:** Burt, Miriam. ( 1995). *Evaluating Workplace ESL Instructional Programs*. ERIC Digest. Washington, DC: National Center for ESL Literacy Education, Center for Applied Linguistics.

<http://www.cal.org/ncl/digests/BURT.HTM>

Isserlis, Janet. *Workplace Literacy Programs for Nonnative English Speakers*, ERIC Digest, National Center for ESL Literacy Education, Center for Applied Linguistics

<http://www.cal.org/ncl/digests/BURT.HTM>

H-10c

**Group C:** McGroaty, Mary & Suzanne Scott. “*Workplace ESL Instruction: Varieties and Constraints*,” ERIC Digest, National Clearinghouse on Literacy Education, October, 1993.

[http://www.cal.org/ncl/digests/WORKPLACE\\_ESL.HTML](http://www.cal.org/ncl/digests/WORKPLACE_ESL.HTML)

Burt, Miriam. (1995). *Selling Workplace ESL Instructional Programs*. ERIC Digest. Washington, DC: National Center on ESL Literacy Education, Center for Applied Linguistics, December, 1995.

<http://www.cal.org/ncl/digest/SELLING.HTM>

#### 1. Reading and planning

Ask teams to read their assigned article(s) and complete an overhead transparency or flip chart that identifies key aspects of each component — planning, implementing, or evaluating — covered in their articles. They will later present their findings to the group. Have each group select a presenter or presenters.

*Allow 35 minutes for the jigsaw activity.*

**Note:** While planning, implementing, and evaluating are the essential components of structuring a workplace education program, they often occur simultaneously, or not in sequence, and it may be difficult to separate one from another, i.e. assessment may occur in planning, implementing, and/or evaluating. Some items such as class times and format could appear under planning or implementing.

**LUNCH**

**50 minutes**

## 2. Presentation

30 minutes

Following the task, each team will present to the group. H-9 suggests 5 minutes for each presentation, but facilitators may want to allow up to 30 minutes total for those unable to complete their presentations in 5 minutes.

Similarities and differences of points should be identified in the presentations.

F-2

**Note:** It is important for facilitators to listen carefully to each group report. F-2, identifies points from each reading. Facilitators may want to check off the points as they are made by each group. Facilitators may select some or all of the items in section C below, Review of Key Points, to reinforce as part of the follow-up.

**B. Review of key points**

15 minutes

## 1. Planning a workplace ESL curriculum.

The planning process helps the educator clearly identify the desired outcomes and helps the employer understand the amount of time needed to accomplish the expected goals.

- Include all stakeholders (e.g., management, unions), and ensure they clearly understand the scope of the program and the expected outcomes.
- Conduct a needs analysis.
- Clearly state goals initially that are minimal, manageable, and measurable. The goals will be based on a needs analysis.
- Goals common to workplace ESL programs are listening and speaking. The ability to read materials such as manuals, policies, etc. is often a goal. Occasionally the company's written material needs to be converted to much simpler, basic language for easier student mastery.
- Remember, for ESL students, language mastery is a long process dependent to some extent on the individual's formal education and skill level in their native language.
- Set course length at 6–8 weeks as it is more feasible for workers and employers than longer courses.

T-7, H-11

Assessment

- Participant assessment is an important aspect of the planning process.
- Assessment should be related to program goals.
- A task analysis may be completed for specific jobs.
- Standardized tests are recommended, if applicable, to measure reading, since they could also be used as a post-test for documenting student progress.
- Both formal and informal assessment can occur throughout the process. Show T-7, H-11, Formal and Informal Assessment, as a review of these types of assessment.
- Remember assessment is an essential part of planning, implementing, and evaluating. For example, needs analysis is necessary to determine the skills and knowledge needed to do a specific job and is a first step in the planning process.

## 2. Implementing a workplace ESL curriculum.

- Activities should include realia and be designed to allow participants to use all language skills, reading, speaking, and listening.
- Priority should be placed on the particular skills identified as most important in the planning process.
- The employees' function in the workplace and the context in which they work will influence the content of the course.
- Course content is not just literacy as in a basic workplace program but specific phrases and terminology unique to the work setting that may be culturally different for the employee.
- Participants should be grouped by functioning level. This will contribute to program success.
- Classroom facilities should be suitable for adults—tables and chairs, quiet and private, somewhat removed from the production area, with good lighting and easy access for participants.
- Grammar and usage should be included in the course, but the focus for the workplace is basic understanding and ability to communicate and succeed in the context of the workplace setting.

3. Evaluating a workplace ESL program
  - Evaluation can be both quantitative and qualitative.
  - Program evaluation should relate directly back to program goals.
  - The final report should include evaluation measures that clearly define student progress.
  - Various measures can be used including pre- and post-tests, standardized tests, student self-assessment reports, portfolios, rubrics.
  - A combination of evaluation approaches can be used to acknowledge different types of learning.

**Note:** Facilitators may want to refer to T-7 and H-11 – Formal and Informal Assessment, as they discuss evaluations of the workplace ESL program

## VI. SUMMARY OF POINTS FOR DEVELOPING AND DELIVERING A WORKPLACE ESL PROGRAM 15 minutes

T-8, H-12

Show T-8, H-12, Basic Steps for Establishing an ESL Workplace Program.

Tell participants that this chart represents a summary of the steps to be followed when developing a workplace education program. They highlight the points discussed in this session and will be helpful to guide the interim assignment.

## VII. INTERIM ASSIGNMENT

H-13

Ask participants to locate H-13, Interim Assignment.

15 minutes

Review instructions for interim assignment.

H-14

Ask participants to select one of the four scenarios described on H-14. If the group is small the facilitator may want to limit the number of scenarios from which to choose. Using the information presented in this session complete the following:

H-15

1. Describe the activities that would occur in each phase—planning, implementing, and evaluating—of the ESL workplace program you design to address the scenario.
2. Use H-15. The ESL workplace planning chart, to describe the activities.
3. Bring the completed chart to the next session and be prepared to share with the larger group.

**Note:** Participants can work in pairs on the interim assignment.

**VIII. WRAP-UP OF SESSION 1****10 Minutes**

Remind participants what will happen at Session 2 of the workshop series.

1. Group presentation of program plans for home assignment
2. Development of ESL workplace lesson plans
3. Presentations of program evaluation strategies: meeting NRS requirements and preparing the final report

Remind participants that there will be an evaluation of the workshop series at the end of Session 2.

Thank participants for their enthusiasm and willingness to participate fully in the activities and wish them well on their project efforts during the interim.

**End of Session 1**

# HANDOUT MASTERS FOR SESSION 2

# Session 1: Objectives

**By the end of this session, participants will be able to:**

1. Identify at least three the unique characteristics of workplace ESL
2. Describe the steps involved in developing a workplace ESL program
3. Identify the basics of planning, implementing, and evaluating workplace ESL programs
4. Design an ESL workplace education program

# **Session 1: Agenda**

- I. Introduction, Objectives, Agenda
- II. Why ESL in the Workplace?
- III. Knowledge Foundation for Developing a Workplace ESL Program
- IV. Comparison of ESL and Workplace ESL
- V. Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating a Workplace ESL program
- VI. Wrap-up of Session 1

# Why ESL in the Workplace?

- Changing employment patterns will require workers to have better communication skills and to be both literate and proficient in English.<sup>1</sup>
- Those with limited English skills are often confined to entry-level jobs.<sup>2</sup>
- In 1998, 47% of the participants in federally funded adult education programs were there to learn English as a second Language.<sup>3</sup>
- Employee turnover costs the US more than 11 billion dollars a year.<sup>4</sup>
- When companies provided quality improvement training events, they were not successful. Managers realized that before these could be implemented, basic skills needed to be raised.<sup>5</sup>
- “Training has a positive effect on productivity. Failure to maintain a well-trained workforce eventually will cause productivity to decline and harm the competitive position of the U.S. economy.<sup>6</sup>
- In order to deliver high performance workplace training, ESL workers first have to be familiar with American workplace culture and master basic skills in speaking, problem solving, and writing.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Burt, M. *Workplace ESL Instruction: Interviews from the Field*, ERIC, Washington, DC.: Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education (1997).

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational Education (2001). *Adult Education for Limited English Proficient Adults*, Washington D.C. <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/AdultEd/InfoBoard/fact-3.html>

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (1999). *State-administered adult education program 1998 enrollment*. Washington, D.C: Author. <http://www.ed.gov/offices/ovae/98enrobp.html>

<sup>4</sup> ED 313 927

<sup>5</sup> Burt, M. “Selling Workplace ESL Instructional Programs,” *Eric Digest*, December 1995.

<sup>6</sup> National Alliance of Business, *Workforce Economics*. 7 (1), Spring 2001

<sup>7</sup> Burt, *Workplace ESL Instruction*.

# Basics Of Workplace Education Programs

The following are recommended points or common characteristics found throughout the literature on workplace education programs:

- Involve all stakeholders
- Develop strong partnerships to initiate and sustain program
- Set clear, measurable goals
- Consider employer and employee needs
- Be sensitive to unique factors existing in the workplace
- Use written materials used on the job to identify necessary skills and develop curricula
- Maintain a professional relationship and do not get caught up in worksite politics
- Ensure availability of adequate resources to implement the program.

# Comparison of ESL and ESL Workplace Education

	ESL Education	Workplace ESL
Director/ Coordinator		
Instructor		
Goals ✓ Student  ✓ Company		
Factors Affecting Student Success		
Resources/Content		
Context		
Assessment		
Evaluation		
Transfer of Learning		

# Work-Centered Vs. Worker-Centered

Workplace programs should “provide instruction that participants need for all their language needs in all facets of their lives” and should “empower participants by giving them much needed practice with language.”<sup>1</sup>

<b>“Work-Centered”</b>	<b>“Worker-Centered”</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Language structure, functions, and vocabulary are drawn from the work life of the participants</li> <li>▪ Includes language needed to communicate with co-workers</li> <li>▪ Content ranges from specialized vocabulary to language used in procedure manuals or benefits packets</li> <li>▪ Often based on employer’s perception of participants’ language needs for their position</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Includes what workers want to know for their personal lives and what workers want to learn for their jobs</li> <li>▪ Content relates to tasks performed in their jobs</li> <li>▪ More holistic and participatory approach to determining participants’ second language needs</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Either approach can be effective at improving learners’ skills</li> </ul>	

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<sup>1</sup>McGroarty, M. & Scott, S. (1993, October) *Workplace ESL Instruction: Varieties and Constraints*. ERIC

# **Factors Affecting ESL Students' Success in the Workplace<sup>1</sup>**

- Cultural differences can affect performance and learning in the workplace.
- Many language minority workers come from cultures where values such as assertiveness, speaking up on the job, and ambition are not greatly valued (e.g. Southeast Asia workers are taught to quietly follow directions and not draw attention to themselves).
- Language learners need to be able to indicate lack of comprehension, need for clarification and desire to express themselves on the job.
- Workers may hesitate to indicate lack of comprehension of what has been said.
- Advancing oneself in the U.S. workplace is a skill that needs to be taught, as do English language proficiency and literacy skills.

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<sup>1</sup>Burt, M. *Workplace ESL Instruction: Interviews from the Field*, ERIC Washington, D.C.: Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education ( 1997)

# Qualifications of Workplace ESL Instructors<sup>1</sup>

Instructors need to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Occasionally interview employees, supervisors, and participant's peers to clearly identify learning goals</li> <li>▪ Be sensitive to the workplace</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Be comfortable observing in the workplace to better understand the culture and content required</li> </ul>
Instructors must also:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understand the values and perspectives of the business community</li> <li>▪ Promote workplace education at the worksite</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evaluate the impact of their work on non-instructional outcomes</li> </ul>
Instructors should have the ability to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understand the mission of the business and how workplace instruction fits</li> <li>▪ Showcase programs to the business and other interested audiences</li> <li>▪ Use creative problem-solving techniques</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify issues related to cross cultural or multicultural communication</li> <li>▪ Communicate information on learner progress in the format and at the time requested</li> <li>▪ Collect and modify job related materials</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup>Mansoor, I (March 1994) Kaleidoscope: Roles of the ESL Workplace Teacher. Paper presented at The Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Convention.

# Modified Jigsaw Activity

## Instructions

1. Read individually, the following (Estimated at 15 min. each):

Members of Group “A”: (H-10a) <http://www.cal.org/ncl/digests/PLANNINGQA.HTM>

Grognet, Allene Guss (1996) “Q & A *Planning, implementing, and Evaluating Workplace ESL Programs*. ERIC, Washington, DC: National Center for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE)

Members of Group “B”: (H-10b1) <http://www.cal.org/ncl/digests/BURT.HTM>

Burt, Miriam and Saccomano, Mark (1995). *Evaluating Workplace ESL Instructional Programs*. ERIC Digest. Washington, DC: National Center for ESL Literacy Education, Center for Applied Linguistics (EDO-LE-95-07)

(H-10b2) [http://www.cal.org/ncl/digests/WORKPLACE\\_LITERACY.HTML](http://www.cal.org/ncl/digests/WORKPLACE_LITERACY.HTML)

Isserlis, Janet. *Workplace Literacy Programs for Nonnative English Speakers*, ERIC Digest, National Center for ESL Literacy Education, October 1991

Members of Group “C”: (H-10c1) [http://www.cal.org/ncl/digests/WORKPLACE\\_ESL.HTML](http://www.cal.org/ncl/digests/WORKPLACE_ESL.HTML)

McGroarty, Mary & Suzanne Scott, “*Workplace ESL Instruction: Varieties and Constraints*”, ERIC Digest, National Clearinghouse on Literacy Education, October, 1993, EDO-LE-93-07.

(H-10c2) <http://www.cal.org/ncl/digests/SELLING.HTM>

Burt, Miriam. (1995) *Selling Workplace ESL Instructional Programs*. ERIC Digest. Washington, DC: National Center for ESL Literacy Education, Center for Applied Linguistics, December, 1995, EDO-LE-96-01.

