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**English at Work**

*English at Work* in Manitoba is a collaborative effort between Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), Labour and Immigration Manitoba (LIM), Manitoba Start, and participating businesses. The program delivers on-site language training specifically designed for employees at Manitoba workplaces. For teachers, understanding the difference between general English language training and English for specific purposes language training is critical to success in this program.

*English at Work* programs are usually quick and intensive. As such, *English at Work* is training more so than it is education. Time given to employees to attend training is a major investment for participating businesses. They do so with the belief that they will receive a return on their investment through reduced employee turnover, fewer workplace errors and accidents, increased production, and greater employee flexibility and trainability. *English at Work* is designed to meet these specific needs. In the basic model:

- classes are on-site at the business for beginner to advanced learners;
- training includes the listening, speaking, reading and writing functions identified by employees, managers and unions through program needs assessments;
- classes are usually near the end of the work day, with one hour on paid work time and one hour on employee time; and
- training usually takes place twice a week for two hours for 6-10 months.

The instructor is introduced to company representatives and begins to research the needs of the learners. Days and times for classes are agreed upon and the instructor conducts needs assessments, develops an initial course outline, and begins to teach. The instructor continues to meet regularly with the project planning group and supervisors to ensure that the content of classes is on track with what was expected. Lesson preparation is done by the instructor at the worksite or at home using information specific to the workplace.

Some businesses have moved towards a more integrated approach to *English at Work*. Depending on the size and nature of the business, the company requests an instructor on either a part-time or full-time basis to do any or all of the following:

- deliver technical workplace training for immigrant employees in an EAL style that allows time for language development in combination with technical skill acquisition;
- conduct language assessments for new hires or for internal movement within the organization;
- facilitate transfer of learning to the shop floor – trainer works side by side with workers for periods of time ensuring classroom learning is used and practiced;
- adapt existing skill and safety training practices and materials to reflect the needs of language learners, as well as integrate skill and safety training into language classes;
- develop plain language workplace documents, materials, signs, etc.;
- establish and coordinate volunteer programs within the workplace (e.g. a Language Partners program that matches immigrant employees with Canadian English speakers for conversation practise).

In this integrated approach, the instructor is not an outsider who drops in and out of the workplace, but has a workspace at the business so as to remain in close contact with the team and the employees. This approach benefits many more people than just those who attend the classes – even if that benefit is something as simple as improved signs around the worksite or skills training that has been adapted for EAL employees.
Learning Centre models of delivery have been developed at several programs. With this approach, participants drop in for training when the Learning Centre is open. The instructor prepares a range of resources and materials that learners can pick up when they come to class and may also deliver short seminars that are repeated as different learners arrive. The instructor works one-to-one or with small groups assisting use of resources, coaching learners to gain new language skills, preparing self-study materials, and answering learners’ questions about language problems they encounter. On-line learning can also be implemented with this approach, with the instructor facilitating or guiding the learner with material and following up via email or telephone.
English at Work Process

As of 2014, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), Manitoba Labour and Immigration, and Manitoba Start created a partnership for the administration of the English at Work program. The following summarized process describes the partnership:

CIC negotiates and manages Contribution Agreement with MB Start
CIC maintains communication with MB Start and Province MB regarding program activities and budget
CIC monitors program activities and financial reporting
CIC reports to National Headquarters on overall program outcomes
CIC assesses program for potential application in other Provinces and Territories

Province MB offers the support of an EAL Consultant to English at Work programs
Province MB, in consultation with MB Start, meets with business to develop training plans
Province MB selects, trains, monitors, and mentors instructors
Province MB develops and/or delivers professional development for instructors
Province MB develops resource material, program protocols, and maintains the Instructor Handbook
Province MB and MB Start conduct program evaluations and complete reports specific to program performance goals

MB Start provides information to businesses and organizations about English at Work
MB Start negotiates contracts with instructors for the delivery of the program
MB Start maintains required financial and other records, as indicated in the CIC Contribution Agreement
MB Start reports participants in iCARE (Community Connections) on a monthly basis, and other program-related information in narrative reports to be submitted to CIC on a quarterly basis
MB Start and Province conduct program evaluations on objectives and outcomes as indicated in the CIC Agreement

Instructor conducts needs assessments with learners and managers
Instructor develops initial course outline and begins instruction
Instructor delivers training designed to meet needs of employees and employers
Instructors maintain participant records to facilitate MB Start reporting requirements
Instructor provides employer, MB Start and Province MB program reports on a quarterly basis
Financial Matters

Instructor Employment Status

English at Work instructors are contractors who work on a fee-for-service basis. They do not have an employer-employee relationship with their participating business, with government, or with Manitoba Start. In cases where the participating company/organization qualifies for 100% instructor funding, the instructor is paid by Manitoba Start. In cases where the company/organization qualifies for 50% instructor funding, the instructor receives half of their pay from Manitoba Start and the other half directly from the business.

The Province and MB Start develop training plans and discuss availability of funds with participating businesses. Following this, English at Work instructors develop and deliver training at the various worksites. Instructors are contracted by Employment Solutions for Immigrants Inc.- MB Start, and if part of their pay also comes from the business, they may establish a personal contract between themselves and the business or simply invoice the business monthly.

Instructors are responsible for their own tax remittances and do not receive T4 slips from Manitoba Start or from their participating businesses. It is advised that instructors receive tax advice on operating as a contractor for the potential benefits they may realize. Self-employed contractors in Canada are not required to charge GST from their worksites nor remit GST to Revenue Canada if their self-employed income is less than $30,000 in one year. If self-employed income is expected to be close to or above $30,000, instructors should apply for a GST # and begin charging GST to ESI and/or their workplace throughout the program year. Failure to do so could lead to a situation where an instructor has to make GST remittances at the end of the year without having received funds designated for GST, and would have to pay the GST out of pocket.

Contracts

Funding to support English at Work programs is provided by CIC to Manitoba Start, and in turn, from Manitoba Start to English at Work instructors. In the first year of participation, 100% of the instructor salary is covered by CIC funds. In the second and following years, private businesses and organizations begin to cover 50% of the instructor salary. Not-for-profit organizations continue to qualify for on-going 100% coverage of instructor salaries.

The Provincial English at Work Consultant meets with participating businesses and organizations to discuss their program needs and requests. A decision is made regarding the number of weeks of training that will be offered at each business throughout the year. From this, the English at Work Consultant drafts a budget using Provincial guidelines for expenses. This budget is provided to Manitoba Start as a basis for creating contracts with English at Work instructors. Manitoba Start, through Employment Solutions for Immigrants Inc, enters into contractual agreements with English at Work instructors outlining the services that are to be provided and the remuneration.

Invoices

Payment to English at Work instructors is made upon receipt of invoice. Instructors working under a 100% funded agreement should invoice ESI monthly. Instructors working under a 50% funded agreement should invoice half of their total wage to ESI and half to the company. Alternately, the instructor may invoice the company for the first half of the contract period (ie. April-August) and ESI for the remainder of the contract period. The amount invoiced should be based on actual services
delivered during that month, not a simple monthly average of the total contract. For example, if seven 2-hour classes were delivered one month and nine 2-hour classes the next month, the invoice should reflect that.

The standard claim for English at Work allows for 1 hour of preparation time for each hour of delivery. English at Work programs tend to be prep heavy at the beginning of training and prep reduced later into the program, but invoices should maintain the 1-1 ratio throughout unless otherwise arranged. One exception to this is in the event that a teacher arrives at a class one day and is told that the company cannot release the students from work that day, perhaps for reasons of production. In this case, the instructor may invoice for the time of the class but not for the preparation. If this scenario occurs more than once, the Provincial English at Work Consultant should be notified. The company should be made aware that if classes are to be cancelled, the instructor should be contacted before leaving home.

In some new English at Work programs, additional needs assessment and program development time is required, usually at the beginning. This may be the result of a very large sign-up and the resulting extra time is needed for interviews and recommendations to the company for class groupings. It may also be the result of multiple information sessions given to a wide cross-section of company employees to determine numbers of employees interested in registering. In this case, the 1-1 ratio is maintained throughout the training but an additional agreed upon number of hours for preparation are allowed in the first month.

All English at Work contracts allow for professional development expenses. Instructors delivering more than one program in a year will have these professional development allowances added to their first contract. A standard allowance for materials is also made for teachers to use a home office with resulting expenses for paper, printer ink, etc.

Forms and templates are provided in this Instructor handbook.
English at Work Checklist

BEFORE THE CLASS BEGINS
☐ Participate in planning with the company/organization
☐ Conduct needs assessments with students and their supervisors
☐ Develop preliminary Communication Network Diagram
☐ Develop draft lesson plans and outlines
☐ Establish working relationships within the company

FIRST THREE WEEKS
☐ Begin teaching
☐ Finalize Communication Network Diagram and course outline
☐ Meet with company, Province, and MB Start to update plans and address issues that have arisen in first 3 weeks

ON-GOING
☐ Deliver training that is specifically designed to meet the needs of employees and employers
☐ Develop, deliver and keep a record of lessons
☐ Gather feedback from students on program content, likes, dislikes, learning styles, etc. and modify and adjust lessons as needed
☐ Maintain contact with supervisors to gather additional lesson content
☐ Report to company, Province and MB Start on a quarterly basis using format provided (June/ August/ November/ February)
☐ Employ Language Portfolio Assessment practices
☐ Reinforce self-directed language learning strategies

MONTHLY
☐ Invoice MB Start and/or company to receive pay

FINAL THREE WEEKS
☐ Evaluate the program
☐ Facilitate formal student evaluation/feedback of the program, with copies provided to the Province and MB Start
☐ Issue student progress reports to each student utilizing the students’ language portfolio for evidence of progress
☐ Ensure each student is aware of other opportunities to continue EAL training (online and part time classes)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (ongoing)
☐ Participate in English at Work staff meetings
☐ Participate in Community of Practice teacher work pods
☐ Participate in one Manitoba EAL Conference
☐ Participate in industry specific training if required
The Workplace

An initial tour of the workplace and regularly returning to the worksite to gather information or as part of class time with students is crucial to the success of the program. This allows the instructor insight into the work done, equipment used, products built, atmosphere at work, safety on the job, cultural mix of employees, interaction with management, interaction among employees, languages heard in the workplace, etc. It is important that the instructor sees the initial tour as an orientation, not as a one and only trip into the worksite. Program development relies on regular information gathering.

