MODULE 2:
Knowing Your Community’s Needs and Understanding the Workplace
HANDOUT 9A

Workplace ESOL Scenario 1

**Scenario:** The plant manager at Dairy Land calls the adult education provider in your area. The plant manager wants to know if adult education can offer an ESOL course for some workers at the plant. The adult education provider will ask questions to try to identify the performance issues leading to this request and begin to understand how to help and if adult education services are a possible solution.

**Observers/group task:** Listen to the role play and note the types of questions the adult education provider asks, and with what results. After the role play is completed, read the background information sheet, which was provided to the plant manager but not to the adult education provider before this role play. Highlight what details the adult education provider was able to identify during the conversation with the plant manager.

*Then discuss the following:*
1. What questions were especially effective in revealing performance information?
2. What other questions might she have asked to reveal more of the performance context to this request?
3. If you were the adult education provider, what would you do or suggest as next steps?

**Notes:**

**Local adult education provider:** You are the adult education provider for ABC County. Your program offers a range of basic skills courses, including ESOL courses customized for the workplace. You get a call from the plant manager at Dairy Land, who is interested in setting up an ESOL program for some workers. Role play this initial conversation, asking questions to get at performance issues behind the plant manager’s request and in order to understand how you can be of assistance.

Drawing on your experience and preparation for delivering ESOL in the workplace, make suggestions to the local business representative regarding next steps in setting up an ESOL worksite-based program for company employees. Think about the steps involved in establishing such a program, and make an effort to get as much information from the company representative as possible.

**Notes:**

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Local business representative: You are the plant manager at Dairy Land. You call the area adult education provider in ABC County to see if an ESOL course for workers can be offered at your plant.

Before you call the adult education provider, read over the background information below but do not reveal any of this information unless you are asked the right question(s). Call the adult education provider and convincingly repeat the following opening script, your voice betraying a hint of frustration at the situation. Then engage in a conversation with the provider about your training needs. You may need to make up additional information during the role play:

Hi. This is the plant manager from Dairy Land. I am calling to see about getting an English language course out here for some of my staff. This is my last resort—if they don’t learn to communicate properly with me and the rest of the staff before the end of the fiscal year, I’ll just have to let them go. One of our sales reps said he heard you do this kind of thing, and I want to know if you can help us out and when you can start.

Background information: Your plant is the Refrigerated Products Division of Dairy Land, which makes ice cream and frozen yogurt for distribution throughout the state. About 35% of your employees speak very limited English. These workers are concentrated in the packaging area and the sanitation crew, which works the night shift. Most are hard working and valued workers, and many are long-term employees. There have been problems recently with the sanitation crew’s improper handling and storage of chemicals, even though the guidelines are available in the MSDS (material safety data sheets) and this was covered in the WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System) training that they all had to take. Some workers have left open containers of chemicals too close to raw product. On several occasions, workers have not flushed out the lines enough after cleaning, leaving trace elements of chemicals in the first batch of product, which, therefore, had to be rejected. Your boss is leaning on you about the time and costs of attending to these errors and expects there to be a significant reduction in the number and frequency of such incidents. You have talked to some of the workers yourself, but they just smile, nod, and walk away; and you aren’t sure they understood at all.

There have also been problems with training new staff. The company relies largely on the “buddy system” for training and some new staff have complained that they could not understand the employees that are supposed to be training them. A major new expansion is planned for the start of the next fiscal year that will involve more automated systems (and, therefore, training on the new systems) and a shift to team-based management. You are wondering how that will work, since many of these workers tend to keep to themselves, choosing not to mix in the lunchroom or in other social venues. And, team-based management relies on effective input from all team members to identify and resolve problems within the work unit.
Role play: As an adult educator, you are just beginning to venture into workplace ESOL. None of the area businesses has contacted you about offering ESOL classes at the worksite, so you are initiating a call to a company based on the following information.

A small manufacturing company hires a group of Hispanic immigrants to work on its production line. The company 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 Occupational Health and Safety Act (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 training, a 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. You learned about this incident from some of the employees, who attend evening ESOL classes in the community.

Plan your phone call to the company, keeping in mind that management may be wary of news about injuries becoming public knowledge.

Notes:

Role play: You are the company’s training director, and you are 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, you realize that most of the immigrants did not understand any of the OSHA training content.

You receive a call from the local adult education provider who wants to discuss the possibility of offering ESOL instruction at your worksite. You are surprised to learn that such services are available locally, and you have lots of basic questions and anticipate a number of obstacles. List your questions below, and also identify the obstacles you believe could thwart such training efforts. Finally, you’re expecting cuts to your company’s training budget, so you know you will have to sell upper management on such an investment at this time.

Notes/questions/issues:
HANDOUT 10A

Modified Jigsaw Reading Activities and Instructions

1. Throughout this training, you will be introduced to current research and literature pertaining to workplace ESOL. Although training time constraints will not allow for the reading and discussion of all the entries, they are provided to you in their entirety, at several junctures in the training, for your own professional development as well as that of your instructional staff.