2. As a group, decide on the most important points that you need to teach other workshop participants in the 5 minutes you will have to teach. (10 minutes estimated to select points)
3. Write the key points on the blank transparency or flip chart provided in the appropriate columns
4. Decide what instructional strategies would be most effective for teaching those points. You may select individuals to do the teaching or some form of team-or-group teaching. (10 minutes for choosing strategies and constructing any devices necessary—e.g., flip chart, cards, transparency, etc.) **Try to find a way to make your 5-minute lesson creative and interesting so team members will remember the contents.**

**(Note: Total teaching time of 3 expert groups = 15 minutes. Please select a time-keeper from each group to keep tasks 1, 2, and 3 above, and your teaching on time.)**

# Modified ESL Jigsaw Reading: Group A

## Q & A

### Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating Workplace ESL Programs

Project in Adult Immigrant Education (PAIE)  
National Center for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE)

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by Allene Guss Grognet  
Center for Applied Linguistics

Any employment-related English as a second language (ESL) program, whether conducted on the job or as pre-employment training, is a result of five interrelated steps:

1. Conducting a needs analysis of the language and culture needed to perform successfully in a specific workplace or occupation. The needs analysis leads to the development of objectives for the program.
2. Developing a curriculum, based on the objectives, that identifies tasks and skills for verbal interaction on the job, and tasks and skills for reading and writing on the job. The curriculum should also prioritize these tasks and skills.
3. Planning instruction by gathering text material and realia, determining classroom activities, and identifying opportunities for learners to put their skills in practice outside the classroom.
4. Determining instructional strategies that include a variety of activities that focus on the objectives, keep the class learner-centered, and include as much paired and group work as possible. Strategies for assessment should also be determined when planning instruction.
5. Evaluating the program on both a formative and summative basis.

These steps are discussed below from the point of view of what the educator needs to consider in planning, implementing, and evaluating a program. However, throughout the process, the educator must remember that the "buy-in" of the business partner, especially at the level of the frontline supervisor, is indispensable to the success of any workplace ESL program (Kirby, 1989; Westerfield & Burt, 1996).

#### **How should a needs analysis be conducted?**

The needs analysis is perhaps the most crucial of the steps, because the remaining steps are based on it. Much has been written about how and why to do a needs analysis. Philippi (1991) describes a detailed process of observing workers on the job, interviewing all stakeholders, and collecting all written material to determine the basic skills needed on the job to do a specific job. Thomas, Grover, Cichon, Bird, and Harns (1991) provide a step-by-step guide on how to perform a task analysis for language minority employees. Burt and Saccomano (1995) discuss the value of a needs analysis that goes beyond the work floor to include union meetings and other places where workers interact on the job. Auerbach and Wallerstein (1987) talk about a needs assessment process that is more participatory as workers themselves identify the issues they wish to explore in the class. And Taggart (1996) points out that the emergent curriculum development process that takes place as the class progresses provides timely information to service providers and is less costly for employers.

Participatory learner-generated needs assessment is not antithetical to the traditional needs assessment process. Grognet (1994) stresses that for adults learning English as a second language, any instruction to help them succeed in the workplace is in their best interest and is by definition learner-centered. Lomperis (in press) asserts that having a curriculum framework generated from a pre-program needs assessment can facilitate the process of soliciting input from learners in the classroom. Finally, Mansoor (1995) speaks of the necessity for the needs analysis to be performed not solely for the jobs the participants have, but for the positions they aspire to, as well.

If the learners are already on the job, the analysis is conducted in that specific workplace. If learners are preparing for a job, several different environments in that occupation can be used for the needs analysis. In interviewing or surveying supervisors, managers, and nonnative and English-speaking employees, the same kinds of questions should be asked so that information from all these sources can be compared (Alamprese, 1994; Lynch, 1990).

For example, managers and supervisors might be asked if they perceive their employees experiencing difficulty in such common workplace tasks as following spoken instructions; explaining or giving instructions; reporting problems; asking questions if they don't understand something; communicating with co-workers; communicating on the telephone; communicating in group or team meetings; making suggestions; reading job-related manuals; filling out forms; writing memos, letters, or reports; reading notices, newsletters, or short reports; doing job-related math computations; interpreting graphs, charts, or diagrams; or following safety standards and measures. Employees or learners should also be asked if they have difficulties with these tasks. Next, or simultaneously, educators go to the workplace to see the jobs performed and the language used on the job. At the same time, all of the written materials used in the workplace or in that occupation—for example, manuals, notices, safety instructions, and office forms—should be collected and analyzed for linguistic difficulty. Meetings and other team activities should also be observed for language use.

Perhaps the most important part of the needs analysis is the reconciliation, where one takes the information from managers and supervisors, employees and learners, puts it together with personal observation, and lists and prioritizes the language needed on the job. This in turn leads to forming the objectives for the program. Program objectives developed in this way are based not only on what one party has reported, and not solely on observation, but on a combination of factors.

## **What major areas should be considered in curriculum development?**

While needs vary within each worksite or occupation, there are general areas that should be considered in curriculum development. Some of these areas, with examples of specific linguistic and cultural competencies, are outlined below. Not all tasks and functions are taught at every worksite to every participant. However, along with the information from the needs analysis and from learner input, these topics form the backbone of the curriculum.

---

### **Workplace Curriculum Topics**

#### **1. Workplace Communication Expectations**

- greeting coworkers
- asking questions
- making "small talk"
- reporting problems and progress
- calling in sick or late
- requesting time off or permission to leave early
- responding to interruption and criticism
- making suggestions
- accepting and declining requests and invitations

- asking for and giving clarification and verification
- apologizing

## **2. Following Directions and Instructions**

- identifying listening strategies for directions
- understanding quality control language
- understanding words of sequencing
- giving feedback to directions
- asking for, giving, and following directions
- giving and responding to warnings
- understanding and following worksite rules
- following safety rules

## **3. Job-Specific Terminology**

- identification of one's job
- enumeration of the tasks
- description of the tasks
- identification and description of tools, equipment and machinery
- identification of products and processes

## **4. Cross-cultural Factors**

- food and eating habits
- personal hygiene, habits, and appearance
- cultural values of America and the American workplace
- understanding workplace hierarchies
- understanding "unwritten rules"
- recognizing problems and understanding appropriate problem-solving strategies

## **5. Company Organization and Culture**

- management functions
- union functions
- personnel policies, procedures, and benefits
- performance evaluations
- rewards and recognition

## **6. Upgrading and Training**

- understanding career opportunities
- understanding the need for training
- understanding what a "valued" worker is

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Other factors also matter. Understanding situations in which pronunciation makes a difference, such as in describing work processes and procedures or in giving oral instructions, is important as are literacy initiatives (e.g., reading posted notices, production reports, and forms; writing an accident report; and keeping a written log). However, for the language minority worker, the curriculum should start with workplace communication and end with company organization and culture, and skills upgrading.

## What should be considered when planning lessons?

Lesson planning includes gathering text material and realia (e.g., those manuals, signs, and job aids that were analyzed during the needs analysis process) and any tools and equipment possible. From these, classroom activities that involve listening, speaking, reading, and writing can then be designed. However, language practice should not be limited to the classroom. Learners should leave the classroom after each session able to perform at least one new linguistic skill. For example, they might be able to pronounce the names of three pieces of equipment, know how to interrupt politely, or use the index of their personnel manual to find information on sick leave policy. To this end, instruction must include activities that use language needed by learners either on the job or in the wider community.

The educator may have input into revising written materials used at the worksite as a way of resolving worker performance problems on the job (Westerfield & Burt, 1996). Guidelines for adapting written material found on the job follow:

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### Adapting Written Materials

- Make the topic/idea clear.
  - Reduce the number of words in a sentence and sentences in a paragraph wherever possible.
  - Rewrite sentences in subject-verb-object word order.
  - Change sentences written in the passive voice to the active voice wherever possible.
  - Introduce new vocabulary in context and reinforce its use throughout the text.
  - Eliminate as many relative clauses as possible.
  - Use nouns instead of pronouns, even though it may sound repetitious.
  - Rewrite paragraphs into charts, graphs, and other diagrams wherever possible.
  - Make sure that expectations of prior knowledge are clear, and if necessary, provide background material.
  - Eliminate extraneous material.
- 

## What are characteristics of learner-centered instruction?

All workplace ESL (and all adult ESL in general) should be learner-centered. If language learning is to be successful, the learners' needs, rather than the grammar or functions of language, must form the core of the curriculum and the instruction.

Many educators, among them Auerbach (1992), Auerbach and Wallerstein (1987), and Nash, Cason, Rhum, McGrail, and Gomez-Sanford (1992), have written about the learner-centered ESL class. In a learner-centered class, the teacher creates a supportive environment in which learners can take initiative in choosing what and how they want to learn. The teacher does not give up control of the classroom, but rather structures and orders the learning process, guiding and giving feedback to learners so that their needs, as well as the needs of the workplace, are being addressed. In a traditional teacher-centered classroom, where the teacher makes all the decisions, learners are sometimes stifled. At the same time, too much freedom given to learners, especially those from cultures where the teacher is the sole and absolute classroom authority, may cause learners to feel that the teacher has abandoned them (Shank & Terrill, 1995). The teacher must determine the right mix of license and guidance.

The following are characteristics of learner-centered classrooms:

1. What happens in the language classroom is a negotiated process between learners and the teacher. The content and sequence of the workplace curriculum is seen as a starting point for classroom interaction and for learner generation of their own occupational learning materials. The language presented and practiced in a good adult ESL text is usually based on situations and contexts that

language minority adults have in common. When one adds to this the exigencies of a particular workplace or occupation, another layer of learning is presented to the learner.

2. Problem solving occupies a good portion of any adult's life, so it is not surprising that problem-solving activities are a necessary part of learner-centered curricula. Problem-solving exercises should be prominent in any workplace classroom. Learners can be asked what they would say or do in a particular situation, or about their own experiences in circumstances similar to those presented by the teacher. Learners can also be asked to present the pro's and con's of a situation, to negotiate, to persuade, or to generate problem-solving and simulation activities from their own lives. By presenting and solving problems in the classroom, learners become confident in their ability to use language to solve problems and to take action in the workplace and in the larger social sphere. These problem-solving activities are especially valuable in high-performance workplaces where work is team-based and workplace decisions are made through group negotiation (Taggart, 1996).
3. The traditional roles of the teacher as planner of content, sole deliverer of instruction, controller of the classroom, and evaluator of achievement change dramatically in a learner-centered classroom. When the classroom atmosphere is collaborative, the teacher becomes facilitator, moderator, group leader, coach, manager of processes and procedures, giver of feedback, and partner in learning. This is true whether the teacher has planned a whole-class, small-group, paired, or individual activity. (See Shank and Terrill, 1995, for discussion of when and how to group learners.)
4. In managing communicative situations in a learner-centered environment, teachers set the stage for learners to experiment with language, negotiate meaning, make mistakes, and monitor and evaluate their own language learning progress. Language is essentially a social function acquired through interaction with others in one-to-one and group situations. Learners process meaningful discourse and produce language in response to other human beings. The teacher is responsible for establishing the supportive environment in which this can happen. This does not mean that the teacher never corrects errors; it means that the teacher knows when and how to deal with error correction and can help learners understand when errors will interfere with effective, comprehensible communication.

## **What are learner-centered instructional strategies?**

Some strategies that are especially useful for workplace ESL programs are:

- Using authentic language in the classroom.
- Placing the learning in workplace and other adult contexts relevant to the lives of learners, their families, and friends.
- Using visual stimuli for language learning, where appropriate, and progressing from visual to text-oriented material. While effective for all language learners, this progression taps into the natural learning strategies of low-literate individuals who often use visual clues in place of literacy skills (Holt, 1995).
- Emphasizing paired and group work, because learners acquire language through interaction with others on meaningful tasks in meaningful contexts. It also sets the stage for teamwork in the workplace (Taggart, 1996).
- Adopting a whole language orientation-integrating listening, speaking, reading, and writing-to reflect natural language use.
- Choosing activities that help learners transfer what they learn in the classroom to the worlds in which they live.
- Treating the learning of grammar as a discovery process, with a focus on understanding the rules for language only after learners have already used and internalized the language. In this way, grammar is not a separate part of the curriculum, but rather is infused throughout.

- Integrating new cultural skills with new linguistic skills. Learners acquire new language and cultural behaviors appropriate to the U.S. workplace, and the workplace becomes a less strange and frightening environment.

Various types of exercises and activities can be used in a learner-centered environment. These include question and answer, matching, identification, interview, fill-in, labeling, and alphabetizing; using charts and graphs; doing a Total Physical Response (TPR) activity; playing games such as Concentration and Twenty Questions; creating role-plays and simulations; developing a Language Experience Approach (LEA) story; or writing in a dialogue journal. (See Holt, 1995, and Peyton and Crandall, 1995, for a discussion of these and other adult ESL class activities.)

## What about assessing learner progress?

Testing is part of teaching. Funders may mandate that programs use commercially available tests such as the Basic English Skills Test (BEST) and the Comprehensive Adult Student Achievement System (CASAS). These tests, when used in combination with program-developed, performance-based measures, can provide a clear picture of what has been learned in the class. (See Burt and Keenan, 1995, for a discussion of learner assessment in adult ESL instruction.) Performance-based tests measure the learner's ability to apply what has been learned to specific, real-life tasks. Actual job artifacts such as pay stubs, job schedules, and company manuals can be used to assess linguistic skills. Further, program-developed materials lend themselves well to workplace ESL instruction in that they allow both learners and teachers to see progress in the outlined objectives over time. Some program-developed assessment instruments are discussed below:

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### Program-Developed Assessment Instruments

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1. Checklists (e.g., aural/oral, reading, writing)
  2. Learner-generated learning logs
  3. Portfolios (e.g. written classwork, learner self-analysis, program-developed tests)
- 

*Checklists.* Objectives for the course, or even for each lesson, can form the basis of a checklist. For instance, an *aural/oral checklist* for high-beginning learners might include such items as 1) uses level-appropriate words and phrases to respond verbally to spoken language; 2) uses extended speech to respond verbally to spoken language; 3) initiates conversation; 4) participates in small group or paired activities; 5) follows oral directions for a process; and 6) asks for clarification.

A checklist for *reading* might include such items as 1) recognizes appropriate sight words(e.g., words on safety signs); 2) recognizes words in context; 3) shows evidence of skimming; 4) shows evidence of scanning; 5) reads simplified job aids or manuals; and 6) reads paycheck information.

A checklist for *writing* might include entries such as 1) fills out simple forms; 2) makes entries into work log; and 3) writes requests for time-off.

*Learner-generated learning logs.* In a notebook, such page headings as "Things I Learned This Month" "Things I Find Easy in English" "Things I Find Hard in English" "Things I Would Like to Be Able to Do in My Work in English" create categories that help learners see growth in their English language skills over time. If learners make an entry on one or more pages every week, then review the logs with their teachers every three months, they usually see progress, even if it is slight. This also helps teachers to individualize instruction.