It is from the workplace that instructors draw the relevant vocabulary, dialogues, and course material that make an English at Work program different from an ESL/EAL class. It can seem bewildering to the instructor at first because they may not have had much experience in workplace settings. The brief but important communication exchanges between workers and supervisors, the sometimes lack of niceties in these exchanges, the noise and smell of the machinery, the quantities of materials, the repetitive nature of many jobs, the dust, lack of windows, and the potential for injury may all be new experiences for teachers. This is, however, the daily working environment for many students in English at Work classes. English at Work teachers are not reaching the potential of their job if they don’t see their learners in their work environment on a regular basis. Asking questions and making notes of what they see and hear at the work-site all make for great learning material.

Ask for information about the company. Is there an employee handbook? Ask for a copy. Find out about company rules, safety rules, shifts, etc. What input does the regular employee have? Are there regular team meetings? What types of things are discussed?

Meetings with Management / Union

The teacher should be prepared to meet with a group of management/human resources staff and union representatives who will want information and reassurance on a number of issues. Management and union want to feel confident in going forward with the program. They may not have much experience with the teaching and they may themselves have to answer to company owners and union executive. They may also have unreasonable expectations that employees at lower levels will suddenly become fluent after a few weeks of lessons. A reminder that full-time language learners attending EAL schools full-time may progress one or two benchmarks in a year. People with full-time jobs who take 4 hours of classes a week will progress, especially on topics that you include in your workplace specific study, but expectations should be kept reasonable.

The following are some of the questions that are frequently posed to teachers by businesses, be prepared for these:

- Where have you taught before?
- What’s your plan here?
- How can you teach employees from different ethnic backgrounds, languages and level in the same room at the same time?
- Why don’t employees speak their first language to each other?
- They seem to know when there is a problem on their paycheque, maybe they know more English than they let on?
- How will you include information about safety, HR policy and union benefits into the training?
At this meeting, it is important to establish what teaching resources are available. You may want to request blackboard/whiteboard/chart paper on which to write. You may inquire about photocopying and AV equipment. Materials such as binders and paper for learners may be available from the union. Knowing what is or is not available will allow you to plan ahead and modify your lessons to suit the resources available. Even where adequate resources are available, it is important to have some back-up plan prepared in case the room you are to meet in is suddenly needed by the company for something else, or equipment breaks down.

Training in the workplace is an advantage to management, union and workers, as it leads to efficiency, competency, greater understanding, and productivity. For the workers, this may lead to advancement. Training must, therefore, be presented as a positive for all concerned.

Make a point of asking management and union the question, “What can I do for you?” Revisit this question with all contacts on a regular basis.
Based on the learning principle that it is more effective to “teach less but teach it better”, *English at Work* learning objectives are a short list identified by the learner, the workplace, the union and the teacher. Other concepts and topics will naturally be introduced during the training period, but the focus of the course should always be on this short list. The method for measuring success in achieving these objectives should be indicated. The objectives should be refined during the first three weeks of the course and presented to the company for approval. Further changes should be made if necessary as the course develops, with regular updates to the program coordinators and funders. Programs should be evaluated both formatively and summatively based on the objectives shown in the Communication Network Diagram.

Daily lesson plans should be a natural extension of the Communication Network Diagram. A good rule of thumb for planning an activity in an *English at Work* class is always that if it doesn’t fit into the scheme of the diagram, it probably doesn’t belong in an English at Work class.

Occasionally, companies will request information on the progress of learners. This may come to the teacher as a request for test results, or perhaps even as a request for participants’ CLB scores before and after a period of training. The Manitoba *English at Work* program does not recommend these forms of evaluation for participants’ English proficiency. It is important that all *English at Work* learners participate in the program voluntarily and without pass/fail standards that could impact negatively on their employment status. Sharing the Communication Network Diagram with employers together with a report on the progress of the group is the recommended form of reporting progress to employers. The section on Evaluation later in this booklet will give more details on providing employers and employees information about the investment they have made in learning progress.
A Communication Network Diagram helps you to quickly identify the people that learners need to communicate with and the people you should talk with regularly throughout the training period to develop your authentic workplace learning materials.
Language tasks/functions:
- understand daily instructions
- ask for explanation
- request vacation

Language tasks/functions:
- ask for information about deductions
- fill in employee forms
- call in sick

- daily social conversation
- ask for information or help
- manage problems

- read sections of employee benefit manual
- participate in employee meetings
- request information

- friendly interaction with neighbours
- interaction with social services (doctor, children’s teacher, etc.)
- use of media (newspaper, radio, TV)
Instruction and Organization of Classes

*English at Work* instruction combines language learning principals that are common to any language learning program with special purpose content. The degree to which any *English at Work* program is like a general language learning class will depend on the needs of the learners and the employer. Classes may start off fairly generic in content because at the time of needs assessments learners and employers are unaware of specific language barriers and don’t know what they don’t know. With some time, teachers and learners will begin to make connections to more specifically focused language learning that can make an immediate difference in the learner’s workplace proficiency.

The Manitoba *English at Work* program has developed curricula that can be used by instructors who share common workplace language needs. *English at Work: Manufacturing* was originally developed by an experienced *English at Work* instructor for one particular manufacturing worksite. It was then re-developed for use at any manufacturing worksite.

While most of the instruction in the *English at Work* program is self-developed by the instructor, there are many good published resources as well. A small library of resources is maintained by the Province and can be accessed through the English at Work Consultant.

Classroom Activities

Every language teacher develops a liking for some activities more than others. Regardless of the activities that are chosen, it is important that the teacher remain mindful of the variety of learning styles and preferences that come with each group of learners. Many will have learned English from very traditional rote-style learning and will feel that a strictly communicative approach that is more common here is just ‘passing time’, and that the teacher doesn’t actually know anything about the language. Teachers should in fact know about the structure of the language and keep educating and re-educating themselves about it. Good teachers don’t all need to be grammarians, but just like doctors, engineers, electricians or athletes they should stay in shape and up to date with their field of expertise.

There are some basic principles of teaching that should be followed in designing every lesson:

Presentation

In the presentation stage, the teacher gets the students interested in the topic by presenting an example of authentic use of language that students need or want to learn. This is often done with use of visuals or audio samples, but could be as simple as posing some questions about a situation where English language communication is required.

Focused practice

Now that students are aware of the purpose and context for the lesson, focused practice allows them to try it out with the ‘training wheels’ on. Modeling, repetition, substitution drills, and pattern practice are commonly part of this phase in learning. Errors are caught and corrected with explanation. There is a time and a place for worksheets in language classes and this is it.

Guided spontaneity

The ‘training wheels’ come off and opportunities are provided for learners to start using what they have learned. At this stage of the lesson fluency is the goal, accuracy is secondary. Activities are designed that force learners to start naturally using the language functions that they were practicing under control in the earlier phase of the lesson. In this phase of the lesson, student’s voices should
be heard more than the instructor’s. If it is a writing or reading activity, authentic forms of writing or reading that come from needs assessments should be engaged in, not worksheet-style fill in the blank exercises.

Evaluation
Evaluation in language classes should be constant, with by far the greatest amount of time spent on formative and informal evaluation. This kind of evaluation is meant to be supportive, instructive, and informational. Teachers offer both praise and critique to learners, learners offer suggestions or feedback to each other and back to the teacher on the activity that the teacher used. Teachers also need to be self-evaluative, making notes on the lesson plan at the end of the class about something that worked or didn’t work and why.

By contrast, summative and formal evaluation (i.e. tests, exams) are seldom used in English at Work setting. They can be useful if learners are highly motivated and structured, but the issue of scores and numeric grading is something to be careful of in the English at Work context. Learners in these classes are attending voluntarily, providing numeric scores to learners is generally not recommended and providing scores to employers is highly discouraged.

Further clarification of evaluation processes are provided later in this handbook.

Classroom organization

Classroom set-up
Students need to be able to see each other to engage in effective communication. A traditional classroom or theatre-style setup with rows all facing the front is conducive only to lecturing, which language classes should never be. A U-shape is the most common class setup in language teaching. If a boardroom table is all there is to work with, teachers should make sure to schedule time in each class for students to move their chairs to 3 or 4 different parts of the room to work in small groups. We are all creatures of habit and in almost every class students will want to go to the same seat they always sit in, almost as if they teachers had established a seating plan. Make sure to design activities in every class that require people to sit in a different place and speak to different partners, at least for a short while.

Agenda for the day
A brief point form agenda should be up on the board at the beginning of every class. If this isn’t done, you as the teacher are the only one in the class who knows what’s going to happen next. Offering students some knowledge of the plan for the day is respecting them as adult learners and shares power. It also helps teachers to move along through planned activities that can at times be unnecessarily lengthened by a student who is prone to monopolizing class time.

Teacher talk
With the best of intentions teachers may dramatically alter their speech to try to make themselves understood by students. Slowing down a little for new material is good, but using broken English or constantly enunciating perfectly is not doing learners a favour in the long run. For students at lower levels, short sentences and high frequency vocabulary is recommended. The teacher’s voice should be at a normal volume and near-normal pace.

Activity pace
English at Work students have been working all day...they are tired. The pace of the class should be gentle but not slow. Most English at Work instructors design at least 4 or 5 activities for a 2-hour class. A short 5-10 minute break is sometimes helpful but may not be necessary if the teacher breaks up the class with movement and variety of activity.