**Resources:**

**Group A**

**Group B:**

**Group C:**

**Group D:**

This article is found in *Teaching Basic Skills in the Workplace*, pp. 57-64.

2. After reading the selection, discuss and decide on the most important points that you need to teach other workshop participants in the 5 minutes you will have to present (10 minutes estimated to select points). Try to find a way to make your 5-minute lesson creative and interesting so participants will remember the contents.

3. Write the key points on a flip-chart page for your presentation.

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, such as flip charts, cards, transparencies, etc.).
Workplace Literacy Programs for Nonnative English Speakers

— Janet Isserlis, International Institute of Rhode Island

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.

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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?

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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.

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(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.

**References**


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**For Further Reading**


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Workplace ESL Instruction: Varieties and Constraints

—by Mary McGroarty & Suzanne Scott, Northern Arizona University

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, & Friedenberg, 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.

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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.

References


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Selling Workplace ESL Instructional Programs

—by Miriam Burt, Center for Applied Linguistics

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.

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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, http://www.cal.org/ncle/digest/SELLING.HTM
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.)

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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.

References


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Handout 10E

Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating Workplace ESL Programs

—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

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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.

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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

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

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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:

**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

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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.

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• 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:

Program-Developed Assessment Instruments
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.

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**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 Alamprse, 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.

**References**


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HANDOUT 11

Workplace Code of Ethics

1. Know and respect the workplace setting.
2. Follow all rules of the worksite.
3. Avoid site-specific internal conflicts (e.g., union vs. management, women vs. men, management vs. worker).
4. Do not release scores to employers.
5. Avoid verbal discussions with supervisors and/or coworkers about specific learners—stay general.
6. Learn names, jobs, and so forth of support staff and all other personnel.
7. Stay focused on the goals and objectives of the program.
8. Know the contract and what you are expected to do.
9. Do not discuss proprietary information.
10. Be flexible—there are times when the workload may be more important to the learner than the educational class.
11. Do not accept gratuities, gifts, or favors that would affect professional performance.
12. Do not encourage or permit intimate relationships between instructor and company personnel and/or learners.

I have read the above and agree to abide by the Workplace Code of Ethics.

____________________________________
SIGNATURE

____________________________________
DATE

____________________________________
WITNESS
First impressions count. An employer has contacted you or you have contacted the employer. You arrange a time to meet and request that the meeting be attended by a representative group of managers, supervisors, and decision makers (six to eight individuals). You, as the adult education supervisor, are accompanied by a qualified ESOL instructor. You have also prepared a packet of information about your program. You are prepared to present (briefly) your program’s history, successes, awards, and populations/numbers served; the program’s strengths; and services provided. Your marketing packet might include the following:

1. A brief history and information about the successes of your program,
2. Statements from former ESOL adult learners about how their classes have helped them in the workplace or life in general,
3. Letters of commendation from other businesses for which you have provided workplace education services, and
4. Information about the process you would follow in assessing needs and designing a program.

Be sure the instructor who accompanies you to this meeting understands the purpose of the visit. Be prepared to discuss his or her qualifications and expertise. Ask and answer the following question as you select an instructor: What am I looking for in an ESOL teacher for the workplace?

Learn everything you can about the company prior to your first meeting. Do they have education requirements for their employees? Do they require entry-level workers to have prior training or experience? Do they have funds set aside for employee training? Can you obtain this information by phone?

Discussion with the employer’s representatives (your ad hoc advisory group) should address the following topics:

1. Ask them to describe their needs. What is it they want their employees to learn? What level of English is required for employees to perform their jobs?
2. Ask them what problems they are currently encountering with respect to their employees’ work habits, performance, and so forth.
3. Discuss what they are willing to contribute to a workplace education partnership.
4. Tell them what you can contract to provide in terms of services.
5. Consider offering short courses with a few specific, attainable goals.
6. Confirm that general management and frontline supervisors support the initiative. Management must authorize the classes, and frontline supervisors must strongly support employee participation. Will this group be able to meet and provide input and feedback periodically during the course of instruction?
7. If possible, establish a single point of contact and confirm that this individual will be able to communicate with you on a regular basis.
8. Try to determine early on how often and how many weeks the class can meet, where the class will be held, whether it will be held on company or employee time or both, and how participants will be recruited. Stress the need to schedule pre- and postassessments in order to identify needs and measure progress.
9. Help the employer develop realistic goals about a workplace ESOL program. Without too much academic language, explain what you believe can be accomplished, given the parameters set by the company and the nature of second language learning.
10. Make arrangements to return to conduct a language task analysis. This should include as many of the following elements as possible: opportunities to job shadow and interview employees and frontline supervisors, a tour of the plant or facility, participation in employee orientation or training, and an opportunity to examine environmental print with which employees are expected to be familiar.
Once you have conducted your initial meeting or phone conversation with an employer and have secured a commitment to conduct a needs assessment, you are ready to proceed with the language task analysis. While you may have been able to collect some of the needed information during your initial meeting with the employer, you will want to confirm your understanding with as many company personnel as possible. The components of the language task analysis include a series of questions you may use to interview management, frontline supervisors, or the targeted workers; brief surveys found in Chapter 3 of *Teaching Basic Skills in the Workplace* (pp. 60–71, 73–86); and worksheets to help you identify work-related language tasks and literacy skills. Depending on what you learned during your initial visit or phone conversation with the employer, you will select the activities most appropriate or useful.