*Portfolios.* These individual learner folders include samples of written work, all pre- and post-testing, self analysis, and program-developed assessment instruments. Portfolio contents also tend to show growth in vocabulary, fluency, and the mechanics of writing over time.

## What kind of program evaluation is necessary?

*Formative evaluation,* performed while a program is in operation, should be a joint process between a third-party evaluator and program personnel. Together, they should review the curriculum to make sure it reflects the program objectives as formulated through the needs analysis process. They should also review all instructional materials (e.g., commercial texts and program-developed materials) to see that they meet workplace and learner needs. Finally, the third-party evaluator should periodically observe the classroom to evaluate instruction and learner/teacher interaction.

*Summative evaluation,* done at the completion of a program, should evaluate both the learner and the program. Learner evaluation data can be taken from formal pre- and post-tests as well as from learner self-analysis, learner writings, interviews, and program-developed assessments (Burt & Saccomano, 1995).

A summative program evaluation should be completed by a third party. The third party evaluator analyzes the above summative data that includes information from all the stakeholders (i.e., teachers, employers, union representatives, and learners) about what worked and did not work in the program, and why. The evaluator also looks at relationships among all the stakeholders. This analysis will yield more qualitative than quantitative data. However, there are processes to quantify qualitative information through matrices, scales, and charts, as discussed in Alamprese, 1994; Lynch, 1990; and Sperazi & Jurmo, 1994.

## Conclusion

By following the steps discussed in this digest, a workplace or pre-employment ESL program should meet the needs of employers, outside funders, and learners. The best advertisement for a workplace program is employers choosing to continue instructional programs because they see marked improvement in their employees' work performance. The best advertisement for a pre-employment program is learners using English skills on jobs they have acquired because of their training.

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*This article is produced by the Project in Adult Immigrant Education, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation through a grant to the Center for Applied Linguistics.*

*The National Center for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE) is operated by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) with funding from the U.S. Department of Education (ED), Office of Vocational and Adult Education and the National Institute for Literacy, through the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, under contract no. RR 93002010. The opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the Institute or ED or the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.*

# Evaluating Workplace ESL Instructional Programs

by Miriam Burt and Mark Saccomano  
Center for Applied Linguistics

As the United States continued its shift from a manufacturing- to a service-based economy in the late 1980s and early 1990s, researchers reported that changes in employment patterns would require workers to have better communication skills and to be both literate and proficient in English (McGroarty & Scott, 1993). Not surprisingly, there was a rise in the number of workplace education programs for both native and non-native speakers of English. The U.S. Department of Education's National Workplace Literacy Program (NWLTP), which funded demonstration workplace projects offering instruction in basic skills, literacy, and English as a second language (ESL), fueled this increase by funding more than 300 projects between 1988 and 1994. Forty-nine percent of these projects included at least some ESL instruction.

With this increase in workplace instructional programs, a need has arisen for procedures to evaluate program effectiveness. Evaluations of ESL workplace programs seek to determine if the attention given to improving basic skills and English language proficiency has made a change in the participant and in the workplace. They also identify practices associated with program effectiveness so that successes can be replicated (Alamprese, 1994). This digest examines evaluation measures and activities used in workplace programs, and discusses issues associated with the evaluation of workplace ESL programs.

## Evaluation Measures and Activities

Because numbers alone cannot show the depth or the breadth of a program's impact, evaluations often use both quantitative and qualitative measures to gauge success in attaining program outcomes (Padak & Padak, 1991). Qualitative measures include focus groups and individual interviews, workplace observations, and portfolios of learner classwork (Alamprese, 1994). Quantitative measures include commercially available tests, scaled performance ratings, and some program-developed assessment tools, such as portfolios.

## Focus Groups and Stakeholder Interviews

What is examined in an evaluation is determined by stakeholders' (employers, labor unions, participants, teachers, funders) stated goals, expected outcomes for the program, and the resources available to the evaluator (Patton, 1987). As stakeholders may have different, possibly conflicting goals, it is important to clarify these goals and achieve a consensus beforehand as to which goals are most important to examine with the available resources (Fitz-Gibbon & Morris, 1987). The information gathered from the focus groups and stakeholder interviews should be recorded and accessible to the program and to the evaluators throughout the program.

## Observations

Task analyses are generally used in curriculum development as educators observe and record their observations of the discrete steps included in workplace tasks such as setting up the salad bar for a cafeteria or making change for a customer at the cash register. The recorded observations are then plotted on a matrix of basic skills or English language skills. Although programs have relied on these analyses as a key data source for workplace outcomes (Alamprese, 1994), they do not represent the totality of skills used at the workplace. In order to better understand the *range* of skills needed for workplace success, other workplace-related activities such as staff meetings and union functions should also be observed.

## **Participant and Supervisor Interviews**

Pre-program interviews with participants solicit information on their goals, their reasons for enrolling in the classes, and their perceived basic skills and English language needs for the workplace. When matched with exit interview data, these data provide information to evaluate program outcomes. Because the purpose of these interviews is to obtain information about learner perceptions rather than to assess learner skills, it is advisable to use the native language when interviewing participants with low English skills.

Similarly, the direct supervisors of participants should be interviewed both before and after the program to compare initial assessment of learner needs and expected outcomes with actual results. It is also useful to interview the direct supervisors midway through the program for their feedback on worker improvement and to identify unmet needs.

## **Tests and Other Types of Assessment**

Commercially available tests are commonly used sources of quantitative data. The perceived objectivity of these tests and their long tradition of use make them appealing to managers and funders who often use them to make decisions regarding the continuation of a program. And, in fact, test-taking is a skill all learners need, and it is likely that ESL participants will come across this type of test in other contexts, as well.

Two commercially available tests that include workplace-related items and are often used in ESL programs are the Basic English Skills Test (BEST) and the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) ESL Appraisal. These instruments are easy to use, their reliability has been tested, and they allow for comparison among programs. The objections to these tests are that they may not measure what has been taught in the classroom, and they may have little applicability to specific workplace tasks or to a particular workplace. And, as with all tests, when interpreting results, evaluators and program staff should be aware that some errors may be due to ESL participants' unfamiliarity with the format of the tests rather than to lack of content knowledge.

Because of the limitations of commercially available tests, a complete evaluation of learner progress requires using tests created for the program. *Performance-developed tests* are designed to measure the learner's ability to apply what has been learned to specific workplace tasks (Alamprese & Kay, 1993). Because these tests are developed from authentic materials (e.g., job schedules, pay stubs, and union contracts) from participants' own workplaces, the content is appropriate and likely to be familiar to the participants.

Another assessment measure is the *portfolio* of learner work. Portfolios often include samples of class work, checklists where learners rate their progress in basic and workplace skills, and journals where they record their reactions to class and workplace activities. Like interviews, these measures can provide vital information on learner attitudes and concerns. They are also a venue for self-assessment, and allow participants who are unable or unwilling to express themselves orally, or who have difficulty with formal tests, to demonstrate progress towards their goals.

## **Quantifying Qualitative Measures**

To increase credibility and help ensure reliability of qualitative measures, evaluators collect multiple types of evidence (such as interviews and observations) from various stakeholders around a single outcome (Alamprese, 1994; Patton, 1987; Lynch 1990). Data collected from the various measures can then be arranged into matrices. This chart-like format organizes material thematically and enables an analysis of data across respondents by themes (See Fitz-Gibbon & Morris, 1987; Lynch, 1990; and Sperazi & Jurmo, 1994).

Questionnaire and interview data can be quantified by creating a scale that categorizes responses and assigns them a numeric value. Improvement in such subjective areas as worker attitudes can then be demonstrated to funders and managers in a numeric or graphic form.

## **Issues in Program Evaluation**

Many issues surround program evaluation for workplace ESL instruction. Stakeholders may have unrealistic expectations of how much improvement a few hours of instruction can effect. It is unlikely that a workplace ESL class of 40-60 hours will turn participants with low-level English skills into fluent

speakers of English. Therefore, when interpreting findings, it is important for stakeholders to realize that ESL workplace programs may not provide enough practice time to accomplish substantial progress in English language proficiency.

The measurement of workplace improvement presents a special challenge, especially in workplace programs at hospitals, residential centers, and restaurants. What measures of workplace productivity exist where there is no product being manufactured? Improved safety (decreased accidents on the job) is a quantifiable measure, as is a reduction in the amount of food wasted in preparation. But how is improved worker attitude measured? Some ESL programs measure success by counting the increased number of verbal and written suggestions offered on the job by language minority workers or by their willingness to indicate lack of comprehension on the job (Mikulecky & Lloyd, 1994; Mrowicki & Conrath, 1994). Other programs record participant requests to be cross-trained or to learn other jobs at their workplaces (Alamprese & Kay, 1993). A long-term view is often needed, however, to discern changes in worker performance and in workplace productivity; longitudinal studies, where stakeholders are interviewed six months to a year after completion of a program, are recommended.

Even if data from longitudinal studies is available, it is not accurate to place all credit for improvement in worker attitude or workplace productivity (or blame for lack thereof) on the instructional program. Sarmiento (1993) asserts that other factors (Are there opportunities for workers to advance? Are the skills of all workers appreciated and used? Is worker input in decision making valued?) need to be considered when evaluating workplace programs. However, for ESL participants who come from cultures where assertiveness, ambition, and speaking up on the job may not be valued, the presentation of opportunities to succeed is not enough. Advancing oneself at the U.S. workplace is a cross-cultural skill, which, like language and literacy skills, must be taught.

Finally, funding is an important issue in evaluation. The activities described above (focus groups, interviews in English or in the native language, program-developed assessment instruments, extensive contacts with all stakeholders from before the program begins until months after completion) are costly. As federal funds are unlikely to be available, evaluations need to be structured so that they can provide practical information to the employers funding them.

## Conclusion

Evaluation is a complex process that involves all stakeholders and must be an integral part of workplace ESL instructional programs before, during, and after the programs have been completed. When done appropriately, it can increase program effectiveness by providing valuable information about the impact of programs and highlighting areas where improvement is needed (Jurmo, 1994). And, a rigorous and complete evaluation can identify replicable best practices, enabling a program to serve as a model for other workplace ESL instructional programs.

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This article is produced in part by the Project in Adult Immigrant Education, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation through a grant to the Center for Applied Linguistics.

# Workplace Literacy Programs for Nonnative English Speakers

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Workplace-based educational programs are not new. Recent perceptions of a national literacy crisis and the need for a competitive workforce, however, have resulted in the development of new programs across the country, many of which provide literacy and language training for nonnative English speakers.

## Reasons for Initiating Workplace Programs

The increasing need in the service industry for competent workers with literacy skills in English, combined with uncertain economic times, has resulted in more limited work opportunities for many nonnative speakers of English and more complex demands on those who are employed. Because of the growing numbers of nonnative English speakers in the U.S. workforce and their educational needs, some companies are beginning to provide training in literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving skills on the job (Johnston & Packer, 1987).

Workplace-based programs differ from traditional classroom-based literacy programs with a workplace component. They take place at the work site or at a location designated by the site, in response to needs identified by staff at the site--top level management, personnel officers, union representatives, or line workers. Employers' stated need for their employees' education is often related to specific skills, and expectations and stakes are often high. Those initiating the program often expect significant changes in the workplace; participating workers see education as an advancement opportunity on and off the job.

Those designing workplace-based programs face an additional challenge because they must take into account not only the dynamics of the workplace itself but also the literacy needs expressed by the learners, their employers, and union representatives. Often the interests of these groups conflict. At the same time, workplace-based programs have powerful potential for promoting learning. Workers who would not attend a night class in another location have their education brought to them. Education can be tailored to the needs and interests of the workers and discussion of job-specific literacy needs can provide a starting place for addressing literacy needs beyond the workplace as well.

## Types and Essential Features of Programs

Wrigley (personal communication, August 1990) suggests three models for workplace literacy: *workplace-specific* (which focuses on language and literacy skills needed for specific jobs at a specific site), *workplace-general* (which focuses on general employment skills such as seeking clarification, complaining about unfair treatment, or organizing a committee, or on issues such as cross-cultural communication), and *workplace clusters* (where a number of jobs or vocations are clustered together according to the functions or skills they have in common). Programs for nonnative English speaking workers tend to be both workplace-specific and workplace-general; depending on the needs of a company and its learners, workplace-specific instruction often consists of one or more units within a workplace-general curriculum. Pelavin Associates (1991) has identified four major components of successful workplace programs: 1) systematic analysis of on-the-job literacy requirements; 2) active ongoing involvement by workers in determining the types of tasks they must perform and the literacy levels necessary; 3) active involvement by project partners (employers, unions, and teachers) in planning, designing, and operating classes; and 4) development of instructional materials related to literacy skills actually required on the job.

The design and implementation of an effective program include the components described below.

## Needs Assessment

Before appropriate curricula, materials, and teaching approaches for a particular workplace program can be determined, a needs assessment must be conducted in cooperation with key company and worker representatives. Because the needs assessment involves learning about the total ecology of the work site from multiple perspectives, an ethnographic approach is most effective (see Castaldi, 1991). Extended visits to the workplace--to production lines, to break and eating areas, and to office spaces--allow direct observation of activities to augment and clarify information provided by workers and employers in meetings and interviews. By speaking not only to management and personnel representatives but also to union representatives, potential learners, and key workers with whom the learners interact, the person conducting the needs assessment learns about the workings of the company and the needs of workers from a variety of perspectives, gleaning answers to questions such as the following:

- What jobs are performed? What skills are required for those jobs?
- What skills do workers have? What skills do they still need and want?
- What problems do workers experience in performing their jobs and moving to new jobs?
- Who holds the positions of power in the company, and who are their subordinates? Who makes decisions about hiring, job allocation, training, and other company policies?
- Why is the site considering an education program for its employees? Where did the idea originate, and what was the route it followed through the organizational hierarchy?
- Who determined that there was a language or literacy problem, and with whom is the problem presumed to lie?
- How will learners be recruited? Will attendance be mandatory or optional? Will a stipend be given upon completion of the program? What are the consequences of non-completion of the program?
- What are the workers' educational aspirations, and how do they participate in planning the program?
- What are the language, literacy, and cultural issues to be addressed?
- Who will measure progress in the program? How? What is at stake if a certain literacy level is not attained by the program's end?