Correcting errors
How much of student language should be corrected? Too much correction and confidence and fluency is stymied. Too little correction and students lose the teachers’ help as an expert and don’t get an opportunity to improve accuracy. In general, teachers should try to give a greater amount of correction during the ‘focused practice’ phase of the lesson. During the ‘guided spontaneity’ phase of the lesson they should offer limited correction and make a note to come back to repeated errors later.

Teaching activities

The new English at Work teacher comes into the worksite with no curriculum and little or no knowledge of the work that their learners do. The work might be manufacturing furniture, assembling aircraft parts, fabricating plastic or metal parts, cooking, cleaning, nursing, accounting, engineering...the list is endless. In the appendix to this Instructor’s Handbook, a sample of language teaching activities has been provided to give newer teachers an idea of how to activate the language that their learners need to practice. This is not an exhaustive list and experienced teachers might be able to double or triple the number of these activities with activities they like to use. Some activities have been contributed to this Handbook by current English at Work teachers. They are provided here as a kind of ‘comfort food’ of activities that have been used successfully for many years. As always, they must be adapted to fit the context of the situation.
Professional Development

*English at Work* teacher meetings are normally held twice a year, once in late September or early October, and once in late January or early February. These are ½ day meetings and are considered required attendance by all instructors. At these meetings *English at Work* processes are introduced or reinforced, and an informational or educational presentation is delivered by one of the teachers, a guest speaker, or the *English at Work* Consultant. The meetings are normally held on Friday afternoons so as not to interfere with instructor teaching hours. 3-4 weeks advance notice will be given of the meeting dates and it is expected that all teachers will find a way to clear any other commitments in order to attend. Instructors may bill $75 for a ½ day meeting - a total of $150 annually.

‘Community of Practice’ is the primary form of professional development for English at Work instructors. In this form of professional development teachers learn from each other in informal working groups and with the assistance of a facilitator. Pod meetings are intended to be the staffroom that *English at Work* teachers don’t have. Teachers may use pod meetings to share successes, challenges, ideas, advice, and most importantly...lesson plans! The pod facilitator is not supervisory and doesn’t report to the Province or to MB Start about meetings, so teachers can feel free to ask their pod facilitator anything without any fears of looking weak. Facilitators were selected specifically because they’ve been around long enough to have seen the good, the bad and the ugly side of *English at Work* programming. Pod meetings will be scheduled by pod facilitators 4x per year. Teachers may bill $25 for attendance at each pod meeting for a total of $100 annually. Pod facilitators are also funded extra time to stay in touch with their group members...never feel that you are intruding on their kindness by asking them for consultation or advice.

Attendance at EAL Conferences is encouraged for the opportunity to gain broader perspectives in the field of EAL. Up to $75 may be billed to cover the registration fees of one conference per year.

Professional development expenses, as described above, may total up to $325 annually.

In some *English at Work* programs, industry specific training is required. This will normally be done at the expense of the host work-site at days and times arranged by the teacher with work-site management.
End of Program Process

*English at Work* programs may start and stop at any time of year, and classes may take a summer break and then start up again in the fall with the same learners. This leaves it unclear as to when a program is ‘ending’ so that formalities such as evaluations and progress reports to learners can be conducted. There is no clear cut rule, but that does not mean these formal processes should not happen at all. Choose a time of year at least once a year to ensure that the following processes are conducted with your *English at Work* class. In most cases, these events will feel most natural to participants if they occur in May or June before the class takes a summer break.

**Learner evaluations**
Informal learner evaluations should be regular throughout the course through means such as ‘check-in and check-out’. If good informal evaluations have been regularly conducted there will rarely be any surprises when the final formal evaluation is conducted. Within the last few weeks before a program closing, ask students to provide you feedback on the course. A template is provided in this document that correlates to methods of evaluating return on investment (Reaction, Learning, Behaviour, Results).

**Learner progress reports**
A final summative progress report should be given to each learner. These are confidential reports given from the teacher to the learner, and should be written in a style that is supportive and instructive. Comments should relate to the goals of the learners as found in their Communication Network Diagrams. There is no need to use academic or programmatic language in these reports, they should be in the teacher’s own voice and written to the learner directly. Speak to the learner in these reports as you would wish to be spoken to…respectfully, professionally, and with clear purpose. No one else will see these reports, copies should not be made for the company or for the government.

**Instructor evaluations**
The instructor evaluation is the teacher’s opportunity to document impressions and opinions of the program as a whole. They should be written with the understanding that the workplace and government coordinators and funders will receive a copy, which means adopting a professional tone if attempting to describe a problem or perhaps even suggest blame for a problem. A copy should be given to the workplace, the Province, and MB Start.

**Learner ceremony**
Some *English at Work* programs desire closing ceremonies, others feel that it is just too formal. Speak to your workplace contact to decide whether to conduct a ceremony of some kind. For some students who have rarely experienced learning successes the act of receiving a certificate in front of a group of invited guests who applaud is something quite special! Certificates can be made available with at least a week’s notice. If these are desired, send the Provincial *English at Work* Consultant an email with names of certificate recipients as they are to appear on the certificate. If guests are to be invited, such as supervisors or HR managers, give at least 2 weeks notice of the date and time.

It is usually a good idea to suggest to students that they speak at the ceremony after all the invited guests have said their speeches. The impression that this leaves on management is very significant. Heartfelt thanks from the learners with a sprinkling of grammatical errors is far more powerful than silence that makes managers wonder if anyone has learned any English.

**Final reports**
Program reports must be submitted to the Province and Manitoba Start at the end of June, August, November, and February. Note that these reports are read by several levels and layers of funders and coordinators and form a part of annual reports for public accountability. Several of the questions in the program reports are directly correlated to funding criteria. Before completing the report, read this Instructor Handbook thoroughly so that you are aware of the expected standards in all aspects of the program, including conducting needs assessments, gathering learner feedback, designing and delivering training, implementing learner portfolios, and evaluating progress.
Evaluation

The process of evaluating *English at Work* programs begins on the first day of the program, not the last. There are many aspects to evaluation that must be considered; including whether it is formative or summative, whether the evaluation is of the learner, of the program, by the learner, by the instructor, by the supervisor, etc.

Informal and Formative Evaluation

Check-in/ Check-out
Checking in with students requires much more than asking learners the standard “how are you, how was your weekend” questions. While those questions are good for warm-up, check in – check out questions can actually be the most important part of your program evaluation process. At the beginning of each class, take 5 minutes for learners to let you know how they have used the English they are learning. Learners should also present problems or questions for you or the group to help them with. This may be a time to ask if anyone has heard an idiom or expression that was new and confusing. It may be a time for someone to tell the group about a success that they recently had, such as using English for the first time to get a bank loan or to ask the supervisor for help. Someone may want to suggest a topic for English study, such as filling in a dental form or reading product labels. Or, it may be a time for setting new personal goals, such as “I need to speak English to someone at lunch-time at least once every day”.

Similarly, check-out should be a time to think about what was learned that day. Allow 5 minutes to ask these questions and encourage discussion: “What did I learn in this class?” “When and where will I use what I learned tomorrow?” Encourage learners to seek out opportunities to expand their English, and to see class as a place that has relevance for solving everyday problems. Some students have started carrying a note pad with them everywhere they go so they can jot down something that caused them a problem in English, which they then bring to class for assistance at check-in time.

Language Portfolio Assessment

Approximately once a month, the instructor and learners should engage in a portfolio activity. This is an assessment process that engages teachers and students in dialogue. Together over time, teachers and students set goals; identify, select and compile examples of language proficiency and learning, and reflect on progress. In the *English at Work* class, the portfolio normally takes the form of a section in the back of the students’ binders where samples, not everything, showing competence in English can be gathered. For oral language, a page can be labelled “Speaking and Listening”, and learners can simply date and write down examples of things they are able to do in English that they couldn’t do before, such as ask the Human Resource officer for information on sick leave. In cases where companies ask instructors for evidence of progress, examples from students’ portfolios can be copied and shared, with learner permission. If companies still require further documentation or validity of learner language proficiency, they should contact the Province to enquire about the development of a Workplace Language Assessment tool, which is a language test that can be developed specifically for a worksite.

Learner Evaluations
Companies vary widely in how they want to evaluate the progress of *English at Work* with their employees. Some take a soft approach to the training and only want to know if participants are feeling positive about the classes. Others want harder data demonstrating that the company is getting a return on its investment, and may even want to base employee status on the demonstration of progress in English proficiency.

The *English at Work* program has taken the position of ‘do no harm’ when it comes to informing companies of employee progress. Participants in *English at Work* classes should be coming voluntarily. Conscripted learners are unlikely to progress. Setting voluntary learners up with potentially damaging reports of slow progress is unfair when they are coming to classes of their own volition to try to improve on their skills.

A better process for reporting to companies and to learners themselves originates with the Communication Network Diagram and moves on to the Collaborative Language Portfolio Assessment (CLPA) as described above. Early in the course, time in class is required for the group to discuss what should go into the diagram, and each learner should record their own needs. A group compilation may then be put together by the teacher that reflects the needs of the entire group, which forms the course outline.

In the final weeks of the class, learners should be given an opportunity to evaluate the course and the instructor. In *English at Work* classes final evaluations are normally led openly by the instructor with plenty of discussion. A more traditional method for course and instructor evaluation led by a neutral administrator might allow students to make critical or negative comments with some anonymity. However, past experience has been that students attempt to protect their teacher when answering to an outsider and very little information of substance is offered. In *English at Work* classes, if the instructor has been ineffective the learners will have informed their supervisors early in the program or simply quit coming to class, so there is little value in trying to manage the evaluation by 3rd person.

In classes where language levels are very low, learners may speak with each other in first language to discuss the questions and one spokesperson can tell the teacher in English what the group said. The teacher should take notes and use the information to complete a single group evaluation and indicate on the form that this was the method used to gather student feedback.