Date: _____________________________________________

Name of the company: _________________________________________________________________________________________

Address of the workplace: _______________________________________________________________________________________

Company contact: _____________________________________________Phone no.:_______________________________________

**Questions Employers Might Have but May Never Ask**

1. How much will a workplace ESOL program cost?
2. How long does the training take?
3. What can the company expect in terms of outcomes?
4. What is the return on investment for the company?
5. How and when will you assess the needs of the employees?
6. How will gains and outcomes be measured?
7. What involvement will be required of the company?
8. Can you accommodate our shift schedules?
9. Is there curriculum already developed?
10. Is workplace ESOL a service you currently provide? For whom?
11. How do you select your instructors for workplace assignments?
12. Would your instructors agree to participate in onsite orientation before beginning their assignments?
13. Are your instructors prepared to teach in a work environment (plant floor, cafeteria, training room)?
14. Can you customize or adapt materials to meet the company’s specific needs?
### Questions to Ask Employers Who Have a Focus on Performance

1. What have you observed that suggests that English language instruction is needed?

2. What jobs are performed by workers with limited English language skills?

3. What skills are required for those jobs? Do workers need to be trained for different jobs or tasks?

4. Do the workers have the needed skills?

5. What problems do workers with limited English language skills experience in performing their jobs and moving to new jobs?

6. How is communication currently conducted? Is another language used? Are interpreters being used?

7. How does the use of another language impact employees’ work, attitude, contributions, or interaction with native speakers of English?
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>8.</strong> Can you provide examples of communication problems between workers with limited English language skills and supervisors?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9.</strong> Are there safety issues caused by language miscommunication?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10.</strong> Can you estimate the cost of errors due to language miscommunication (in terms of time, productivity, waste)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11.</strong> What if any action has the company taken in the past to address the situation? With what results?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12.</strong> Where did the idea originate, and what was the route it followed through the organizational hierarchy?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>13.</strong> How has it been determined that there is a language or literacy problem?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>14.</strong> If ESOL instruction is offered on-site, how will participants be recruited? Will attendance be mandatory or optional?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>15.</strong> What results would you expect from workplace ESOL classes?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16. Are there particular topics you would want addressed in class (safety, benefits, work culture)?

17. What space will be available and how frequently can classes be held? Will classes be held on company time, employees' time, or both?

18. What equipment will the instructor have access to? Can you provide us with work-related materials for classroom use?

19. Can arrangements be made for the instructor to visit the plant, meet with workers and their supervisors before setting up the course?

20. Will incentives be given for participation and completion of the program? Are there opportunities for promotion?

21. Are there consequences of noncompletion of the program? What is at stake if workers do not improve their literacy and language skills?

22. What are the workers' educational aspirations, and will they be able to participate in planning the program?
23. What are the language, literacy, and cultural issues you as the employer need to have addressed?

24. Which upper and middle management personnel should be involved in the design, delivery, and evaluation of the training?

25. What do you perceive to be the role of frontline supervisors in this initiative?
## HANDOUT 13B

### Language Task Analysis Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Materials and records reviewed</th>
<th>Forms</th>
<th>Manuals</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify 2 entry/lower level positions and collect a sampling of forms, manuals, and communiqués workers with limited English language skills must utilize on a regular basis. Try to determine the kinds of errors made and how often they occur.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Position 1.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Position 2. | | | |

**Observations:** Spend at least two 15-minute periods observing work by employees with limited English language skills and record your observations (use back of sheet if necessary).

1. Circle the types of reading that must be done in these jobs:
   - signs
   - manuals
   - forms
   - instructions/directions
   - labels
   - information from machines

2. Circle the kinds of oral/aural communications taking place:
   - with peers
   - with supervisors
   - giving/taking directions
   - asking for clarification

3. Mathematical computations required on the job:
   - four basic functions
   - fractions
   - percentages
   - decimals
   - multistep processes
**HANDOUT 13C**

**Language Task Analysis Activities: Getting It Down on Paper**

This form may be most useful when observing or job shadowing employees with limited English language skills. Information may also be extracted from the activities completed in Handouts 13A and 13B.

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<tr>
<th>Job task</th>
<th>Literacy skills</th>
<th>Work-related materials</th>
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