## Program Design, Curricula, and Materials

The needs assessment feeds directly into the design of the program. Mrowicki and Lynch (1991), for example, use grids and graphs to chart uses of language and literacy and potential literacy and communication problems in the workplace, and then construct appropriate curricula. Anorve (1989) bases his program design on impressionistic and descriptive observations and formal and informal interactions with employers and employees.

Workplace literacy programs are moving away from conceiving of education as remediation of learner weaknesses and toward emphasizing and building on the skills and strengths that workers already have. Eastern Michigan University's Academy, one example of an effective research-based, learner-centered adult literacy project, cites three principles basic to its approach: "Learners' strengths are recognized and built on, teachers and learners collaborate as equal partners, and the environment has a significant impact upon teaching" (Soifer, Young & Irwin, 1989, p. 66). Academy staff pay attention to the diverse prior educational experiences of learners and attempt to undo the "years of working in a very directed, repetitive situation that have only reinforced their low self-esteem and sense of powerlessness" (p. 66).

Some workplace literacy programs are also moving away from the idea that they should prepare learners for specific jobs, believing instead that workers should "develop...the critical understanding necessary to apply knowledge to an evolving and continuously changing environment" and have the tools necessary to cope with that environment. These tools include "the ability to think, reason, question, and to search out facts" (Pandey, 1989, p. 6).

The best workplace literacy programs, in this growing view, are not those designed and carried out by outside researchers or top-level management. Instead, learners themselves are involved in formulating and implementing the program. In some instances, course content is not even fully determined until the course

is actually underway and the instructor has come to know the learners. Learners continue to participate in developing the curriculum and content throughout the course.

A critical aspect of program design is defining, clarifying, and at times overcoming the different expectations that managers, supervisors, union representatives, and workers have for workplace education. For example, employers may want workers to gain specific skills as a result of attending workplace classes, while workers may want to develop more general literacy and language skills for use beyond the workplace. Bean (1990) argues that employers need to be helped to broaden their understanding of the kinds of training that are needed. Sarmiento & Kay (1990) likewise argue for the need to reconcile workers' employment and personal literacy needs with those of the employer.

Employers *and* learners need to realize the time it takes to acquire and build on literacy skills. Workplace literacy is a long-term and ongoing process. Successful programs run for several modules or semesters and promote teacher/learner collaboration in deciding how long the learner will continue (see Pharness, 1991).

Some programs use curricula, training manuals, or guidelines developed by a company, and adapt these materials to the needs of their learners. Others develop instructional plans with learners, integrating employers' stated needs (for example, "workers need to fill in work order forms more carefully") with learners' stated needs. Soifer et al. (1989) stress the need for authentic, challenging, non-threatening materials that include printed materials used on the job such as work orders, pay stubs, and handbooks.

## **Learner Assessment**

Effective learner assessment is an important part of a workplace literacy program, because the results can have serious consequences in terms of employment options. While assessment has traditionally involved standardized pre- and post-testing (using tests such as the BEST Center for Applied Linguistics, 1984 or other in-house or site-specific tests), many programs are moving to other, more qualitative means of assessment such as portfolios, periodic observations with focused checklists, or interviews with learners and supervisors (Lytle & Wolfe, 1989). Programs preparing learners for licensing or other credentials must follow state or nationally developed testing procedures in addition to their own assessments.

## **Conclusion**

Given the enormous potential for workplace learning, employers, unions, teachers, researchers, and policy makers need to work together to develop, implement, and study effective programs. Programs need to focus on long-term processes rather than quick-fix solutions; involve teachers and students in all aspects of design, implementation, and assessment; identify and build on the strengths that learners bring to instruction; and expand the focus of instruction so it does not simply develop specific skills but also increases individuals' options as workers and as citizens.

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The National Clearinghouse on Literacy Education (NCLE) is operated by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract no. RI89166001. The opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of OERI or ED.

## Workplace ESL Instruction: Varieties and Constraints

by Mary McGroarty & Suzanne Scott

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Changes in the U.S. economy are altering employment patterns, and these changes have implications for workers whose native language is other than English. While the nature and type of English language skills needed to succeed on the job vary according to local employment patterns, many commentators on trends in the workplace see a broad-scale shift to jobs that demand better communication skills and thus assume English fluency, both oral and written (e.g., Naisbitt & Aburdene, 1990). Though the extent and impact of such a shift has been questioned (Mishel & Teixeira, 1991), lack of English language and literacy skills is clearly a barrier to many kinds of employment. Hence, many programs have been established to prepare adults for the workplace or to help workers already on the job. Here we summarize the types of existing programs and discuss constraints on program development.

### Meanings of "Workplace Literacy Instruction"

ESL programs including some component designated as "workplace language" are found in a variety of settings and funded by various sponsors. This variety is a key to understanding the nature of instruction provided (Kerda & Imel, 1993).

**Pre-workplace classes.** Some ESL literacy programs might be more accurately called "pre-workplace." They serve unemployed heterogeneous groups of adult ESL learners who are preparing to enter the workplace. Learners in these programs work on a variety of second language skills, many of them related to interviewing or filling out the forms needed to get a job. Some programs are aimed specifically at training workers for a certain job area or occupational cluster, such as manufacturing or custodial positions. Much of the course material comes directly from the jobs learners expect to do.

**"Work-centered" approaches.** The usual meaning of "workplace ESL" is second language instruction held at the work site. Goals for such programs generally reflect a competency-based approach, particularly if they have been developed based on an employer's perception of participants' language needs for their positions (Wrigley & Guth, 1992). Thus the language structures, functions, and vocabulary are drawn from the work life of the participants and can range from discrete study of specialized vocabulary items, to the more abstract and often convoluted language used in procedures manuals or benefits packets, to the language needed to communicate with co-workers.

**"Worker-centered" approaches.** A limitation of competency-based workplace ESL programs is that they dwell on isolated second language skills and ignore participants' full social identity, only part of which is constituted by the job held. Labor organizations have been particularly sensitive to the need to take a "worker-centered" rather than "work-centered" view of second language instruction, which includes finding out what workers want to know for their personal lives as well as the tasks they perform in their jobs (Gueble, 1990). Many adult education agencies and employee organizations now favor this more holistic and participatory approach to determining participants' second language needs (Wrigley & Guth, 1992).

## Current Perspectives on Workplace Learning

Observers have noted that, too often, workplace education programs treat workers as skills deficient rather than as multifaceted individuals with strengths to be built on and perspectives that enrich workplace activity (Hull, 1993). While worker-centered, participatory programs value employees as multifaceted individuals, they often retain a focus on functional language, teaching workers, for example, how to interact with supervisors or customers in typical production or service settings when they may already have done so successfully for months or years. Recent research in Britain (Roberts, Davies, & Jupp, 1992) and the United States (Hart-Landsberg, Braunger, Reder, & Cross, 1993) emphasizes the social construction of work-based learning, the interactive nature of human negotiations on the job, and the need to build workers' self-confidence as well as language skills. Advisory committees made up of learners, supervisors, and teachers are one way to assure that all of the participants' needs are being addressed.

## Constraints on ESL Workplace Program Development

The type of program and its underlying philosophy, as well as other issues detailed below, affect the course goals, materials, and methodology; time, location, frequency, and duration of ESL classes; and voluntary or mandatory nature of participation. There are many factors for both program developers and learners to consider.

**Needs assessment.** To discover what skills employees need, most program developers conduct some form of a needs assessment, although the depth and scope of such assessments vary considerably. Explanations of needs assessments and program development abound in the literature. Here we address criticisms of and constraints on needs assessment. One recent criticism is that the task analyses (or job audits) that normally comprise needs assessments are too narrowly focused on specific job skills; needs assessments should incorporate a broader range of knowledge (U.S. Department of Education, 1992).

The time required to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment presents another concern. Thomas, Grover, Cichon, Bird, and Harns (1991) suggest that, at a minimum, six weeks of detailed planning precede a 40-hour course. Such lengthy preparation time is unlikely to be universally feasible, so some negotiation will probably take place. Even with considerable lead time to develop curricula, it is not possible to predict all workplace language needs; flexibility and spontaneity allow for emerging curricula.

**Assessment measures.** Like other adult ESL and literacy programs, workplace ESL programs face difficulties identifying appropriate language assessment measures, particularly for the job-related skills developed as a part of workplace training (Berryman, 1993). Program developers need to define appropriate indicators of instructional quality and tailor standards for evaluating participant outcomes to their particular circumstances.

**Participant attitudes and expectations.** Both workers and employers may demonstrate either skepticism or unrealistically high expectations about what can be accomplished during instruction. Employers need to acknowledge the concerns of employees and their unions, who may fear that job audits could be used to fire or demote employees whose skills fail to match those putatively required for tasks they already perform satisfactorily (Sarmiento & Kay, 1990). Thus, the types of information required for a needs assessment and their uses must be established and known to all parties from the program's inception.

**Enrollment management.** The recruitment and retention of students presents additional challenges for program developers. Developers need to decide which employee groups to target and whether to make participation voluntary or mandatory. Most practitioners strongly recommend that participation be voluntary. If training does not occur during work hours and at the work site, issues of childcare, transportation, and remuneration must also be resolved.

**Language choice.** While employers may expect or even demand that English be the sole language of instruction, this is not always the most effective use of instructional time. Recently arrived immigrants and refugees with limited English proficiency may benefit from explanations of workplace procedures and training in their native language. Developers thus must determine whether English, the native language(s) of learners, or some combination is the most effective vehicle for instruction.

**Support.** Finding financial and organizational support for a workplace ESL program is a multifaceted task. Presently, funding for training primarily benefits professional and managerial employees, most of them college educated (Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, 1990). The nonnative English speaker is rarely the recipient of training, except in new-hire education. Support is often short term and comes from a complex combination of public agency, private employer, union, and community-based organizations, and is realized in a variety of forms (McGroarty, 1993): direct payment of costs, subsidies in the form of childcare or transportation costs, or provision of things such as classroom space.

**Building coalitions.** A major challenge for workplace programs is the creation of a successful coalition among the many parties involved. Second language professionals, accustomed to operating with some measure of autonomy, need to learn to collaborate with employers, employees, and officials in public agencies and unions. Each stakeholder must cultivate an ability to appreciate the concerns and expertise of others. No one of these groups can successfully take on alone the considerable task of designing, implementing, and evaluating a workplace language program (Vanett & Facer, 1992).

**Decentralization.** No single federal or private educational or business agency coordinates all workplace ESL programs, although the Departments of Education and Labor oversee current federally funded projects. This decentralization makes gathering information difficult for program developers, who must often reinvent the wheel when starting a program if they are not already part of a network of experienced professionals. Even if developers are aware of different programs, the short lifespan of many workplace language programs, combined with the fragile nature of the support coalitions and the often customized nature of specific worksite curricula, hinder efforts to gather information on curricula or program results. To alleviate this problem, several manuals for workplace language training have been published (e.g., Bradley, Killian, & Friedenber, 1990; Cook & Godley, 1989). Recognizing the problems inherent in short-term projects, the U.S. Department of Education (1992) recently extended the length of its workplace education grants to three years.

In conclusion, development of ESL instructional programs for the workplace is a complex and long-term process. As the national employment picture changes, ESL workplace instruction needs to remain flexible and innovative to serve participants effectively.

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# Selling Workplace ESL Instructional Programs

by Miriam Burt  
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The late 1980s and early 1990s witnessed a rise in visibility for workplace instructional programs to improve workers' basic skills and English language proficiency. From 1988 through 1994, the U.S. Department of Education's National Workplace Literacy Program (NWLP) funded more than 300 basic skills programs, 49% of which offered some English as a second language (ESL) instruction (Burt & Saccomano, 1995). However, independent of (uncertain) federal and other public funding, few companies actually provide instruction in basic skills and ESL to their workers. In fact, a survey done by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (U.S. Department of Labor, 1994) revealed that of the 12,000 businesses surveyed, only 3% offered training in basic skills or in ESL.

This digest explores the issue of why companies do and do not provide workplace basic skills and ESL instruction. It reports on data from a survey of businesses in Illinois (Illinois Literacy Resource Development Center, 1993) and from interviews with 18 workplace ESL program directors, teacher trainers, curriculum writers, and instructors (Burt, in press); and it offers suggestions to educational providers and independent consultants on how to *sell* or market workplace ESL programs to employers.

## Why Some Businesses Provide Instruction

Managers, education providers, employees, and supervisors from twenty-one businesses in Illinois were interviewed in a study of why businesses do or do not provide basic skills and ESL instruction (Illinois Literacy Resource Development Center, 1993). Fourteen businesses provided this instruction, seven did not. The following were the reasons given for initiating workplace programs:

### Quality improvement

In manufacturing companies there has been a recent emphasis on quality, which has necessitated a change in the manufacturing process. When companies provided quality improvement trainings, they were not successful. Managers realized that before these could be implemented, basic skills needed to be raised.

### Commitment of top management to training and education

In some companies, training and education are part of management philosophy. The classes offered in these companies often cover general knowledge and skills. The goal is not necessarily to prepare workers to succeed in other company training, but rather to allow them to pursue their own goals.

### Sales effort of an educational provider

Educational providers who were knowledgeable and willing to prepare and design basic skills programs at a low cost have sold such programs to managers who are aware of basic skills problems within the workplace. If the employers and the educational provider have a "previously established relationship" (Illinois Literacy Resource Development Center, 1993, p.3), there is a greater chance the employers will buy the educator's services.

The businesses' preferred instruction providers were public schools, community colleges, and universities. In fact, these were preferred over in-house providers and commercial job-training providers. Their third, fourth, and final choices were community-based organizations, private consultants, and union consortia.

## **Why Other Businesses Do Not Provide Instruction**

Although some of the Illinois business representatives interviewed indicated that they were aware of employee deficits in basic skills and language proficiency, they had not initiated workplace programs. The reasons given were:

### **Cost of Instruction**

Some companies did not offer training of any kind to any of their employees (whether as perks for executives, technological training for middle management, or basic skills instruction for entry level workers. Training of any kind was seen as too expensive.

### **Reluctance of upper management**

Upper management was at times reluctant to initiate training. This was due, in part, to lack of information about the need for programs, the kinds of programs available, and the cost involved. A 1990 evaluation of state-financed workplace-based retraining programs supports this finding (U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, 1990). This study attributed managers' failure to provide instruction to a lack of information about the best approach to use, uncertainty about how to fit the training into new technology and work processes, and reluctance to disrupt work schedules for an "elusive future benefit" (p.131).