For other classes where discussion in English is fruitful, allow time for the group to give opinions orally, then ask each learner to write down their own response. Take notes of the comments that are given orally. Once learner responses have been recorded, gather the forms and review the information after class. Make copies to give to your worksite contact as well as to the program coordinators and funders.

**Progress Reports**

A final summative progress report should be given to each learner. These are confidential report cards given from the teacher to the learner, and should be written in a style that is supportive and instructive. Comments should relate to the goals of the learners as found in their Communication Network Diagrams. There is no need to use academic or programmatic language in these reports, they should be in the teacher’s own voice and written to the learner directly. No one else will see these reports, and copies should not be made for the company or for the government.

**Instructor Evaluations**
The instructor evaluation is the teacher's opportunity to document impressions and opinions of the program as a whole. They should be written with the understanding that the workplace and the government funder will receive a copy, which means adopting a professional tone if attempting to describe a problem or perhaps even suggest blame for a problem. A copy should be given to the workplace contact and the program coordinators and funders.
When Things Go Wrong

Unfortunately it isn’t a question of “if”, it’s “when”. Some things will go wrong. Strong experienced instructors have had classes fizzle, and programs have ended at companies when everyone thought they had the potential to continue for years.

It is always possible in spite of the best plans and intentions that events will not unfold as expected. It is how you deal with things that go wrong that make a difference. You may find that the expectations of management and/or the employees are not being met or were very difficult to meet. The company may not have clearly thought out their reason for offering English at Work or communicated that to you or to the employees. In any case, issues should be addressed quickly and wherever possible defused.

English at Work instructors do not have a colleague down the hall who they can ask for advice, so it can feel lonely when the program isn’t doing what you and everyone hoped for. English at Work will probably not provide the teacher with the safe school classroom environment that some are used to. To overcome this, it’s important for instructors to develop allies at the work-site. Just dropping in to teach and never connecting with managers and supervisors is a mistake. While it is true that everybody is always very busy, a quick “do you have anything you want me to work on with the guys next week?” will buy you a lot of support from supervisors and managers even if they always say “no, everything’s fine.” The English at Work instructor has to become a recognizable part of the workplace. Supervisors need to know them by face and by name. The Human Resource or training manager responsible for getting the class started wants it to work, and usually likes to get short updates every week or two on how things are going. Union representatives who helped initiate the project should also be part of the instructor’s support network. All of these people are more likely to help when things go wrong if they felt included before things went wrong.

Ask the Provincial English at Work Consultant for advice or just vent if you need to… we all need colleagues. Contact your Community of Practice pod facilitator or group members to ask for advice. If something or someone is causing a problem for your learners, try to find a way to help your learners resolve their own problem. If something or someone is causing you the problem, discuss with the Provincial Consultant your rights and responsibilities as an English at Work instructor. Ask, “What am I being asked to do here? What does everyone hope for? Is it realistic? Can I do it?”

In the end, it may not be possible to resolve the situation satisfactorily. If this is the case, you may have to just let it go as a learning experience. Chances are it won’t ever come to this if the time was taken to build the support ahead of time – but, remember that English at Work sites are not schools. The company is good at whatever it does…making doors or aircraft parts, processing chickens, providing health care, etc. …but it may not know how to run a language training program for employees. Your program may be one small drop in a very large bucket at the place you are teaching. You can only do your best… and for the sake of the great people that come to your classes to learn English from you, it’s all worth it!
ENGLISH AT WORK

FORMS and TEMPLATES
Note to instructors: These questions are most effective if you use them as a general guide to a conversational oral interview. Needs must be continuously re-assessed throughout the program.

NAME: ____________________________________________________________

DEPARTMENT: ______________________________________________________

RESPONSIBLE FOR FOLLOWING EMPLOYEES:

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

LANGUAGE SKILLS NEEDED: (priorize 1, 2, 3, 4)

Listening ___ Speaking ___ Reading ___ Writing ___

LISTENING / UNDERSTANDING

Who speaks to the employees that will be in the class?

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

What is said?

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________
SPEAKING

Who should the employees be able to speak to?

What about?

READING

What do you want the employees to be able to read?

WRITING

What do the employees need to be able to write?
What can I do for students in this course to help you with your work as their supervisor?
Needs Assessment - Employees

Note to instructors: These questions are most effective if you use them as a general guide to a conversational oral interview. Needs must be continuously re-assessed throughout the program.

LEARNER INFORMATION

1. Name: ________________________________

2. Country of birth: ________________________________

3. Languages spoken: ________________________________

4. When did you come to Canada? ________________________________

5. How long have you been working here? ________________________________

6. Have you studied English before? Yes / No
   If yes:
      Where: ________________________________
      When: ________________________________

7. What was your occupation before coming to Canada?
      ________________________________

8. How many years did you attend school? ________________________________

WORK INFORMATION:

Department: ________________________________

Supervisor: ________________________________

LANGUAGE SKILLS NEEDED: (Prioritize 1, 2, 3, 4)

Listening _____ Speaking _____ Reading _____ Writing _____
SPEAKING:
Who do you need to speak English with at work?

What do you need or want to talk about?

LISTENING:
Who speaks to you in English at work? (e.g. to give you instructions?)

What do they tell you?
READING:

What do you need to be able to read at work?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

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WRITING:

What do you have to write or fill out?

________________________________________________________________________

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WRITING SAMPLE:

Please write on a topic of your choice for 5 minutes. (e.g. what do you do at your job, OR, what do you want to learn in this English class?)
Communication Network Diagram

Functional language tasks: ____________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

Functional language tasks: ____________________________

______________________________

______________________________

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Functional language tasks: ____________________________

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Functional language tasks: ____________________________

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Communication with: 
(from Communication Network Diagram)

Functional language tasks: ____________________________

Language Learning Activities

Communication with: 

Functional language tasks: ____________________________

Language Learning Activities
Communication with: 

Functional language tasks: 

Language Learning Activities

What worked: 

What didn’t: 

Follow-up plan:
English at Work Program Report

Workplace: ____________________________________________________________
Instructor: __________________________________________________________
Report period: _______________________________________________________

1. Program data:

   number of students registered ________________________________
   number of students attending regularly ____________________________
   reasons for non-attendance (if any) ________________________________
   range of CLB levels ______ to _________
   class days and times _____________________________________________
   number of classes since last report _______________________________
   number of hours since last report _________________________________

   immigration status of students
   (indicate how many students)
   Citizen _____ Permanent Resident _____
   Work Visa _____ Other _____

   new students since last report
   Citizen _____ Permanent Resident _____
   Work Visa _____ Other _____

2. Please give a short description of activities and the content of the training (or attach the course outline).

3. What was done to assess learner needs, and in what way did your instruction respond to those needs?

4. Attach a completed Communication Network Diagram for the program.

5. What evidence is there that learners have had success and progressed in their communicative competence? Give specific examples of tasks learners can accomplish in English now that they couldn’t before.

6. Learning portfolios are a systematic collection by students showing samples of their progress. Were learning portfolios kept by students? _____
   Describe the system used in your class for students to keep learning portfolios.

7. Did learners complete end of program evaluations? _______
   Describe the ways that learners provided you with formal and informal feedback.

8. How many of your students received formal progress reports? _______
9. In what way did the program satisfy the needs of the employer?

10. What are some aspects of this project that presented challenges or did not succeed as well as you expected? What are your recommendations?

Comments:
English at Work Student Report

Learner: ________________________________
Program: ______________________________

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<th>Skill/Objective</th>
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<th>Developing</th>
<th>Completed</th>
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Comments and suggestions about your language learning:

Date: ____________ Teacher's Signature: ________________________
English at Work Learner Evaluation

Name (optional): ______________________ Date: ____________________

Workplace: ________________________ Instructor: ____________________

Please answer the following questions on this page or on a separate paper if you need more space.

1. My English has improved.

A lot  A little  Not much  No

☐  ☐  ☐  ☐

What can you do in English now that you couldn’t do before?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2. I learned English that I need for my job and daily life.

A lot  A little  Not much  No

☐  ☐  ☐  ☐

What did you learn in class? Give examples.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

3. My teacher was helpful and well-prepared.

Always  Usually  Sometimes  Never

☐  ☐  ☐  ☐

Give examples.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
4. The learning activities were helpful and well-prepared.

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<tr>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Usually</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
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The learning activity that I want more of is...
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

The learning activity that I want less of is...
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

5. My learning portfolio helped me see my progress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A lot</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Not much</th>
<th>No</th>
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<td>☐</td>
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Give one example of something in your learning portfolio that shows your progress.
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

6. I would like more English classes at work in the future.

Yes ☐ No ☐

Recommendations:
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

39
English at Work
Evaluation by the Instructor

Name: 
Workplace: 
Date: 

1. What did you find satisfying about this program?

2. Comment on the learning success of learners in your class. What major gains did you notice? Give one or two examples.

3. What was not satisfying about this program?

4. Comment on the supports given to you by the company.

5. Comment on supports given to you by the Province and/or Manitoba Start.

6. Please provide any recommendations you wish to give.

Instructor: ____________________________ Date: ____________________
English at Work Payment Guidelines


Rates:

A 6-15 students $32/hour
Or 1-5 students with high workplace course content

B 1-5 students $27/hour

Experience Increments: years completed ___ x $1.00 ($5 max) $____

Hourly rate: rate plus experience increment $____

Wages:

Program delivery: ____weeks x ____ hours = ____ hours x $ ____ /hr. $____

Preparation:
A 1-1 ratio in delivery to prep time is standard. Variances given by the Province may include situations where 2 or more classes are taught at one business allowing for preparation time reduction, or a new complex program requires significant additional initial needs assessment.

