

Tennessee ESOL in the Workplace



A TRAINING MANUAL FOR ESOL SUPERVISORS AND INSTRUCTORS

A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT OF
TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT OFFICE OF ADULT EDUCATION
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Introduction

Over the course of a year, the task force reviewed workplace ESOL efforts in other states, as well as efforts already underway in Tennessee. The final meeting of the task force yielded the following recommendations for the development of a workplace ESOL training initiative:

- Remember to keep it simple; workplace ESOL is generally a new venture for adult education.
- Make certain that everyone understands how workplace ESOL can increase adult education's enrollment numbers and contact hours.
- Include standard templates that can be adapted/tailored to the needs of a specific county's program. Templates for a marketing packet, such as introductory and follow-up letters to businesses, brochure, and employee survey; a language task analysis; proposal format for services; a letter of agreement; and a sample final report should be included in the training packet.
- Include suggestions for tracking marketing efforts and responses (phone logs, postcard usage, employer responses/inquiries, etc.).
- Definitely utilize California's CD-ROM and workbook, *Teaching Basic Skills in the Workplace*; identify essential, as well as optional, activities that may be used for continuous improvement by local programs.
- Include a PowerPoint presentation that can be adapted to meet the needs of local programs.
- Include a strong evaluation component, with practical examples to capture and document the success of the program (changes in worker behavior and performance). Guide participants in utilizing *Teaching Basic Skills in the Workplace*, which includes excellent examples of performance-based assessment.
- As part of the needs assessment, include in the language task analysis opportunities to job shadow, interview employees, tour manufacturing plants/business facilities, and participate in new-employee orientation.
- Standardize and share information with Tennessee's local workforce development boards.
- Include case studies (e.g., Wyndham Garden Hotel–Nashville Airport ESOL classes for housekeeping and for concerns, setbacks, lessons learned, progress reports, etc.) and promising practices when available.

Comments From the Field

The following comments are concerns about initiating ESOL classes. Would you like to know how to resolve these issues? Each chapter in this instructional manual, Tennessee ESOL in the Workplace, will be devoted to answering these concerns.

"I'd like to have an ESOL class in the workplace, but no one has called me to ask for one."

"I've tried to start a class in the workplace, but all they want is a class in Spanish."

"We started a class in the workplace, but it just didn't make it. They acted as if they wanted one, but one day they called and canceled it."

"I'd like to approach one of our businesses and start a class, but I don't know how to find a good teacher to teach the ESOL classes."

“I really don’t know how to get started. I don’t know how to approach people in the business world.”

“How can a workplace ESOL teacher teach when she/he doesn’t know anything about the workplace?”

“Why should we bother going to the workplace when they can just come here to our classes?”

“We had pursued the idea of offering a free class at one of the Mexican restaurants in our area; but, for some reason, the management was adamant about us not having the class. This was particularly puzzling, since, of course, the class is free and would also include some wonderful students from past classes. One former student said he felt the cause of it could be that the management was threatened by employees improving themselves. Does anyone have any thoughts to share about this?”

When you have finished this training, you WILL be able to successfully place a workplace ESOL class, and you will also learn how to continue...

- Address the required negotiation skills of setting parameters for classes (target population, realistic goals and objectives, delivery cycles).
- Include tips and strategies for extending learning beyond formal instruction (using the buddy system, getting frontline supervisors invested in reinforcing what is being taught/learned, using personalized dictionaries).
- Demonstrate how to calculate and inform employers of the cost of services—even if adult education is paying all or some of costs—versus the cost of not training employees.
- Include tips on addressing issues of prejudice and discrimination toward non-native speakers of English.
- Explore with participants the possibility of reallocating resources to cover instructor preparation and curriculum development, language task analysis, job shadowing, and so forth.
- Provide tips on accessing census data and migrant information for each county.
- Consider whether two days’ training is sufficient for introduction of basic concepts and essential components, job shadowing/language task analysis, and preparation for practical application.
- Include as part of the training a practicum or praxis through which participants can apply what they have learned in their local program, receive technical assistance when needed, and share the results with others.
- Address the need for additional staff development if workplace instructors have no prior ESOL training or experience.
- Include criteria for what to look for in a workplace ESOL instructor, as well as characteristics not beneficial to a workplace setting.

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