### **The not-bad-enough syndrome**

Some companies find other ways of dealing with basic skills deficits rather than providing instructional intervention. For example, some businesses screen prospective employees through a basic skills test. In a 1989 survey by the American Management Association, 90% of the responding companies said they would not hire workers who fail such a test (U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, 1990). Some companies organize the workplace so that the language and literacy deficiencies of already hired workers do not hinder production. These workers may be given the so-called back-of-the-house jobs such as dishwashers or salad preparers, where they have no contact with the public, and minimal, if any, contact with English-speaking coworkers and supervisors. In many companies where most of the workers speak a common native language (often Spanish), frontline managers speak the native language of the workers and the lack of English skills becomes almost irrelevant to the work flow (Burt, in press). However, although the native language may be used almost exclusively in some entry-level positions, in order for workers to be promoted, good English skills are still obligatory (McGroarty, 1990).

## **How Educational Providers Can Sell their Product**

Workplace ESL educators from Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Maryland, New York, Texas, and Virginia were asked how programs can best sell their services to businesses (Burt, in press). These practitioners were from educational institutions, community-based organizations, volunteer organizations, union consortia, or from within the business itself. Three were independent consultants who had started their own companies to provide workplace ESL instruction.

The following themes surfaced, many of which echo the conclusions drawn from the survey data listed above.

1. Start out with a better chance of success by contacting companies with a history of offering training for employees at all levels, not just as perks for executives.
2. Don't promise what cannot be delivered. It is not likely that a workplace ESL class of 40-60 hours will turn participants with low-level language skills into fluent speakers of English. Educate all the stakeholders (the general managers, the frontline managers, the human resources department, and the prospective learners themselves) about the length of time needed to achieve proficiency in a second language.
3. Offer short courses, or "learning opportunities" (Jurmo, 1995, p. 12) with a few specific, attainable goals. Discrete, highly targeted courses such as accent reduction, teamwork skills, and pre- total quality management (TQM) are saleable and give learners skills to use in any job or workplace.

4. Seek ways to maximize resources and personnel already at the workplace. Programs can schedule a one-hour class/one-hour study time match at work sites where there are learning centers for individual, computer-assisted instruction. Instructors can team with job skills trainers to offer vocational English as a second language (VESL). The program can require home study to match workplace course hours. This is especially important when offering instruction to learners with low-level English skills who may not yet have the language proficiency necessary to access the more specialized courses listed above.
5. In addition to providing instruction on American workplace practices and values to ESL learners, offer cross-cultural courses to both native and nonnative English speakers at the workplace. This may help dissipate feelings that the language minority workers are getting special treatment and can directly address the need for better communication at the workplace.
6. Develop realistic ways of documenting how instruction has improved performance at the workplace. Promotions due to improved skills are very impressive; however, in many companies, downsizing is occurring, and no one, native or nonnative speaker, is being promoted. Instead, educators can cite other indicators of improvement, such as increased number of written and oral suggestions made by learners at meetings or other appropriate times; increased number of learners expressing the desire to be promoted; and increased number of learners asking to be cross-trained. (See Mikulecky & Lloyd, 1994; and Mrowicki & Conrath, 1994, for discussions of measuring and documenting improvements at the workplace.)
7. Make certain that general managers actively support the program. They authorize the classes and their authority is necessary to ensure that their frontline managers (the participants' direct supervisors) strongly support the classes. The supervisors will arrange schedules so that workers can attend classes, provide opportunities on the job for them to use what they are learning, and encourage them to attend classes regularly. (See Kirby, 1989, for a discussion of the role of frontline managers in ESL instructional programs.)
8. Don't insist on teaching language for the workplace only. Although the workplace is the core of and the backdrop for instruction, workplace instruction does not need to be connected exclusively to workplace skills. Educators know that learning means transfer of skills to other life situations and learners have always sought this link. Many educators interviewed said that company management asked them to teach life skills and general communication skills as well as workplace skills, especially to learners with minimal English.

## Conclusion

Although basic skills and English language instruction are often viewed as real needs at the workplace, few companies provide this for their workers. With the decrease in federal and state funds available for instruction at the workplace, it is not enough for educational providers to design, implement, and evaluate workplace instructional programs. They must also be able to *sell* their programs to the businesses they are asking to sponsor the instruction.

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This article is produced in part by the Project in Adult Immigrant Education, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation through a grant to the Center for Applied Linguistics.

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The National Center for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE) is operated by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract no. RI 93002010. The opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of OERI or ED.

# Formal And Informal Workplace ESL Assessments

## Formal: Standardized Tests:

- I. BEST (Basic English Skills Test) [www.cal.org/BEST](http://www.cal.org/BEST)
- II. CASAS (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System) [www.CASAS.org/](http://www.CASAS.org/)

## Informal:

- III. Learner self-evaluation forms
- IV. Performance-based (skills/tasks)
  - A. Supervisor's rating forms—indicating improved areas on the job
  - B. Instructor rating forms/rubrics—indicating classroom improvements
- V. Learner profile: developed by instructor or in partnership with student (may be in narrative form)
  - A. Summarizes learner's accomplishments in the context of personal goals and employer's goals
  - B. Describes how training impacted learner's life at work, at home, and in the community
- VI. Program developed: checklists, learner-generated log, portfolios

# **Basic Steps for Establishing an ESL Workplace Program (Summary of Session 1)**

## **Step 1: Assess the Need for an ESL Workplace Program**

- Conduct a needs analysis
- Assess participants' needs
- Conduct a task analysis, if appropriate

## **Step 2: Build Support for the Program by Involving all Stakeholders**

## **Step 3: Develop a Program Plan**

- Identify goals
- Ensure adequate resources
- Prepare the instructional format
- Select instructional materials
- Select site facilities and class equipment
- Develop or identify instruments for monitoring and evaluating progress

## **Step 4: Design the Curriculum**

- Focus on contextual learning
- Use realia
- Consider cultural differences
- Develop a plan to document student learning
- Design an evaluation system

## **Step 5: Implement the Program**

- Identify instructional staff
- Maintain ongoing relationships with stakeholders at the work site
- Develop reporting procedures

## **Step 6: Evaluate & Monitor the Program**

- Use informal and formal assessment methods
- Use formative and summative measures
- Include in final report qualitative and quantitative measures

# Interim Assignment

Instructions:

Select one of the scenarios described below:

1. Describe the activities that would occur in each phase – planning, implementing, and evaluating — of the ESL program you design to address the scenario.
2. Refer to jigsaw readings and session discussions to help you address the scenario.
3. Use H-15, the ESL Workplace Planning Chart, to describe the activities.
4. Bring the completed chart to the next session and be prepared to share with the larger group.

# ESL Workplace Scenarios: Interim Assignment

## Scenario A

A small manufacturing company hires a group of Hispanic immigrants to work on its production line. The sponsoring agency provides a translator to assist in the interview process and in completing the application forms. The translator also helps to explain the job tasks. After a few weeks on the job, the company is scheduled for mandatory OSHA training. All employees participate in the training. The immigrants are attentive and follow the example of others in the class. A few days after the class, a female worker lifts three full boxes of parts and seriously injures her back. One of the items covered in the OSHA training was the importance of following safety procedures, including the use of a tow motor to lift boxes onto pallets. The Training Director was very concerned not only for the worker's safety but also because the company could be fined by OSHA for failure to ensure a safe work environment and have their workmen's compensation rates increased. After interviewing a few of the immigrants, she realized that most of the immigrants did not understand any of the OSHA training content. She called your office and asked for help.

## Scenario B

A hotel in a large city hires a large number of Southeast Asians to work in housekeeping and food service. A representative of the sponsoring agency helps in completing the hiring process and screening the applicants. After being hired, each worker is paired with a current employee to shadow for two weeks. Following the orientation period, the workers are assigned their own areas. Within a month, the general manager receives a number of complaints about rooms not being made up properly, problems in the kitchen, and laundry not completed on time. It is apparent that the language barrier is greater than originally perceived and that although the workers are well intentioned, their lack of knowledge about American culture and basic English are impeding their ability to get the job done. The training coordinator calls your office and asks if you can help.

## Scenario C

A medium sized plastics plant in Ohio hires 20 Hispanic workers to work on the production line. The plant has just become the supplier for a large company in its area. It is critical that they produce a quality product on time. Although the workers were able to do the work, the supervisors noted that they were unable to understand employment policies and safety issues. The Training Director conducted a brief review and determined that the employees' English skills needed to be improved. The Training Director calls your office and ask for help.

## Scenario D

A manufacturer of electronic equipment shifted its assembly line production from a semi-automated to a flexible computerized system. A professional trainer was sent from the company that sold the computerized system to the manufacturer. The training was completed in two days using videos and demonstrations and all workers were provided with a 200 page manual. All workers participated in the training. None of the non-English speaking workers passed the final tests at the end of the two days of training. The HRD director calls your office in a panic and asks for help.

# ESL WORKPLACE PLANNING CHART

Issues to address in Scenario	Planning	Implementing	Evaluating

TRANSPARENCY MASTERS FOR  
SESSION 1

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# Session 1: Objectives

**By the end of this session, participants will be able to:**

1. Identify at least three unique characteristics of workplace ESL
2. Describe the steps involved in developing a workplace ESL program
3. Identify the basics of planning, implementing, and evaluating workplace ESL programs
4. Design an ESL workplace education program

# **Session 1: Agenda**

- I. Introduction, Objectives, Agenda
- II. Why ESL in the Workplace?
- III. Knowledge Foundation for Developing a Workplace ESL Program
- IV. Comparison of ESL and Workplace ESL
- V. Planning, Implementing and Evaluating a Workplace ESL Program
- VII. Wrap-up of Session 1

# Some Basic Principles of Adult Learning

- Adults are self-directed in their learning
- Adults have reservoirs of experience that serve as resources as they learn
- Adults are practical, problem-solving-oriented learners
- Adults want their learning to be immediately applicable to their lives
- Adults want to know why something needs to be learned
- “All adult learners need adult-appropriate content, materials, and activities that speak to their needs and interests and allow them to demonstrate their knowledge and abilities.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cunningham, Florez, M.A. and Burt, M. (October 2001) Beginning to Work with Adult English Language Learners: Some Considerations, ERIC Q & A, Washington, D.C.: National Center for ESL Literacy Education.  
*An Introduction to Workplace ESL*

# **Basics Of Workplace Education Programs**

- Involve all stakeholders
- Develop strong partnerships to initiate and sustain program
- Set clear, measurable goals
- Consider employer and employee needs
- Be sensitive to unique factors existing in the workplace
- Use written materials used on the job to identify necessary skills and develop curricula
- Maintain a professional relationship and don't get caught up in worksite politics
- Ensure availability of adequate resources to implement the program

# Principles Of ESL Instruction

- Be sensitive to the students' background and experiences
- Group students according to functioning levels
- Ensure that course content and instructional strategies are addressing learners' needs as well as employer needs and builds on their knowledge and experience
- Provide opportunities for students to speak, listen, read, write and interact in English
- Include one new linguistic skill and one new piece of content or information in each lesson
- Support the transference of skills to other settings
- A mix of instructional approaches is usually necessary
- Language acquisition occurs through meaningful use and interaction

# Tasks Involved in Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating Workplace ESL Programs

Author(s)	Planning	Implementing	Evaluating

# **Formal And Informal Workplace ESL Assessments**

## **Formal: Standardized Tests:**

BEST (Basic English Skills Test)

CASAS (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System)

## **Informal:**

Learner self-evaluation forms

Performance-based

Learner profile

Program developed

# **Basic Steps for Establishing an ESL Workplace Program (Summary of Session 1)**

**Step 1: Assess the Need for an ESL  
Workplace Program**

**Step 2: Build Support for the Program by  
Involving all Stakeholders**

**Step 3: Develop a Program Plan**

**Step 4: Design the Curriculum**

**Step 5: Implement the Program**

**Step 6: Evaluate and Monitor the Program**

FACILITATOR'S SUPPLEMENT

SESSION 1

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## Comparison of ESL and Workplace Education

	ESL Education	Workplace ESL
Director/ Coordinator	General knowledge and awareness of ESL field Narrow scope, internal focus on organizational issues Manage resources	Business savvy, establish partnerships with business ABE, and ESL knowledge Awareness of management/labor relations Manage/identify resources
Instructors	Understand adult learning theory Knowledge of ESL content Focus on student needs	Awareness of workplace culture Experience in the workplace, Understand and practice adult learning theory Understand ESL basic principles and content Curriculum development with business partner Flexibility and adaptability
Goals ✓ Student  ✓ Company	Developed by student and instructor  NA	Worker-centered, students identify individual goals Labor/management influenced  Work-centered, developed by employer in collaboration with provider
Factors Affecting Student Success	Family problems/pressures Transportation to class Different levels & cultures combined in same class Concerns about getting employment	Cultural differences, i.e. some students are taught that assertiveness, speaking up on the job, etc. are not greatly valued. Quietly following directions – even if not completely understood – may be behaviors valued by their culture. Concerns about job retention

	<b>ESL Education</b>	<b>Workplace ESL</b>
Resources/Content	Based upon learner needs and sponsoring program's policies and guidelines	Based upon workplace environment and learner needs Cultural considerations Authentic material
Assessment	Based upon ESL program's policies and guidelines	Based upon workplace needs, ABE policies and guidelines, and ESL policies and guidelines
Evaluation	Based upon standardized tests or other approved assessments	Based upon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ABE policies and guidelines</li> <li>- Mastery of skills identified in program goals</li> <li>- Employer's return on investment</li> </ul>
Transfer of Learning	Transfer skills to family, worker, and community member roles	Transfer skills directly to work environment with carryover to family and community roles

# Tasks Involved in Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating Workplace ESL Programs

Author(s)	Planning	Implementing	Evaluating
McGroarty, et al	Needs Assessment Assessment measures Enrollment Management Language Choice		
Burt & Selling	Up front with employers Set Goals Include support Explain why implementing Quality/ISO	Content should include transfer of skills to real life	Indicators of improvement Asking to be cross-trained
Grognet	Needs Analysis Task Analysis Current & future jobs Assessments Learner Centered	Instructional strategies with variety of activities Curriculum Topics <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Comm expectations</li> <li>2. Following directions</li> <li>3. Job specific training</li> <li>4. Cross-cultural factors</li> <li>5. Culture</li> <li>6. Upgrading and training</li> <li>7. Adapting materials</li> </ol>	Formative and Summative  Checklists Learner – generated learning logs Portfolios