Preparation hours ______ x $ ____ /hr. $____

Professional Development
English at Work staff meetings $ 75 x 2
Community of practice $ 25 x 4
EAL Conference fee $ 75 $ 325

Materials: $ 100

Total: $____

Company total - $____ MB Start total - $____
INVOICE
#1
Jane Doe
Multiplex Manufacturing

Date: July 31, 2014
Bill To:
Employment Solutions for Immigrants Inc.
271 Portage Ave
Winnipeg, MB  R3B 2A8

Please make cheque payable to: Jane Doe

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<td>$1,776.00</td>
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<td>- 6 classes @ 4 hours – 24 hours of instruction</td>
<td>48 hours</td>
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<td>- 24 hours of preparatory time allotted</td>
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<td>months</td>
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<td>Other</td>
<td>GST Number if applicable</td>
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<td>TOTAL:</td>
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<td>$1,784.33</td>
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Terms: Due on receipt to the address below

Jane Doe
1146 Tomato Ave
Winnipeg, MB  R2M 5E9
E: doejane@hotmail.com

Signature: ___________________________  Date: ___________________________
An Agreement Between

________________________________________________________________________________________

- and -

________________________________________________________________________________________

(“The Instructor”)

________________________________________________________________________________________

(address)

1. The Instructor will be engaged for a term beginning on _________________ and ending on
   _________________.

2. The Instructor shall perform the work in accordance with the Statement of Work, which is attached to this agreement.

3. The total amount payable over the term of the contract will be $____ for ___ hours of development and ___ hours of
   instruction at a rate of $____/hour.

4. The Instructor is an independent contractor who has had the opportunity to negotiate and exercise control of the terms of
   delivery. The Instructor is responsible for initiating and setting the direction for the content of training, and as such the
   Instructor is not in any way an employee or agent of ______________, is not eligible for Employment Insurance, and is
   responsible for all statutory remittances, including but not limited to Canada Pension Plan and Income Tax.

5. All reasonable fees and expenses approved in advance and incurred by the Instructor in performance of his/her duties
   under this contract will be paid upon receipt of invoice.

6. The Instructor retains ownership of all materials of this project including all rights to the intellectual property generated by
   the Instructor in the performance of his/her duties under this contract, unless ownership is otherwise retained by public
   funders according to project funding agreements.

7. The Instructor agrees that he/she has had the opportunity to obtain his/her own independent advice in respect to this
   contract.

8. Either party may cancel this contract with two weeks notice for any reason.

Signed by:

Instructor: _________________________________ Date: _____________________________

Business/organization: _________________________________ Date: _____________________________
Statement of Work

This Statement of Work accompanies the Agreement between ______________________ and, ______________________ dated ______________________.

The work agreed to will include the following:

- *English at Work* program delivered at ______________________

- training delivered according to the following schedule agreed upon by learners, instructor, and the business/organization, subject to change by further agreement.

  __________________________________________

  (days, times, start date, end date)

- #______ learners in each class

- #______ hours of instruction per class

- research and development of instructional material relevant to the needs of the learners and the business/organization, to be approved of by the program planning team.

- individual learner feedback, progress reports and final evaluations provided by instructors.

- course content determined by needs assessment with learners and other stakeholders, with topics that include:
  
  -
  -
  -
  -

- Any additional work must be agreed to by both signing parties.
Attendance Register

Program: __________________________________________________________

Instructor: _________________________________________________________

Month: ____________________________________________________________

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Total

COMMENTS:

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APPENDIX

Teaching Activities

Some activities have been contributed to this Handbook by the Manitoba *English at Work* Consultant as well as teachers in the program. This is not an exhaustive list of English at Work teaching activities by any means. Experienced *English at Work* teachers might be able to double or triple the number of these activities with activities they like to use. They are provided here as a kind of ‘comfort food’ of language learning activities that have been used successfully for many years. As always, they must be adapted to fit the context of your own situation.
What Did She Say?

Often when an EAL teacher asks someone in the class a question, other students don’t listen to the answer – especially if the student gives a long answer! Typically, this becomes their time to browse through their book or think about what they are going to say when it’s their turn to talk. When one student is speaking, take this as an opportunity to practice your students’ listening skills. One way to do this is to say… “While XX is speaking, try to remember as much as possible because I’m going to ask you what he/she said.” After the student takes a turn speaking, this is your chance to really work on everyone’s listening and speaking accuracy. Now say, “Who can tell me something that he/she said?” When someone says part of it, you model the correct way to say it, and say, “Everyone repeat after me”. Everyone can repeat the correct phrase after you 3-5 times, with you modeling it each time. Then you can ask individuals to repeat after you on their own. (This all may seem very repetitive to us as teachers, but it really allows students to hone their skills to perfection – they actually find this repetition exciting if you make it sound exciting, because they hear themselves getting better with each time they repeat.) For more advanced students, oral repetition practice is less about saying the right words and more about mimicking pronunciation. 3-5x repetition should start slowly and clearly, then move to natural speed, rhythm and intonation.

2 Questions

Similar to the above, teachers frequently have students take turns speaking out loud on various topics. You can ensure that people listen to each other if they know you are always going to follow these kinds of speech events with a task. This can be as simple as giving a “2 question” assignment. After everyone has had their turn saying something to the class ask everyone to choose 2 people they want to ask 2 questions to. If necessary, students can take a couple of minutes to prepare their questions. The questions have to relate in some way to the information that just came from the person they are questioning. Follow the same procedure as in “what did she say?” for repetition practice.
Conversation Practice Using a Tape Recorder

The purpose of conversation practice is that students improve both their fluency and accuracy. Good conversation practice should ensure that students practice what they already know and also learn something new. New vocabulary is only one area of language where something new might be learned. Understanding rapid speech and use of Canadian stress, intonation and pronunciation are all possible objectives for conversation practice using a tape recorder.

Method:
There are endless variations on how to do this. The following method could be seen as a guideline, but should be adapted, shortened, added to - whatever is needed to make it fit the needs of your students.

1. Prepare a conversational tape with a friend. The speech should be reasonably clear, but not unnaturally so, and should be at a natural pace. The dialogue should not sound like it comes out of a book. Include "um's", "uh's", pauses, "pardon me's", etc. It should be no longer than about 30 seconds for this kind of exercise.

2. Tell students you are going to play a conversation on tape, and ask them three general pre-questions. i.e. What are they talking about? Who are they? What part was hard to understand?

3. Play the tape through completely.

4. Students answer questions from #2 above.

5. Ask the students what they heard, in general. You might replay the tape again. Write point form phrases on the board. Verbatim and sequence is unnecessary.

6. Play one sentence. Press "pause", students repeat as much as possible without you correcting. Continue line-by-line but don't insist on accuracy yet.

7. Rewind to the beginning, and ask students to tell you the first sentence before you play it. Now play that sentence to confirm what they said. Ask what's next. Students say. Play to confirm. Verbatim is still not necessary, but they should be close.

8. Rewind again. Play one line, press pause. Ask class to repeat in unison with you modeling 2 or 3x times. Don't just say, "say it again" - model it so they can mimic you. Play the next line, ask one or two students to repeat out loud. Start insisting on pronunciation that mimics yours, including stress, rhythm, intonation, and volume.

9. Pair practice. Note that at this point, only point form has been written on the board. Students have no written dialogue. Many students will prefer to have everything in writing, before they speak. Remind them that they won't have everything in writing when they need to speak English outside of the class. Verbatim is not important.

10. For pronunciation, stress and intonation, assign students "A" and "B" parts in the dialogue. Play the tape, and while "A" is speaking, all "A" students should be saying that part at the same speed and trying to copy stress and intonation. Don't stop the tape, even if it isn't perfect. Usually everybody thinks it's far too fast and has a good laugh. Try the same thing with your own voice replacing the tape at a slightly slower speed. Then go back to the tape again.
**Mingling / Conversation Circle**

**Mingling**
Ask everyone to stand up and move to another area of the room away from the desks. Tell everyone that for the next few minutes they should talk to a classmate and try to remember as much of the conversation as they can. You can be directive about the topic if you wish, or you can leave it wide open. Give about 2-3 minutes, then say “change” and give another 2-3 minutes for students to speak to another person. (The “mingling” that happens fairly closely simulates a social situation that might occur at a professional work gathering or in their personal life.)

For the lowest levels of English, this might amount to little more than pointing to things around them and saying items in English, or formulaic conversations that you have taught them. If they are acting like they can't do anything, ask them to talk to their partner about something they learned in your class last week - if they can't do that maybe you have to teach it again? However, no paper allowed.

For higher levels, this provides an opportunity for extended English speech – some students need all the time they can get with this. The accuracy part comes in the next part of the activity.

Once everyone has had two partners, form a circle, everyone still standing. Now give 30 seconds for each person to say what one of their partners told them. Time them - 30 seconds - no shorter no longer. After they've reported, you choose one phrase that you think was important and model it correctly, then have them repeat after you. Model it again so that they mimic in unison your words, your intonation, your speed, and your volume. Modeling and repeating should be done at least 3 times. **Don’t just say “say it again” – they have to mimic what and how they hear you say it.**

Modeling and repeating is more obviously acceptable for Stage I learners, but if you explain the value of it to Stage II learners they can also benefit greatly. For them, mimicking your voice will make them mindful of the speed and intonation of a Canadian English speaker. Ask them to think of it as acting lessons, and they're preparing to play the part of a character with a Canadian accent.

**Conversation Circle**
Pretty much as above, but a little more directive in who people speak to. Students form one inner circle and one outer circle, facing each other. After they have spoken to the person they are facing, you direct one of the circles to shift to the left or to the right and continue. This forces people to speak to someone who may be a just a little bit out of their comfort zone, for better or for worse.
Prepared and Unprepared Presentations

Prepared

There are several stages that you can take students through in getting ready to deliver prepared presentations. Before you go too deeply into this however, decide with your class how often they would ever have to deliver a prepared presentation in front of an audience. If the answer is never, just work on unprepared presentations.

A prepared presentation that a person may have to make in their job may be formal or informal, and may allow a little or a lot of time to prepare. Consider these factors as you develop your students’ skills in making a presentation. It may not be necessary to include all the steps below if the presentations your students have to make at work are informal. The following steps will take place over several classes, perhaps even over several weeks:

1. Introduce your students to a plan for everyone to prepare and deliver a presentation in front of the class and other invited guests. Discuss who these invited guests could be. Include people such as supervisors, HR managers, co-workers if at all possible.
2. Agree on the parameters of the presentation, such as length of time, use of audio-visuals, etc.
3. Do a little brainstorming together to come up with topics for presentations. In most cases, the topic should be work-related and about something that they know very well.
4. Demonstrate to the group how to sketch out a presentation outline. Pick a topic such as “how to build a fence” or “how to bake a cake”, and think out loud as you write point form phrases on the board that will become part of your presentation. After you have accumulated 6 or 7 points on the board, sequence them in the order that makes sense for a presentation.
5. Ask students to sketch out a presentation outline on the topic they have chosen.
6. Students pair up. One explains to the other what he is going to include in his presentation. The partner should ask questions and elicit details, dig deeper than what has been offered.
7. Students work alone again, and based on the conversation with their partner begin writing out in full what they want to say in their presentation.
8. Provide a couple of tape recorders in the classroom for students to tape themselves. While some students are reading their presentation to their partner, others are reading theirs onto the tape. After they have recorded themselves they should play it back to themselves for self-critical feedback.
9. Students reduce their fully written presentations to note-cards with only key words and phrases.
10. Repeat step #8. The delivery should sound more natural and spontaneous now.
11. Before giving prepared presentations in front of invited guests, let students practice their presentations in front of their classmates only. After each presentation, ask the non-presenting students to give some positive comments and some suggestions. You may need to manage this to keep it happy, but don’t shy away from constructive feedback. Demonstrate to everyone what constructive criticism sounds like.
12. Set a date for presentations to invited guests and make arrangements for them to attend the presentations. Let them know that you will be asking them to give helpful feedback to the students.
13. Prepare handouts to give to invited guests that instruct them how to give constructive feedback to the students. This should include starting with a positive comment, then giving feedback and suggestions, and finishing with another positive comment. On your handout ask the guest to evaluate the presentation with some of the following questions: did the presenter get his/her message across?; did the presenter keep you interested?; did the presenter engage you with eye contact?; did the presenter use appropriate volume?; do you have any suggestions for the presenter?

14. The next time you reconvene as a regular class, debrief on the whole experience of presenting in front of an audience. What went well, what didn’t and what lessons were learned along the way?

Unprepared

Speaking up at work, perhaps in a meeting or in an impromptu gathering, requires some courage and confidence. Courage and confidence speaking in front of people may come naturally to a few people, but most of us need help. We need to practice something 99 times so that the 100th time, which might be in front of the boss, feels easy.

In any presentation, whether prepared or unprepared, the key is relating to the audience. Need for background comments or not, use of humour or not, level of technicality, and level of formality all have to be considered and applied in seconds.

These are just two ways of practicing unprepared presentations. Almost any improv game will probably accomplish something similar:

1. topic in a bag – ask students to write a word or phrase on a slip of paper and put it in a bag. Each student then takes a turn to come to front, pick a slip of paper out of the bag, and by the time they return to their seat they have to start talking. Limit the speech to 10 or 15 seconds at first, then as students get used to doing this lengthen it to a minute or two.

2. give me a word – students take turns coming to the front (yes, it adds to the pressure and that’s OK). Five students from the class give the presenter one word each. For example: shoe, glass, accident, paycheque and winter. The presenter has to start speaking immediately and gradually use each of those 5 words in a story that somehow connects them. What this does is exercises the person’s ability to think on their feet, literally.
Using a Picture Dictionary in a Workplace Class

Some English at Work classes have picture dictionaries prepared specifically for their business. Alternatively, pictures of relevant tools and safety material can often be found online for those without the luxury of a workplace-specific picture dictionary. This activity reinforces recently taught concepts, directly linking the activity to the workplace.

Hand out one or two pictures to each learner. Have the learners write a sentence relating to the picture and a recently taught grammar concept, possibly incorporating an additional concept from a few classes ago as a review. For example:

- picture of a welder/simple past tense of verbs / adjectives
- Learners could speak or write a sentence such as:
  “The blue welder was out of welding wire.”
  “The old man welded the trailer slowly.”

Have the learners present their sentences to the class either orally or have them write the sentences on the board. If the learners are easily intimidated, work with them individually to ensure their sentences are grammatically correct. As they become more and more comfortable and confident, less correction can happen before the sentences are presented and the sentences can be corrected as a group.

Additionally, a wide-angle picture of a work station can be used to describe prepositions of location and expanded to include adjectives in the descriptions.
Shop Floor Visits

Some businesses allow instructors to visit their learners on the shop floor. This time is critical because the employer is giving up valuable, timed production time and the learner might not be granted additional time to complete their expected tasks.

For low-level learners, this time can be spent describing what they do at work, what tools they work with or what they are producing. It can also be spent asking and answering questions or pre/re-teaching material from in class if they are at a lower level than the rest of the class. Alternatively, it can be used to expand on the material taught in class for learners who are at a higher level than their classmates.

Shop floor visits are an excellent opportunity to ask for and give directions. For example, when describing the directions to the nearest exit in case of a fire, physically walk the path and describe as you go (“turn left at the red bin”). Then, repeat, having the learner give the directions as they go. Next, provide learners with the map of the facility and have them describe the path using the map. Finally, have learner write down the directions. This could be in connection with teaching related vocabulary in class.

If unable to offer shop-floor visits, tours with learners through the worksite (upon management approval) is an excellent change of pace, great language opportunity and a chance to learn what each person does at work each day, building community.
Hands-On Word Strips

Because many of our workplace learners have hands-on jobs, many of them are hands-on learners as well. Teaching basic sentence structure with pre-written words on strips is often enjoyed by learners. Use these activities, for example, after teaching about demonstratives (This/That/These/Those), articles (a/an/some), or verbs (have/has/is/are) along with workplace nouns.

For example, provide them with the exact number of correct words to make three correct sentences. (1 – A’s, 1 – is, 2 – these, etc.)
“A nail is sharp.”
“These welding helmets are heavy.”
“These gloves have holes.”
Learners need to work at developing the sentences until they have used up all of the words provided to them. Each person may have different sentences, but the sentences should each be grammatically correct. (One person may have “These gloves are heavy” and “These welding helmets have holes” in comparison to what the example is.)

Learners will review grammar concepts, but will also become familiar with work-related words and sentence structure. To expand this activity, learners should read their sentences to the group and discuss why these sentences are correct or not.
Work-Related Writing

While on the shop floor, have the learners write down a description of their day-to-day work. If unable to do so on while on the shop floor with the prompts readily available, do so in the classroom using story prompts such as pictures. Correct the writing sample and have the learners rewrite it. Keep a copy of each final story.

At this point, you can select relevant vocabulary from the stories to teach, or use the stories as a basis for lessons or for safety-related story examples. Alternatively, words can be removed from the writing pieces and learners can fill-in-the-blank by referring to a word bank. In addition, learners can work on the stories they created or they can work on other classmates’ stories. The stories can be expanded when descriptive words are learned, or they can be orally paraphrased, confirming their comprehension. After a new verb tense is introduced, the story can be transposed into the new verb tense or can also be used as spelling practise.
Hot Seat

The purposes of hot seat are:
- To provide opportunities for participants to interact with company leadership in ways they would not normally talk to them (if at all)
- To give learners opportunity to formulate, practice and master questions (grammatically and with correct intonation and pronunciation)
- To have their questions directly answered
- To build management and supervisor support for the English at Work program

METHOD:

There are many ways to do this. The following method could be seen as a guideline, but should be adapted, shortened, added to - whatever is needed to make it fit the needs of your students.

1. Arrange for a supervisor, team leader, manager or human resource personnel to come to the class to sit on the hot seat. Let them know that they will be asked questions and that they have the option of answering each question or “passing”.

2. Prior to the guest visit, help learners draft questions. Depending on the CLB level and comfort level of the group, this can be done individually, in groups or as a whole group. Questions can be work related or personal. Discuss with the group which questions might cause the guest to feel uncomfortable and why. Even though the guest has the option to ‘pass’ on a question, exercise your right to censor some questions if they have the potential to turn someone in management against your program…managers don’t like to be embarrassed in front of their staff.

3. Choose an editing process to help learners correct grammar and word choice.

4. Type out all the questions on one sheet.

5. Practice intonation and pronunciation of questions ahead of time.

6. On the day that the guest arrives, introduce the guest and give the rules of hot seat. (For example, that the guest has to option to answer a question or say pass)

7. Learners take turns asking questions, (you can go around the room if you like.) You can allow them to choose whatever question they want to ask. Class participants can check off questions as they are being asked.

Add-on activities

8. If there is time, the guest can also ask the class questions.

OTHER METHODS OF HOT SEAT:

Learners can also take turns being in the hot seat and being asked questions without the involvement of a guest. In this case, you may not want to spend time drafting and re-writing questions ahead of time. The teacher can write down grammatical and pronunciation errors and then focus on accuracy issues after.
Back to Back

There are many variations that teachers can use with this activity. The basic idea is to exercise students’ abilities in giving clear instructions as well as listening and clarifying.

**Drawing**

1. Have students get into groups of two. Students decide who will be the “boss” and who will be the “worker”.
2. Give everyone a blank piece of paper. Bosses and workers pick up their chairs and move to a place where they can sit back to back.
3. The boss draws shapes on his/her page, and while doing it tells the worker what he/she should do to be the same. For example, “make a 3 inch square in the middle of the page. Make a circle inside the square.”
4. Workers should ask questions like “how big is the circle?” if the boss doesn’t tell them.
5. The first time you do this, have them keep the drawings simple. With experience, let them get more detailed.