Author(s)	Planning	Implementing	Evaluating
Burt	Stated goals Involve all stakeholders Expected outcomes Resources available to evaluator Task analysis Pre-program interviews		Change in participant and the workplace Qualitative and quantitative Interviews Focus Groups Observations Tests Performance ratings Assessment tools Exit interviews
Isserlis	Workplace specific Workplace general Workplace clusters  Analysis of job literacy requirements Involvement of workers in determination of types of tasks Involvement of all project partners  Needs assessment Ethnographic approach Emphasize and build on worker's skills Increase worker's options Long term	Course content developed while course is underway  Address employer and employee goals  Adapt company materials	Qualitative & Quantitative

# **An Introduction to ESL in the Workplace**

## **Session 2**

## Contents for Session 2

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## **Handout Masters for Session 2**

H-1	Objectives
H-2	Agenda
H-3	Workplace ESL Lesson Content
H-4	Contextualized Learning
H-5a,b,c	Readings on Developing Generic Course Content and Competencies
H-6	Lesson Plan Template
H-7a	Workplace Education Model

## **Transparency Masters for Session 2**

T-1	Objectives
T-2	Agenda
T-3	Workplace ESL Lesson Content
T-4	Formal and Informal Workplace ESL Assessments
T-5	Characteristics of a Class Uniform Portfolio
T-6	Final Summary Report

## **Appendices**

A	References
B	Instructor Workplace Readiness Assessment Instrument
C	Workshop Series Evaluation Form

# Overview: An Introduction to Workplace ESL

**Objectives:** By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Select at least three appropriate instructional strategies for a workplace ESL program
2. Develop a lesson plan for a workplace ESL class
3. Identify at least three methodologies for workplace ESL program evaluation

## Time Requirements:<sup>1</sup>

Total time required for Session 2 is approximately 6 hours

## Materials Checklist:√

**Hardware:** \_\_\_\_\_ Overhead projector, screen and flip-chart stand (if used)

**Software:** \_\_\_\_\_ Session 2 Handouts  
\_\_\_\_\_ Session 2 Transparencies  
\_\_\_\_\_ Blank transparencies and transparency pens  
\_\_\_\_\_ Flip charts, pens, masking tape, and name tags

## Preparation Checklist: √

\_\_\_\_\_ Duplicate handouts  
\_\_\_\_\_ Check equipment to be sure it is working properly  
\_\_\_\_\_ Set-up the room(s) where training activities will take place<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Regarding suggested times: Agencies should feel free to adjust the suggested times to meet the needs and experience levels of the participants. In addition, it is important to be familiar with the materials prior to the workshop in order to select specific activities to present or delete if sufficient time is not available or some activities take longer than anticipated. Familiarity with the materials also will enable presenters to personalize the materials by adding anecdotes when appropriate.

<sup>2</sup>Regarding room setup: Session activities include both large and small groups. Therefore, the room should be arranged so participants can move about easily. Try to make certain that all participants can see flip charts and overheads.

## Outline for Session 2

<b>Materials</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Estimated Time</b>
H-1,H-2 T-1, T-2	I. Overview Session 2: Objectives and Agenda	10 minutes
	II. Designing Workplace ESL Programs	80 minutes
<b>BREAK</b>		15 minutes
H-3, H-4 T-3	III. Planning Lessons	45 minutes
H-5a,b,c	IV. Developing Generic Course Content and Competencies	50 Minutes
<b>LUNCH</b>		60 Minutes
H-6	V. Lesson Plan Activity	60 minutes
H-7a T-4, T-5	VI. Evaluation Strategies	45 Minutes
	VII. Evaluation and Wrap-up of Session 2	15 Minutes
	<b>Total Time Required</b>	<b>6 Hours and 20 Minutes</b>

## Preparation for Session 2

- Send out flyers announcing the professional development series. **Stress that participants are expected to attend both sessions and participate in an interim activity between sessions.**
- Run-off handouts from Handout Masters (H-1 through H-7).
- Make transparencies from Transparency Masters (T-1 through T-6).
- Order all equipment (e.g. overhead projector, screen, and flip-chart stands) and make sure they are operating correctly. Also check screen for size and clarity of print from a distance.
- Have available such materials as flip charts, pens, masking tape, blank transparencies, and name tags.
- Arrange for a place to hold Session 2 and make sure the location has sufficient space and movable chairs for breakout activities. Consider which room arrangement style will best suit communication and activities. Try to make certain all participants will be able to see the flip charts and overheads.
- Arrange for participant parking, if necessary, and for any refreshments that will be made available.
- Review training packet including all handout and transparency masters. Give special attention to the Facilitator's Notes for Session 2.

# Facilitator's Notes: Session 2

Minutes

T-1, T-2  
H-1, H-2

## I. OVERVIEW OF SESSION 2; OBJECTIVES AND AGENDA

10 Minutes

### A. Welcome Back

Welcome participants back to Session 2. Tell them you hope they had an enjoyable experience responding to the ESL workplace education scenario they selected.

### B. Objectives

Show T-1 and H-1, Objectives, and briefly review the objectives for Session 2.

### C. Agenda

Follow the objectives with the day's agenda, T-2 and H-2 so participants will understand the sequence and time allotments.

Ask if there is any clarification needed or questions to be answered.

## II. DESIGNING WORKPLACE ESL PROGRAMS

80 minutes

### A. Review Interim Assignment and Expected Outcomes

65 minutes

Group participants according to the scenarios they selected. If more than 10 participants selected the same scenario, divide them into two groups. Ask each group to select a presenter or presenters who will report to the larger group.

Distribute blank transparencies or flip charts to each team. Ask participants to share their plans for program planning, implementation, and evaluation. Ask them to:

- Identify and discuss similarities and differences in activities and to try and reach a consensus of activities for each phase to share with the larger group.
- Complete the blank transparency or flipchart.
- Prepare a presentation to the larger group that would include
  - An overview of the scenario and a summary of the activities for each phrase—planning implementing, and evaluation.

Allow teams 30 minutes for discussion. Call teams together and ask for volunteer teams who want to present first.

**Note:** Facilitators should encourage questions and reflection as the participants go through the steps. Facilitators may ask for examples, if there are points that emerged in the group discussions that they want to share.

Allow 10 minutes for each team presentation. If there are 3 teams, the total time is 30 minutes. If the group is large and there are more than 3 teams, shorten the presentation time. Allow a maximum of 45 minutes.

15 minutes

**B. Review of Session 1 Content**

Facilitators review planning, implementing, and evaluating tasks and point out similarities presented by groups and those identified in the modified jigsaw activity in Session 1.

**BREAK**

**15 Minutes**

**III. PLANNING LESSONS**

**45 minutes**

Once a program has been approved and is ready to be implemented, lesson plans must be developed to address the program goals.

Review with participants the factors instructors must consider when beginning to plan a lesson; e.g., class composition, student level, native language, proficiency in own language, goals of the individuals and the group, employer goals.

**A. ESL Workplace Lesson Content**

**Note:** Facilitators present this information in the form of a review. The length of discussion on these items will depend on the expertise and experience of participants.

15 minutes

Show T-3 and refer to H-3, Workplace ESL Lesson Content.

Facilitators indicate that according to the research and literature on ESL workplace education, the following are likely to be included in the content of the lesson.

**T-3  
H-3**

1. Realia from workplace (tools & equipment). Remind participants that developing lessons based on realia are often time consuming but will pay off in the end.
2. Materials, vocabulary, and situations dealing with life in the workplace, community and American culture.
3. Various levels of communication and related content
  - a. Worker/worker – work orders, tools, safety
  - b. Manager/worker – work procedures and standards, personnel policies, social conversation. Remind

participants that communication is a two-way process not just manager to worker.

- c. Worker/customer – answer questions, provide a service, (e.g., make up the bed in the room)
- 4. Opportunities to work on listening/speaking/writing skills
- 5. Thinking and problem-solving skills
- 6. At least one new linguistic skill

Ask participants, based on their experiences, for other workplace ESL lesson content.

15 minutes

**B. Common Instructional Strategies**

Group participants in pairs or in small groups, depending on the number of participants. Ask them to brainstorm briefly the instructional strategies they would use in an ESL workplace setting in the lessons they plan.

Allow 5 minutes for groups to brainstorm.

Ask each group to identify one strategy and how they may use it, until all strategies have been identified.

Facilitators write responses on flip chart or transparency.

**Note:** The box below lists some of the more common strategies used in Workplace ESL programs. If responses from brainstorming activities do not identify these strategies, facilitators add them to the flip chart.

- ESL Workplace Education Strategies**
- Problem solving activities
  - Working in pairs
  - Small and large group activities
  - Authentic language
  - Learning transfer activities
  - Question & answer exercises
  - Using computers

15 minutes

**C. Contextualized Learning**

H-4

Ask participants how many are familiar with contextualized learning.

Ask participants for a definition of contextualized learning.

Explain that contextualized learning is an important component of workplace ESL. It facilitates student understanding, retention, and transfer of learning to other settings.

Show H-4, Contextualized Learning and ask participants to read and discuss quotes.

**Note:** The points in the box below should come out of the discussions. If participants do not raise these points, the facilitator should integrate them into the discussion.

**Contextualized Learning**

- Combines skills needed on the job with skills needed in everyday life.
- Allows learners to see how the skills/knowledge are applied on the job.
- Uses realia materials and situations in the workplace as instructional content.
- Facilitates student input into content and relevancy to their own situations.
- Develops knowledge and skills in a context that is relevant and meaningful to learners, rather than teaching isolated vocabulary and facts. Skills are embedded in scenarios, tasks and activities related to real life/work situations.

Ask participants to share examples of the use of contextualized learning from their own experiences.

After participants share examples of contextualized learning remind them that:

- Not only must the employee learn the vocabulary, policies, and procedures of the company, but in many cases must learn English grammar, structure, and related vocabulary just to survive during the training.
- Instructors must be aware that basic understanding and the ability to communicate take precedent over grammatical formalities.

**IV. DEVELOPING GENERIC COURSE CONTENT AND COMPETENCIES**

**50 Minutes**

**A. Overview**

Some ESL experts are suggesting that a curriculum framework that can be adapted to various industry clusters would be helpful. For example, they suggest developing a generic curriculum for the hotel industry and then customizing that curriculum for the specific site in which the program is located.

**5 Minutes**

Refer to H-5a—H-5c three articles that address generic curriculum, each from a different perspective.

Divide participants into three groups. Assign one article to each group. Instruct participants to read the article, discuss it, and identify two or three major points to share with the group. If the group is large, it may be necessary to divide into more groups and double up on the articles.

Provide a blank transparency or flip chart for each group to record the key points.

Allow 20 minutes for this part of the activity.

### Group A

Mansoor, Inaam, "The Evolution of a Workplace ESL Program" *The Connector*, Fall/Winter, 1995, pages 1 & 4  
<http://www.cal.org/pubs/connector/con3.pdf>

### Group B

Lomperis, Anne" Curriculum Frameworks by Industry: Hotels" *The Connector*, Fall/Winter, 1995, pages 2 & 3  
<http://www.cal.org/pubs/connector/con3.pdf>

### Group C

Burt, Miriam, "Customizing the Curricula or Developing Generic Competencies?" in *Workplace ESL Instruction: Interviews from the Field*. [Http://literacynet.org/eslwp/trends.html](http://literacynet.org/eslwp/trends.html)

**Note:** The above articles include the website links. Facilitators should be familiar with the points in each article.

Ask each group to select a presenter or presenters and to share the major points of the articles they read. Allow 5 minutes for each group to report back.

Facilitators ask for comments and feedback on using this approach to developing curricula.

**Note:** The discussion should include some of the advantages of using this approach. See box below.

### Advantages of Generic Curriculum

- It would minimize the task analysis and allow for a job task-language analysis that could be completed for various industry sectors.
- It would provide a framework to use for designing a workplace program.
- It might be helpful when developing programs at a couple of sites in the same industry.

**V. LESSON PLAN ACTIVITY****60 Minutes****A. Prepare for Lesson Planning Activity**

10 Minutes

Place participants into groups of two or three based on the scenario selected for the interim assignment.

Refer to H-6 Lesson Plan Format. Briefly review the components of the lesson plan and the strategies they may use.

**B. Group Task**

50 Minutes

Ask each group to develop a lesson plan for the workplace ESL program based on the scenario they worked on for their home assignment. Ask participants to think about what they want to accomplish with their students and plan a lesson accordingly.

Remind groups to use some of the suggestions presented in class related to lesson content, strategies, and contextualization.

Allow 20 minutes for the activity.

Provide blank transparencies or a flip chart for the presentation. Ask each group to select a presenter or presenters.

**Note:** Informally monitor progress but do not interrupt the flow of teamwork by bringing extraneous issues to teams.

Ask each group to present its lesson to the larger group. Allow 5 minutes for each presentation. Ask participants to discuss, critique, and identify strategies used and missing components. If there are 6 groups allow a total of 30 minutes.

**Note:** Be sure that teams know the maximum amount of time available when they are planning their presentations! Also, decide in advance whether it will be possible to make lesson plans (without supplementary materials) available to all participants. This would involve duplicating and disseminating all team lessons. Another way to disseminate is to allow sign-ups for individual lesson plans that can be distributed by a central office or by the lesson designers after the session. Finally, lessons could be put on-line after the session, if staff and time (or volunteers) are available to accomplish this task.

**LUNCH****60 Minutes****VI. EVALUATION STRATEGIES****45 Minutes****A. Review evaluation strategies identified in Session 1 and presented by the groups in report back from their interim assignments and lesson plans.**

5 Minutes

T-4

Show T-4 (This is the same transparency as T-8 from Session 1. Use as a review of various types of assessments.)

Remind participants that evaluation/assessment is a key component that appears throughout the process of planning, implementing, and evaluating, and that evaluation must be linked to the goals of the program.

### B. Meeting the National Reporting System Requirements (NRS)

In selecting evaluation instruments, one must consider the purpose and the audience. For federally funded programs, one of the mandates is the National Reporting System. Programs must provide evaluation data that meets the NRS requirements.

20 Minutes

Ask participants: How many have grappled with the question of how to meet the NRS requirements in the workplace education environment?

Note that this can be difficult in workplace programs.

Discuss how one state handled the challenge in meeting the NRS requirements.

The Ohio Northwest ABLE Resource Center has developed a Workplace Education Model to meet this requirement.

H-7

Direct participants to H-7 "Workplace Education Model" and provide 10 minutes to read the description of the model.