**Objects**

1. Repeat step #1 from above.
2. Have the bosses select 5 or 6 objects from your table such as items from their work site, or common items such as paper clips, pencils, coins, or anything interesting that comes to mind. If you have a supply of Lego it is great for this activity. Boss and worker pairs can face each other but there should be a screen of some sort placed on the table between them. A binder should be good enough.
3. Bosses arrange the objects on their side of the screen, then give directions to the workers to copy their arrangement.
4. Workers should ask questions to clarify instructions.
5. When bosses and workers are satisfied, they remove the screen and compare arrangements.
Speech Exercise

Because the pace of speech and comprehension are so closely linked, this exercise focuses on speaking at the optimum pace for making the message understood.

A partner is needed to work through this speech exercise. His or her task is to comprehend what is being said, to be able to repeat it and give feedback about the speech pace.

The speaker’s task is to tell how to do something in five steps. These steps may be jotted down before speaking as helping points to rely on.

Activity Steps

1. Choose one of the speech topics below and think of five steps describing how to do it. Then tell your partner how to go about it.
2. When you have finished speaking, ask your partner to repeat the five steps you spoke of. Did he or she get all of them? If not, why? Did you speak too quickly or too slowly or was there some other speech problem that interfered with communication?
3. Let your partner share his five steps how to fulfill a certain procedure. Give feedback.
4. Rerun the exercise with a different topic as many times as you like.

Examples of Speech Topics

a) How to handle a conflict with a co-worker
b) How to handle a conflict with the management
c) How to handle a customer complaint
d) How to write a thank you letter
e) How to evaluate an employee
f) How to impress a client
g) How to give a good speech
h) How to improve English
Warm-Up Activity

1. Unscramble the following phrases:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presenter’s invitation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>any anybody questions Would like to ask?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have questions anyone any Does?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>would to open I the discussion floor to like .</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses to awkward questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>question Good. you I into back that look and get will to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a now interesting That’s right question don’t to which really have unfortunately I answer an.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that some need to research do I’d into.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>isn’t That afraid my I am field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>due respect off-topic With this all is a little question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>know I’m I don’t afraid should but you able to be out find the X website on.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. How can you start a polite question? (Provide at least 3 examples)

3. If you are confident in the answer, how would you start answering a question?
# Asking and Answering Questions

## Presenter’s invitation
- Would anybody like to ask any questions?
- Does anyone have any questions?
- I would like to open the floor to questions/discussion.

## Academic Question Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Can you...</th>
<th>tell us more about...?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Could you...</td>
<td>clarify what you mean by...?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you be able to...</td>
<td>explain in more details?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Responses to questions you feel confident in answering
- Yes, it’s a good question...
- Sure, it’s a very important/interesting question...

## Responses to awkward questions
- Good question. I'll look into that and get back to you.
- That’s a really interesting question to which, unfortunately, I don’t have an answer right now.
- I’d need to do some research into that.
- That isn’t my field I am afraid.
- With all due respect, this question is a little off-topic.
- I’m afraid I don’t know, but you should be able to find out on the X website.

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**Pronunciation Triads / Linking**
Pronunciation triads give your students practice in analyzing their pronunciation. Divide the class into cross-ability groups of 3 (one low level, one intermediate level, one high level). Provide 3 different short pieces of text appropriate to interests and levels to each group. Students take turns with 3 different roles as speaker, questioner, and analyst.

First, each person reads their short piece of text to themselves, which should be short enough for them to read in under a minute. Now the triad exercise begins. The speaker starts by reading the text aloud to the other two. After reading, the speaker very briefly summarizes what he has just read in his/her own words. This is necessary to allow for natural speech tones that don’t occur when someone is reading out loud. The questioner asks the speaker a question or two. The analyst makes notes this whole time of anything they think the speaker had difficulty pronouncing, and shares these notes with the group. Together they help each other pronounce the words or phrases that caused the speaker a problem.

Linking is what we do when we join words together in rapid speech. For example, “What do you say?” becomes “Whaddayasay?” Students may not need to be able to, or even want to be able to speak like this, but they definitely have to be able to understand linked speech. Gather examples of linked speech and take 5 minutes every class to demonstrate them for students. It’s more important that they just understand them, but if students want to be able to reproduce the speed of linked speech they will have to mimic you. It takes at least 5 or 6 repetitions of short phrases to achieve success, but I’ve seen keen students turn to each other and do 20 repetitions until they are satisfied! Successfully linking words in speech is kind of like being able to use idiomatic speech, it signals to mainstream Canadians that you are “one’v th’ guys”.

See Nina Weinstein’s “Whaddaya’ Say?” textbook.
Conversation Journals

Conversation journals are all about writing fluency. There are many activities EAL teachers use to improve their students’ writing accuracy, so it’s best to just go into this activity fully aware that this is not one of them. Everything inside of you as a teacher will scream at you to make this activity something else, and at first your students will too – try to resist! Conversation journals, simply put, are a conversation between you and your student, only the conversation is all done in writing. You may wish to set aside 10 minutes a week of class time for students to write in their conversation journals, but because class time is usually limited there’s no reason why this can’t be regular homework.

Students should get or be given small journal booklets to write in. Use 8 1/2 x 11 paper folded in half with a coloured paper cover and stapled along the seam. Small pages with no lines are somehow less intimidating. The booklet has to be something separate from regular notes because students will be giving it to you regularly.

Initiate conversation journals by talking with students about the difference between how you teach fluency and how you teach accuracy. When you teach fluency, you are helping them stretch beyond single words and literal translations – it’s the “big picture” – it’s the “forest”. When you teach accuracy you are focusing more on getting it right – it’s the “building blocks” – it’s the “trees”. Many learners are comfortable with only fluency or only accuracy activities, but it’s up to you to develop both.

Ask students to take 10 minutes to tell you something in writing. It can be something about their day (like a diary entry), or it can be providing you with information (telling you about their family or their country or their job), or it can be asking you questions. It’s best if you can be non-directive, but some people just don’t know what to write. Get these people started by giving them something very specific – ask them to give you directions to their house, or to describe their car, or to look around the room and tell you what they see.

Once a week, or every two weeks, take in all the journals. Read them at home and write back to your students. Don’t correct them. Your writing should be related to what they’ve written to you. What they will soon discover is that you can understand what they’ve written to you and that they’re capable of conveying meaning in writing. Their confidence will grow more from communicative success than from any praise you can possibly give.

**Spelling:** Personalized spelling programs can be taught entirely from student journals. Use the back pages of the journal to write down words that the student has spelled incorrectly. Have the student use the Look Cover Write Check method to learn how to spell these words. Global spelling lists that you provide are not ideal – words are either not in their active vocabulary (they aren’t going to use them so they won’t learn how to spell them) or they already know how to spell them. Words from their journal that are spelled incorrectly are obviously in their active vocabulary, and they have trouble spelling them.

**Grammar:** You can also focus in on grammar errors you notice in their journal entries. Again, use the back pages of the journal. Copy a sentence they have written with a grammar error, write it correctly, then assign a pattern practice. (i.e., “I walk to the store yesterday” becomes “I walked to the store yesterday” with a pattern practice of changing “walk” to “drive, run, bicycle” etc.)
Look, Cover, Write, Check

The Look, Cover, Write, Check method for learning spelling encourages visualizing whole words rather than memorizing them letter by letter. Learners should choose words that are part of their active vocabulary rather than have arbitrary words assigned to the entire class by the teacher. Teacher assigned words tend to be words that students either already know how to spell, or are words that students never use - so will learn them and quickly forget them. Student chosen words should come from their own free writing; the conversation journal is an ideal source. Teachers should only assign spelling words to the group if they are sure that they will become part of the learner’s active vocabulary, and teacher assigned words should be in addition to student selected words.

Seven words a day for each student is maximum.

1. LOOK at the word, say the word aloud, close your eyes or look up and ‘see’ the word, let your mind see it for 5-10 seconds.
2. COVER the word and ‘see’ it again in your mind.
3. WRITE the word directly beside the original word that you are still covering. Say it as you write it.
4. CHECK the word to see if you have written it correctly. Check every letter one by one. If you made a mistake, draw a line across the whole word like this.
5. LOOK, COVER, WRITE, and CHECK the word correctly three times in a row before going on to the next word in your wordlist.

Reading: Skimming, Scanning, Summarizing, Questioning
When teaching reading, consider the reading tasks that your learner actually has to do as part of their work or their life. Do they ever take turns reading a paragraph out loud to a group of people? Most likely not. Reading aloud in class has at times been referred to as ‘barking at print’ because the learner is not actually ‘reading’, he’s just making noise. Most likely the other students aren’t even getting the benefit of listening because they are anticipating which paragraph or sentence the teacher will ask them to read out loud and practicing it.

Reading at work is usually short, intensive, and technical. It is also almost always reading silently. *English at Work* teachers need to teach their students strategies for finding the information they need quickly and accurately, and give opportunities for students to practice their newly learned strategies.

Skimming and scanning techniques (attached) are what most working people really need. Skimming means taking a relatively large amount of text and trying to figure out the gist as quickly as possible. Scanning means searching through a piece of text for the answer to one or two very specific questions.

In many professional positions, people have to read a document and be able to summarize it for their supervisor or colleagues. This means getting to the heart of the text, grasping the intent of the writer and then recollecting the facts in point form. Provide your students with pieces of text that they might encounter at work, including reports, emails, policy manuals, letters to clients, etc, and have them do both oral and written summaries. For oral summaries have students read a document and then tell the class or a partner what they just read. Keep these exercises pretty quick - 5 minutes to read, 2 minutes to report. A written summary can be done the same way, give a quick 5 minute reading and 2 minutes to summarize in writing.

Questions? For more detailed reading, rather than first highlighting the vocabulary that you think will be difficult, try shooting first and asking questions later. At work, nobody will pre-teach the difficult vocabulary so they may as well gain some confidence with jumping in at the deep end. Give a short piece of authentic work-related text and allow 5 minutes for students to read it to themselves. Ask anyone to say what it was about. Let others fill in more info if something was missed. Ask everyone to identify the words or phrases they aren’t sure about. Don’t explain something that they don’t ask about – they either understood more than you might have expected, or need to be encouraged to keep asking you questions.
Dictation

Accuracy method

1. Select a piece of writing that is relevant to students' jobs and is at a level near their level of comprehension. Seven sentences maximum.
2. Tell students you are going to read them something. They should just listen, not write.
3. Read the entire passage.
4. Have students tell you anything they can, even if it is just individual words they heard.
5. Read the passage again.
6. Ask what the passage was about. Ask about one or two of the major details.
7. Have students get pen and paper ready for dictation. Ask them not to write until the sentence is finished.
8. Read the first sentence clearly but at a natural speed and rhythm.
9. Ask students to make a first attempt at writing what you said.
10. Read the first sentence aloud again.
11. Allow students to fix up their first attempt.
12. Continue this process through the seven sentences.
13. Give students the passage on paper for their self-correction.

Fluency method

1. Choose a new passage. Follow steps 1-7 from above.
2. Ask students to write words or phrases they hear, but to also keep listening while you continue to speak.
3. Read the entire passage again, clearly but at a natural pace and rhythm. Students should write anything that will help remind them of what was said.
4. Read the entire passage again. Students should fix up, fill in, rearrange. Give at least 5 minutes for them to re-create the passage as well as they can.
5. Give students the passage on paper for their self-correction.
Peer editing is a valuable activity that gives your students an opportunity to reflect on all aspects of their writing, including both accuracy and fluency. After giving some kind of writing activity to your students in a class, ask them to hand it in so you can photocopy it for use in the next class. In the next class, divide students into similar ability groupings of three per group (low level students together, high level students together). When they get into groups, ask them to look at one person’s writing at a time. Silent reading is better, don’t make this an exercise in elocution. After sufficient time, coach the groups how to interact with peer editing. The person who wrote the piece of text that the group is editing should facilitate the discussion. The student can start by asking the other two group members to summarize what was written in one or two sentences. After that students always like to focus on grammar and spelling errors so they may as well go straight there. The writer can ask the other two group members if they notice any grammar or spelling errors, and together they should try to self-correct. You’ll be circulating the room and can give quick answers to these questions.

The last thing the writer should do is ask the group to make suggestions to improve the writing, which might include adding some information, providing an introduction that gives the reader necessary context or a closing that summarizes the information. Point out to students that sometimes the quality and clarity of their written work is improved more by this kind of re-organization than by fixing the grammar.

Error correction activities can also build on students’ ability to self-correct. Gather 10 examples from students’ own writing (their journals are perfect for this) of common errors. Write out the sentences exactly as the student did including all errors, numbering the examples from 1 -10. After each sentence put a number in brackets that refers to how many errors there are in that sentence. You can then either photocopy the page of 10 errors and give each student a copy to correct in class, or you can cut the 10 examples into strips and give one or two to students to correct in small groups of 2 or 3.
Word of the Day (New Words in the Workplace)

**Time:** 5 minutes of class time (routine activity for beginning of class)

**Prep for teacher:** None

Sometimes the workplace is filled with signs, announcements, and messages containing words employees may not know. This activity helps participants gain awareness of the messages around them at work and can be adapted for high and low levels. This activity has proven to increase student confidence by empowering them to learn from each other, research something on their own, and feel successful in contributing something useful or interesting to the class. Students select a new, unfamiliar word they've encountered in the workplace and come prepared to teach it to the class. Words can come from workplace documents, employee handbooks, posters, signs, memos, emails, meetings, or even from eavesdropping in the cafeteria. Actual teaching should be encouraged, not simply writing the word/sentence on the board. This should take about 5 minutes of class time. The word is then written on a large sticky note and added to a poster titled “New Words in the Workplace”. Being able to see the words helps the students remember them and use them.

**Requirements:** Students sign up to teach the *Word of the Day*. It works best to have a sign up sheet with enough spots for each person to sign up only once. The student is reminded one class ahead of time. They should be prepared with the word, part of speech, definition, the context in which it was found, and a couple of original sentences to show the meaning. Questions should be directed to the teaching student.

**Adaptation for lower levels:** Lower level students can simply bring a word to class for the instructor to teach.

**Extensions:** In my class, this started out as *Word of the Day*, then moved to *Expression of the Day*, and eventually students were begging to teach Workplace *Topic* of the Day! They loved it!
English at Work Activity for Restaurant Workers

For restaurant workers in Chinatown who are pre to level 2.

I called restaurants in the area and asked them what English skills they thought the students should focus on.

- Talking to customers- small talk
- asking customers questions about their orders
- names of fruits, vegetables, beverages, meat, tools and utensils
- seasons and seasonal foods, holidays
- Simple form completion e.g. Name address, phone number, and asking questions about themselves, explaining their jobs
- names of days, months, for scheduling purposes
- talking with the supervisor, receiving instructions, asking for time off, questioning pay slips, notices of upcoming holidays,
- telling the time,
- Work schedules ex. How many days a week they can work, can they work overtime, the time clock, yesterday, today and tomorrow
- counting, money, and “how many”
- reading the menu

I got a copy of one of the menus from Ken’s restaurant and taught menu format and vocabulary. We practiced role-plays of customer/server or server/cook

I made conversation questions and had the students prepare answers that were unique to their workplace.

One of the activities I prepared was a snakes and ladders game prepared using questions that came up in the class. I divided them into four or five students a sheet. The students had to correctly answer a question to advance on the board. The prize is a sometimes unusual piece of fruit or some vegetables. We can talk about how to prepare the prize for eating etc.

This activity really allows the students to see how far they have advanced in English as well being enjoyable.

(See Snakes and Ladders board on next page. This is the blank snakes and ladders form I used. I added the questions and then drew in the snakes and ladders by hand. We used coloured buttons for markers and a quarter for a dice. heads rolls 1, tails rolls 2. That way the game lasted a little longer.)
### Snakes and Ladders

|    | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | FINISH |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|       |

**START**
Sentence Puzzles

Sentence puzzles are a good way for students to move from a controlled to an uncontrolled activity, focus on new vocabulary, phrases or structure, and can be adapted to any level.

A sentence puzzle is a sentence written out word by word on cards, usually cut-up colored card stock. I put each sentence on a different color of card stock, and also number the backs of each card so the words can’t get mixed together. (Ex. For sentence number one, I would write “1” on the back of every card.) The target vocabulary/phrase/structure is in red (or any offset color) to draw attention to it. The length of the sentences should depend on the class level.

A sentence puzzle activity can be used for any topic. For example, if you were working on more formal/professional e-mail phrases, you could do an introductory brainstorming activity where you draw out what students already know, then introduce any other phrases that are used in the sentence puzzles that they haven’t suggested.

Once all the phrases/vocab has been introduced, pair up the students and give each pair a different sentence. Let them work together to determine the correct order for the sentence. As I check on the pairs, I will only tell them the number of cards that are not in the right order (ex. “Three of the words are not in the right place.”) and encourage them to read the sentence out loud until they’ve figured it out together. When all the pairs have their sentences correct, I have them read them aloud to each other. I also take the opportunity to show them (or have them suggest) where other correct options are for certain words or phrases may be. Then I give each pair a different sentence (I try to have enough for a few sentences for each pair).

When all the sentence puzzles have been solved, I would have the students extract the target vocab/structure/phrase (which is another reason it helps to have it in a separate color) and use it to make their own examples, written or verbal, depending on what the text is. For phrasal verbs, I may have the pairs role play a scenario where they would use those phrasal verbs, for example.

Students seem to really enjoy this activity and always ask to do it again.
Language Experience Approach

Many students have more well-developed English oral skills than writing skills. The Language Experience Approach (LEA) has been used for decades as a way of helping children transfer concepts and ideas from speech to writing. It is just as useful for adults at a foundation stage in reading and writing.

Use the students’ own experiences to create interesting and relevant reading material that they will quite easily be able to decode because it is actually their own story. The following sequence comes originally from Jennifer House in her Guide for Tutoring Adult ESL Students (1988).

1. Choose a topic with your students that is either work-related or of common interest.
2. Ask the students to tell you what they want you to write. Print the story on the board as they tell it to you. At first, make the necessary grammatical corrections but in later lessons ask students to suggest corrections.
3. After you have written the story, read the story a little slower than normal pace running your finger under the words as you read them.
4. Read the first sentence and ask for a volunteer to read the same sentence after you. You may need to read the sentence in unison at first to help the student with confidence.
5. Continue through the story with other students taking turns reading a sentence after you.
6. Follow up the reading by asking 2-3 comprehension questions and giving the learners time to go back over the story reading silently to find the answers.
7. optional – Students can copy the LEA story into their notebook. There is some value in this transcribing exercise because the memory of the story will still be fresh in their minds and they will be exercising their early writing abilities with some extended text. Students often value these stories because they are examples of their new-found ability to read and write. However, this may be time consuming, and you will need to judge the value of the action of transcribing.
Employees regularly need to be able to explain situations or problems to co-workers or supervisors. This can be challenging when the workplace is multilingual and English is the second or third language being used as the common language. English at Work students need practice with patiently finding alternate ways to explain something or listening to someone explain something to them and finding meaning.

This activity should be treated as a follow-up to a module on giving instructions. Discuss with students how it feels to be misunderstood and encourage them to slow down and find high frequency vocabulary as possible alternatives for finding a communication breakthrough.

- Ask one student to sit with his or her back to the board and facing the class.
- Write a word or phrase on the board.
- The rest of the classmates have to give the one student clues with short phrases, questions, etc. They cannot say the word or words on the board.
- Clues should be given one at a time, not fired all at once by everyone.
- The student at the front tries to guess what is written on the board.
- The others cannot make any kind of facial gestures or body movements. Only the voice.
- Any student who gives away the word/s has to go to the front.
- The student at the front who successfully guesses the word/s chooses the next word or phrase for the board.

This is a fun activity I try when I want to review vocabulary at the end of a module and students love it!