**Note:** Remind participants that the use of portfolios as a way of monitoring and reporting student progress was mentioned in the review of general evaluation strategies. Further discussion on portfolio assessment can be found in the references in Appendix A.

Show T-5 Characteristics of a Class Uniform Portfolio

T-5

Explain that under the Ohio model, one portfolio would be completed for the entire class rather than an individual portfolio for each student as in a non-workplace program. Discuss the following:

- All learner scores on the standardized pre- and post-tests would be included in the portfolio.
- Outline of the course with specific topics would be included.
- Monitoring class progress would occur through a variety of measures (e.g., length and duration of attendance-85% of the students attended 95% of the time).

**Note:** If participants are from multiple states, facilitator can ask if this approach could work for them in their state. Why? Why not?

### C. Final Summary Report (Presentation)

Part of the evaluation process is a final report that is provided to the funding agency after completion of the program. Show T-6, Final

20 Minutes

Summary Report. The report should include:

1. Aggregated data about student participation (e.g., number of students enrolled, number completing).
2. Pre- and post-test scores by number or letter (e.g., student A, individual student scores should not be included by name).
3. Collective reporting of student progress (e.g., Class Uniform Portfolio).
4. Quotes from supervisors, labor representatives, learners, and other stakeholders as appropriate about experiences.

Tell participants that quotes provide qualitative data about learner progress that is often non-instructional i.e., not related to course content (e.g., supervisor indicates that employee is now asking questions and making fewer errors on the production line; employee is calling in now when sick and following procedures in employee manual).

Documentation of these outcomes helps stakeholders and planning committee members realize the impact of the program beyond changes in test scores. These outcomes are qualitative, not quantitative because they are difficult to quantify. The best way to gather this information is through interviews or surveys.

Student and supervisor evaluations may include these outcomes as part of an observation or reflection.

Ask participants to share experiences in learning outcomes not directly related to course content.

5. Recommendations for next steps. (e.g., another 8 week course as a follow-up)

## **VII. EVALUATION AND WRAP-UP OF SESSION 2**

**15 Minutes**

Again thank participants for their energy, creativity and productivity. Wish them well in their workplace ESL programs.

Tell them you would like them to complete a brief evaluation of the workshop series (2 sessions and interim activity).

Evaluation is, of course, optional. Facilitators may want to use the form in Appendix B, or they may wish to use their own evaluation forms.

### **End of Session 2**

# HANDOUT MASTERS FOR SESSION 2

## **Session 2: Objectives**

- Select at least three appropriate instructional strategies for workplace ESL programs
- Develop a lesson plan for a workplace ESL class
- Identify at least three methodologies for workplace ESL program evaluation

## **Session 2: Agenda**

- I. Introduction, Overview, Objectives
- II. Designing Workplace ESOL Programs
- III. Planning Lessons
- IV. Lesson Plan Activity
- V. Developing Generic Course Content and Competencies
- VI. Evaluation Strategies
- VII. Evaluation and Wrap-up of Session 2

# **Workplace ESL Lesson Content Should Include:**

- 1) Realia from workplace (tools & equipment)
- 2) Material, vocabulary, scenarios dealing with life in the workplace, community, and American culture
- 3) Various types of communications needed in the workplace and related content
  - a. Worker/worker
  - b. Manager/worker
  - c. Worker/customer
- 4) Opportunities to work on listening/speaking/writing skills
- 5) Thinking & problem-solving skills
- 6) Linguistic skills

# Contextualized Learning

- “Contextualized learning shifts the focus from the acquisition of skills and knowledge to active application of skills and knowledge in realistic situations.”<sup>1</sup>
- “Marginally literate adults enrolled in a job-related program made approximately twice the gains in performance on job-related reading tasks than they did on standardized reading tests, which measured generalized reading ability.”<sup>2</sup>
- “Contextualized instruction demands more hands-on, active learning that stimulates learners to think, act, and apply skills and knowledge as they would in the workplace and in their lives.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy at Pennsylvania State University, *A Resource for using the Framework for Work-Based Foundation Skills*, Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Castaldi, Teresa, *Ethnography and Adult Workplace Literacy Program Design*, ERIC Digest, National Center for ESL Literacy Education, EDO-LE-91-02, April 1991

<sup>3</sup> Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy at Penn State., *A Resource for Using the Framework for Work-Based Foundation Skills.*, Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of ABLE State leadership Initiative, PA. 2000

# Group A

## The Connector no.3 fall/winter '95

This issue of *The Connector* focuses on the hospitality industry with articles on a curriculum framework that saves time in customizing hotel ESL programs; an ESL class that forged links among its learners and their supervisors; and REEP, a highly regarded workplace literacy program. A two-page, annotated bibliography, **ESL Instruction in the Hospitality Industry**, is now available from Ana Romes at the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, DC. Our next newsletter and annotated bibliography will focus on manufacturing. Please contact us with suggestions for articles or bibliographic resources.

### Evolution Workplace ESL Pro

It is almost impossible to discuss workplace ESL in the hospitality industry without, at some point, turning to REEP. The Arlington Education and Employment Program (REEP) is a special program within the Department of Vocational, Career, and Adult Education of the Arlington Public Schools in Virginia. As a forerunner in workplace literacy, REEP conducted four workplace literacy projects (funded by the National Workplace Literacy Program of the U.S. Department of Education) focusing on the hospitality and other service industries. REEP has served over 40 businesses and hundreds of individuals in the Northern Virginia area. Over the years, REEP has evolved in response to its growing maturity as a training program and the needs of its learners and industries. This article provides a picture of that evolution and some of the issues and challenges the program has faced.

### Program Purpose and Design

As the workplace program at REEP matured, it moved through four major phases of program purpose and design: basic partnership development, expansion to additional partners, transferral to new industries, and self-sufficiency and independence from federal funds. REEP's first project was a partnership with the Arlington Chamber of Commerce and seven local hotels. Industry-specific, job-related curricula were developed, training resources were identified, and successful strategies for organizing a workplace literacy program were put into place. Finding success with this model, REEP expanded the number of participating local hotels and added a second city (Alexandria) to the partnership with its chamber of commerce, school district, and participating hotels. Thus, REEP became a regional effort meeting the needs of the hotel industry. Next, REEP transferred its model to new industries in the service sector. Working through new partnerships with four trade associations, REEP expanded its training to hospitals, nursing homes, apartment and office building management firms, and convenience stores. The trade associations promoted the concept of workplace literacy programming within their industries and helped reach individual businesses with workplace literacy needs. REEP developed job-related curricula for these new industries and provided training through large numbers of on-site classes. The current phase of REEP's evolution is designed to extend access to workplace training by delivering instruction in a variety of ways, especially those using technology. Now, without the support of federal funds, REEP offers services on a contractual basis.

Center for Applied Linguistics Project in Adult Immigrant Education  
<http://www.cal.org/Archive/projects/Mellon.htm> News

## **Training Options, Curricula, and Learner Assessment**

When REEP first began, most training was conducted in on-site classes designed from a literacy analysis of what the workers needed to be able to read, write, and communicate on the job. In addition, workers could use REEP's Adult Learning Center which provided customized job-related materials, as well as flexible scheduling and individual learning plans. A third option was intensive ESL classes offered through REEP at centrally located ESL centers in the county. As over time it became clear that even more flexible access to training at worksites was needed to handle scheduling difficulties and widely varying literacy needs, REEP teamed with Jostens Learning Corporation to establish computer-assisted instructional Learning Corners at four worksites. Based on the INVEST software, an integrated basic skills program for adults, the Learning Corners provided needed flexibility and appealed to workers who might have been hesitant to join a workplace literacy class. Once initial contact was made through the Learning Corner, workers could learn more about other program options. REEP's curriculum development process evolved as well. REEP instructors found that most language minority workers had adequate skills for their current jobs and that a curriculum based on a job task/literacy analysis was not sufficiently broadly based. In response, REEP staff used the SCANS framework to develop a learning hierarchy of skills that were relevant to the learners' needs and taught by the INVEST software. Assessment of such varied activities is a challenge and REEP has used a variety of formal and informal means including a commercially available test (BEST), competency checklists by which teachers rated learners' abilities, learner self-evaluation forms, and supervisors' rating forms. In the future, REEP would like to develop a learner profile that would summarize the learner's accomplishments in the contexts of personal goals and employer's goals, and that would describe how training impacted the learner's life at work, at home, and in the community.

## **Staff Development**

This is perhaps the area of greatest evolution for REEP. Initially, REEP saw an instructor's role in the workplace as essentially the same as that of an instructor in an adult ESL program. But REEP came to understand that, in the workplace, instructors have expanded duties and need new and different knowledge and skills as well as sensitivity to different perspectives. The staff development that resulted helped instructors understand the values and perspectives of the business community, evaluate the impact of their work on non-instructional outcomes, and promote workplace education at the worksite. Working together, workplace instructors gained confidence in what they were doing. These in-sights helped REEP hire, train, support, and evaluate successful workplace instructors. REEP now faces another transition: continuation on a contractual basis without the support of federal funds. It has a great deal of experience to bring to bear on this new challenge.

*Inaam Mansoor is Director of REEP. The program can be reached at 2801 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 218, Arlington, VA 22201; 703-358-4200*

# Group B

## The Connector no.3 fall/winter '95

One of the defining characteristics of workplace language training is that instruction is customized according to input from needs assessment procedures. But needs assessment and curriculum design are time-consuming and expensive processes. If curriculum frameworks were made available to workplace language trainers, they could be used to guide site-specific curriculum development so that each training program would not have to “start from scratch.” To ensure authenticity and quality, frameworks must be based on a job task-language analysis (Lomperis, in press) which identifies *key job tasks and related language* using focus groups, dialogue samples, and criteria for determining priority content. From the job task-language analysis, a set of instructional topics is identified to be used as the curriculum framework. An example from the hotel industry is provided below to illustrate this process. The sidebar presents a curriculum framework developed for three hotel departments: housekeeping, food & beverage, and engineering (maintenance). These departments were identified as priorities for language improvement because of the staff’s frequent contact with guests. Job task-language analysis data were collected for each department and a single, overall curriculum framework was developed. The framework is first divided into three broad categories of interaction: *Guest Interaction*, *Co-Worker Interaction*, and *Management Interaction*. Then, each of these categories is sub-divided into work-related topics. Finally, each topic is broken down into specific instances of language use. A work-place ESL teacher in the hospitality industry can use this framework as a checklist to develop customized lessons with much less initial effort.

### Guest Interaction

In the first category, *Guest Interaction*, importance is placed on appropriate *Socializing With Guests*, including correct farewells. Because hotel revenue depends on repeat business, the employee must always say something to invite the guest back; not merely “Good-bye,” but rather “Have a safe trip, and come back and see us soon.”

Under *Providing Service*, common job tasks include delivering frequently requested items, such as more shampoo, a refill on coffee, or a new light bulb. Understanding the guest’s request and using formulaic “delivery lines,” such as “Here you go. Will that be all?,” instead of silence, are important language skills for these tasks. An example of a more complex job task from the housekeeping department was a special request from a guest for a rubber sheet for a bed-wetting child. Not only did unfamiliar vocabulary have to be clarified, but a good deal of critical thinking and problem solving was required to come up with two very creative solutions: an old shower curtain and a large, plastic garbage bag, cut open. Examples of complaints from the engineering department involve various fixtures in guest rooms which are not working properly, such as the TV, toilet, or drapery pulls. In these instances, language use includes stating the intention to repair or replace and may even involve arranging a room change. Under *Providing Directions and Information*, three areas surfaced from high frequency inquiries: the immediate area, the larger hotel, and the vicinity and community. Interestingly, it was important to distinguish “immediate area” for different departments. Room attendants have to give directions to ice machines, but not to the nearest ladies’ room. (Guests will use their own bathrooms.)

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<http://www.cal.org/Archive/projects/Mellon.htm> News

Wait staff, on the other hand, will be asked about the nearest restroom and the nearest pay phone in the lobby. Regarding the larger hotel, employees from a given department may need orientation about the locations and services in other departments, such as conference room floors and restaurant hours. At the very least, they must know how to make a referral if they can't answer a question personally. Finally, guests always remember if an engineer fixing their air conditioning can also point out the nearest gas station to refill their rental car on the way back to the airport, or suggest tourist attractions appealing to children.

### **Co-Worker Interaction**

In the second category of interaction, *Co-Worker Interaction*, the topic of *Work Orders* typically includes functions such as stating availability or non-availability for an assignment, reporting work progress, requesting assistance, clarifying instructions, and verifying a change in instructions. In addition to the obvious language functions under *Materials, Tools, and Equipment*, training might also include explaining delays and asking about different items than those mentioned. When *Socializing With Co-Workers*, language use re-quires sensitivity to appropriate registers and the kind of talk that builds rapport.

### **Management Interaction**

In the third category of interaction, *Management Interaction*, many language functions are similar to those in *Co-Worker Interaction*, but involve additional attention to factors such as time expectations, quality expectations, role, status, and culture points. Under *Personnel Policies*, learners may need additional help understanding written information in handbooks or memos, as well as oral presentations. This article has described an example of a curriculum framework for a specific industry. It is hoped that this initiative will encourage other workplace teaching specialists to develop curriculum frameworks for their given industries and to share them with the field at large. In this way, the customizing of materials for workplace language training programs can maintain a standard of quality, while reducing the time and money spent in start-up development.

[Editor's Note: This article is excerpted from a forthcoming, copy-righted publication. Permission to reprint must be obtained from Prentice Hall Regents, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey.]

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# **Group C**

## **Customizing the Curricula or Developing Generic Competencies?**

The issue of customizing curricula to the needs of specific worksites is related to the confusion between training and education. As was discussed above, some programs are offering short, discrete courses in such topics as teamwork and accent reduction, and advertise that they will further customize these courses to the specific company that purchases the program.

In California, state funds support a project administered through the California Community Colleges State Chancellor's Office, that funds 10 resource centers serving 100 community colleges throughout the state. These resource centers provide training for community college faculties in workplace education and distance learning technology. The centers also offer specialized courses for practitioners and would-be practitioners of workplace ESL education on such topics as how to do needs assessment and how to market oneself. Further, the resource centers will develop customized courses for companies upon request, as well. (Mission College, 1995).

Customizing courses is extremely costly, however, as it requires the work and time of a trained educator. The NWLP required its grantees to customize courses and provided funds for doing so. However, programs operating without this funding reported difficulty in getting companies to agree to pay for customizing time. Some of the service providers interviewed from projects not funded under NWLP, especially private consultants, spoke of having been "burned," that is, having spent unreimbursed hours of work on site observing workers, interviewing supervisors, and collecting printed matter, followed by many more hours of developing a curriculum from this. Some service providers, such as LinguaTec, say they will no longer customize a curriculum for a project unless the business will pay. Others, such as Fairfax County, are still willing to "invest" some of these hours, hoping to get a foot in the door, and perhaps get enough repeat business from a certain company or companies to cover this extra expense. The Pima County Adult Education project's stance on charging for customization falls somewhere in the middle: PCAE tries to load the cost of customization in the charge per instructional hour rather than charge directly for all customization time.

Although the NWLP required that all curricula developed for projects it funded be worksite and job specific, education providers, at final meetings held for all grantees, stressed the need for curricula to be replicable and transferable to other programs and settings (United States Department of Education, 1992). And now, as companies cover larger portions of the costs for instruction, this transferability of curricula may be a necessity. Companies may be reluctant to fund course customization because they often do not know what outcome they want from the ESL instruction. Some programs (REEP's, Pima County's) report that companies often do not really know how they would like the courses to be customized, and when asked, either say they would rather leave it up to the educational provider or say they just want the participants "to be able to speak English."

Burt, M. Workplace ESL Instruction: Interviews From the Field. Washington, D.C. National Center for Literacy Education. P. 23.

How can curricula be both generic and specific? Programs can develop curricula with competencies or instructional objectives that are described in task-based terms such as "students will be able to read a chart" (Peyton & Crandall, 1995). These terms are applicable to work in general, but use language and examples from the specific workplace. For example, instruction on the generic competency "reading charts and schedules" could utilize specific charts, such as work schedules from the individual workplace, to provide the practice (U.S. Department of Education, 1992). Of course, it is the responsibility of the program to make the connection overtly from the lifeskills being learned to their application to the specific workplace and to other aspects of life (e.g., to reading charts in a doctor's office, or reading a bus schedule).

Pima County Adult Education Workplace Education Project has found its generic competencies useful in that they minimize the work needed to customize the curriculum. With written materials such as signs and policy manuals from the individual sites, and with stakeholder interviews and the observations at the worksite, the Workplace Education Project is able to tailor the program to each site. Having offered workplace ESL classes since 1988, the Workplace Education Project has been able to establish a list of generic competencies for the language and literacy needs of the language minority worker. The topics for the competencies were personal information; socializing at work; tools, supplies, equipment, and materials; learning, doing, and teaching the job; working in teams; health and safety on the job; company policy; and performance evaluations. At the Center for Applied Linguistics, Grognet (1996) has also developed a list of generic competencies that include such topics as workplace communications and expectations, company organization and culture, and skills upgrading.

Related to this issue is the current national focus on tying adult education funding to instruction that will prepare learners for the workplace (although not through direct grants to workplace projects). In 1992, the Secretary (of Labor)'s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) published a list of foundation skills and workplace competencies that all adults need to be successful at the workplace (See Whetzel, 1992, for a discussion of the SCANS skills). Now, with the current welfare reform limiting the participation of public aid recipients in adult basic education and ESL classes, some educators feel that adult ESL programs should address workplace competencies. At the TESOL conference in Orlando in April 1997, at least four presentations dealt specifically with teaching the SCANS skills in adult ESL programs. One of these was given by Fairfax County Adult Education. With a small grant they won from the Center for Applied Linguistics, they are creating lessons for the general ESL curriculum that incorporate the SCANS competencies. Preliminary results show that feedback they are getting from instructors and from learners is valuable from the standpoints of both curriculum development and teacher training.

# Lesson Plan Format

Objective	Linguistic Skill/Literacy Skill:  Workplace Skills:
Presentation/Introduction of Topic	Materials
Practice	Materials
Application	Materials
Evaluation	Materials

# Workplace Education Model

## February, 2001<sup>1</sup>

The Workplace Education Providers and members of the Workplace Education Indicators Project recommend the adoption of the Workplace Education Model to be used to support those ABLE Workplace Education component services offered by local ABLE programs.

### ➤ **Rationale for Recommendation:**

#### **Basic Premises:**

- ✓ Workplace Education is defined in the Workplace Education Resource Guide as, “Education Services offered in collaboration with business, industry, government, and/or labor for the purpose of improving the productivity of the workforce through improvement of literacy skills.
- ✓ Education Services include those activities designed to improve the work-related basic education and literacy skill levels of workers that are offered to business, industry, government, and/or labor by an Ohio Department of Education-funded ABLE service government, and/or labor by an Ohio Department of Education-funded ABLE service provider. Such services seek to increase an individual’s ability to “read, write, and speak in English, compute, and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job...” (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act: Section 203(12).) These services would parallel similar services provided by any ABLE program to individuals seeking assistance with basic skills, ESL, family literacy, or the GED preparation. The workplace education services have the added feature of being conducted within the context of the workplace.

### **Considerations:**

- Without the adoption of this alternative model, many ABLE workplace programs will be unable to count people for whom they provide basic skills instruction.
- These ABLE programs will continue to provide basic skills instruction whether or not the Workplace Education Model is approved; however, these students can not be enrolled through the ABLE delivery system.
  - ✓ Since the Workforce Investment Act focuses its attention on workforce development, it would appear vital to have these people counted as ABLE students.
  - ✓ Since students enrolled through workplace education programs can be more readily tracked, the follow-up for retaining a job or getting a promotion would be much easier to accomplish.
  - ✓ Since students enrolled through workplace education programs are likely to be retained throughout the course, a standardized pre- and post-assessment **will be**

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Created by: Northwest ABLE Resource Center. (2001) *Ohio Workplace Education Resource Guide*. Toledo, OH: Owens State Community College.

administered. Therefore, the use of the Uniform Portfolio System for individual students would not be a requirement for this group. However, a **CLASS UNIFORM PORTFOLIO** is required using the following components of the Workplace Education Model:

- Standardized Assessments,
  - Course Learning Plan, and
  - Monitoring Class Progress.
- ✓ (Those few who would not complete, would be marked as “progressing” within a level.)
- Since the workplace programs using this model have specific time limitations and the collaborative partner may be assisting with the costs of the course, the use of all components of the Student Experience Model hinder the time and efficiency which is essential with workplace education, e.g. UPS management.
- Since workplace education programs are designed to meet specific, defined educational needs of employees, the Workplace Education Model serves them better than the current ABLE Student Experience Model. (Those individuals requiring more special assistance will be monitored and referred to a regular ABLE program. At this point, the student’s participation in ABLE would be fully documented through the Student Experience Model.)
- **Benefits to ABLE**
- ✓ Ohio ABLE Workplace Programs would be carrying out the mandate and intent of the WIA, Title II, AEFL.
  - ✓ There would be a heightened degree of professionalism and cooperation among ABLE workplace programs and the collaborative business, industry, government, and/or labor partners.
  - ✓ ABLE workplace programs would be more visible outside the ABLE delivery system because of the collaborative nature of workplace education offered through ABLE.
  - ✓ Workplace Education providers would be able to count more of the students for whom they provide basic skills instruction for a minimum of twelve (12) contact hours.
  - ✓ The Career-Technical and Adult Education Office of the Ohio Department of Education would realize increased numbers of students receiving ABLE services.
  - ✓ The increased number of students would contribute to the ability of Ohio ABLE to meet its Core Indicators of Performance Goals as listed in the FY 2000-2004 State Plan.

TRANSPARENCY MASTERS FOR  
SESSION 2

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## **Session 2: Objectives**

**By the end of this session, participants will be able to:**

1. Select at least three appropriate instructional strategies for workplace ESL programs
2. Develop a lesson plan for a workplace ESL class
3. Identify at least three methodologies for workplace ESL program evaluation

## **Session 2: Agenda**

- I. Introduction, Overview, Objectives
- II. Designing Workplace ESOL Programs
- III. Planning Lessons
- IV. Lesson Plan Activity
- V. Developing Generic Course Content and Competencies
- VI. Evaluation Strategies
- VII. Evaluation and Wrap-up of Session 2

## **Workplace ESL Lesson Content Includes:**

- Realia
- Material, vocabulary, scenarios dealing with life in the workplace, community, and American culture
- Various types of communications needed in the workplace and related content
- Opportunities to work on listening/speaking/writing skills
- Thinking and problem-solving skills
- Linguistic skills

# **Formal And Informal Workplace ESL Assessments**

## **Formal/Standardized Tests:**

BEST (Basic English Skills Test)  
[www.cal.org/BEST/](http://www.cal.org/BEST/)

CASAS (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System) [www.ccasas.org/](http://www.ccasas.org/)

## **Informal:**

Learner self-evaluation forms

Performance-based (skills/tasks)

Learner profile: developed by instructor or in partnership with student (may be in narrative form)

Program developed: checklists, learner-generated log, portfolios

# **Characteristics of a Class Uniform Portfolio**

## **Sample evaluation strategy for Workplace ESL classes to meet NRS requirements**

Components of the Class Uniform Portfolio include:

- Standardized pre- and post-assessments
- Course Learning Plan
- Monitoring Class Progress

Rationale for this model:

- Workplace education programs are designed to meet specific, defined educational needs of employees
- The students will begin and end at the same time
- Meets mandate and intent of the WIA, Title II, AEFL

# Final Summary Report

- Aggregate data about student participation, i.e. number of students enrolled, number completing
- Pre and post-test scores by number or letter i.e., Student A (Individual student scores should not be included by name)
- Collective reporting of student progress, i.e. Class Uniform Portfolio
- Quotes from supervisors and participants about experiences
- Recommendations for next steps

# APPENDICES

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## APPENDIX A

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# APPENDIX B

# INSTRUCTOR READINESS\*

CATEGORY			PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDED	RESOURCES NEEDED (WHO, WHAT, HOW)	TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION
	YES	NO			
<b>1.0 Context: Does the program have instructional staff who:</b>					
1.1. Are aware of the workplace culture (e.g., management structure, company expectations)? Evidence: _____ _____ _____					
1.2. Recognize the politics of the workplace including labor and management issues? Evidence: _____ _____ _____					
1.3. Are sensitive to diverse populations in non-traditional settings? Evidence: _____ _____ _____					
1.4. Are aware of the effects of change on the workplace (e.g., economic, demographic, organizational)? Evidence: _____ _____ _____					
1.5. Are sensitive to demands and responsibilities of adults in the workplace? Evidence: _____ _____ _____					

\*Note: From Crocker, J. Sherman, R., Tibbetts, J., and Dlott, M. (2001) *Workplace Readiness Guide*, Washington, D.C.: American Institutes for Research. *An Introduction to Workplace ESL*

CATEGORY			PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDED	RESOURCES NEEDED (WHO, WHAT, HOW)	TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION
1.6. Are aware of the issues surrounding workplace safety and security? Evidence: _____ _____ _____					
1.7. Recognize the differences between employer and employee needs and expectations? Evidence: _____ _____ _____					
<b>2.0. RESOURCES: Does the program have instructional staff who:</b>					
2.1. Use a variety of resources to enhance workplace instruction (e.g. realia and human resources)? Evidence: _____ _____ _____					
2.2. Integrate current media and technology as a tool for instruction? Evidence: _____ _____ _____					
<b>3.0. INSTRUCTIONAL COMPETENCE: Does the program have instructional staff who:</b>					
3.1. Are skilled in teaching basic skills including thinking skills, problems solving and decision-making? Evidence: _____ _____ _____					

CATEGORY			PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDED	RESOURCES NEEDED (WHO, WHAT, HOW)	TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION
3.2. Have experience working in non-traditional educational settings? Evidence: _____ _____ _____					
3.3. Have experience teaching in a workplace setting? Evidence: _____ _____ _____					
3.4. Are able to customize curriculum and resource materials to meet the needs of the specific target audiences? Evidence: _____ _____ _____					
3.5. Are able to adapt instructional practices to meet the needs of the workplace? Evidence: _____ _____ _____					
3.6. Are able to use appropriate instructional strategies for adults in non-traditional settings with special needs? Evidence: _____ _____ _____					
3.7. Adapt the physical and interpersonal climate to make it conducive to learning in a non-traditional educational setting (e.g. rapport, cultural sensitivity)? Evidence: _____ _____ _____					

CATEGORY			PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDED	RESOURCES NEEDED (WHO, WHAT, HOW)	TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION
3.8. Provide frequent and varied opportunities to apply learning to the workplace setting? Evidence: _____ _____ _____					
<b>4.0. COLLABORATION: Does the program have instructional staff who:</b>					
4.1. Interact well with staff from professional organizations? (eg. CBO, government agencies, not-for-profits) Evidence: _____ _____ _____					
4.2. Participate as a team member in non-educational settings? Evidence: _____ _____ _____					
<b>5.0. ASSESSMENT &amp; EVALUATION: Does the program have instructional staff who:</b>					
5.1. Are able to determine skills and skill levels needed in non-traditional settings? Evidence: _____ _____ _____					
5.2. Are able to assess existing skills and knowledge in nontraditional settings? Evidence: _____ _____ _____					

CATEGORY			PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDED	RESOURCES NEEDED (WHO, WHAT, HOW)	TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION
5.3. Are able to determine gaps in skills and knowledge and provide appropriate instruction? Evidence: _____ _____ _____					
5.4. Are able to prepare and disseminate information on student progress? Evidence: _____ _____ _____					
5.5. Are aware of confidentiality issues related to employer/employee communications Evidence: _____ _____ _____					

# APPENDIX C: WORKSHOP EVALUATION FORM

## Evaluation of Introduction to ESL in the Workplace Workshop Series

Please check your primary role: Instructor \_\_\_\_\_ Coordinator or Administrator \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate your geographical location: Rural \_\_\_\_\_ Suburban \_\_\_\_\_ Urban \_\_\_\_\_

For the following questions, please circle the number that best describes your evaluation.

	Extremely 4	Very Much 3	Somewhat 2	Not at All 1
1. Thinking back on the 3 main reasons you wanted to attend this workshop series, how satisfied are you with the results?	4	3	2	1
2. To what extent did you increase your understanding of unique characteristics of workplace ESL programs?	4	3	2	1
3. To what extent did you increase your understanding of the basics of planning, implementing, and evaluating a workplace ESL program?	4	3	2	1
4. To what extent do you think you can now plan lessons for a workplace ESL program?	4	3	2	1
5. On a scale of 1 - 4, how would you rate this workshop series?	4	3	2	1

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What additional skills and knowledge would you need to effectively implement an ESL in the workplace program?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

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