English at Work

Basic Work-Related Communications Skills for English Language Learners

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INTRODUCTION

HOW THIS RESOURCE GUIDE CAME TO BE

In December 2002, the Consortium for Worker Education launched STEP, the Skills Training for Employment Program. STEP was designed to help limited-English-speaking adults in New York City who either lost their jobs or took cuts in their income in the four months after the September 11th attacks.   Participants were provided with a package of learning activities consisting of 25 hours of English classes, computer classes, job-preparation workshops, and self-guided practice in the computer lab (where they could practice computer and/or English skills). Funding was provided by the September 11th Fund.

In preparation for this program, CWE staff organized collections of resources for our ESOL and computer teachers and our career advisors to use in their respective sessions with learners. The materials for the ESOL teachers were packaged in a resource guide (recently re-titled as "Learning for Work") organized around a number of questions or themes which unemployed workers had to deal with. This guide drew on work-related curricula already developed by CWE and by others.

As the program got underway, we found that the population of learners being served in this new program had very low levels of English skills. We realized that our original ESOL curriculum was relevant for only a few of our highest-skilled learners. However, we also realized that those same ESOL lessons could be adapted by the career advisors for the career planning workshops in which they help learners think through career options and develop strategies for finding appropriate employment. (In some cases, those career planning workshops were conducted in Cantonese, to ensure that participants got the most benefit from the discussions.)

That left us with the question of what we should focus on in the ESOL classes. With input from our ESOL teachers and drawing on or prior

experience and research in the field, we developed a framework which mapped out the communication (listening, speaking, reading, writing) and math skills a worker needs in most U.S. workplaces. (See Illustration #1.). We then identified learning activities that teachers could use to teach those skills. These learning activities were developed by our teachers and staff and also drew on resources (e.g., handbooks, textbooks) already existing in the field.

The result was this <u>English at Work</u> resource guide for ESOL teachers. It is presented as a work in progress and will be continuously refined and expanded on through input from our teachers and review of other documents from the field.

This guide was written by Paul Jurmo, with the help of Marsha Love and the input of CWE teachers.

CONTENTS AND APPROACH

In the first two months of STEP, the learners confirmed that one of our initial assumptions about this learner population was true: They came to the program with the hope of improving their English skills and getting a job. But what English skills would be most helpful for these learners and what instructional activities should we use to help them develop those skills?

With input from our teachers and drawing on our research and experience in workplace basic skills programs, CWE staff developed a grid (Appendix) showing (a) communication tasks faced by workers in most U.S. workplaces and (b) key communications and math skills needed to perform those tasks.

We then collected examples of learning activities that, in our view, (a) our teachers could use to help learners develop those skills and (b) met guidelines for effective instruction. These activities came from our teachers and from previous work and research our staff have done in the field of work-related learning.

We had begun developing the "guidelines for good instruction" two years earlier through study of the National Institute for Literacy's Equipped for

the Future standards (www.nifl.gov) and other models of learner-centered, participatory adult basic education.

We saw these guidelines as tools that all CWE programs could use, and we disseminated them in teacher workshops and in our teacher newsletter and handbook.

The guidelines are as follows:

- <u>Build on what learners already know</u>: Respect the fact that learners already have much job-related knowledge which should be elicited from them and built on in the classes;

- <u>Respond to learners' interests and goals</u>: Recognize that learners come with particular interests, hopes, goals in mind and that teachers should try to elicit those goals from learners and then tailor activities to those goals as much as possible;

- <u>Contextualize learning activities</u>: Acknowledge that learners play a number of roles in life, especially worker, family member, and community member/citizen. Those roles and the physical and social contexts within which they play those roles provide many opportunities and incentives for developing one's basic skills. Because this project focuses in particular on helping learners get and succeed in jobs, focus on helping learners develop skills which are particularly useful in their role as workers. But also bring in examples from their experience as family members or New York residents, so they see how they can practice their skills throughout the day, regardless of the context they are in at any given time.

- <u>Create a friendly, encouraging environment</u>. Remember that, like most New Yorkers, these learners will have faced difficulties in the past year. Most will have either lost their jobs or suffered reduced income. As immigrants with limited English skills, they are likely to be struggling to understand U.S. culture and New York City's many "systems" (e.g., jobs, the law, education, health-care, etc.), and how to successfully relate to them. You need to use activities which will help learners get to know each other and you as teacher and develop the

confidence they need to succeed not just in your class but in their roles outside the classroom.

- <u>Keep it lively</u>. Use a variety of learning activities which encourage learners to learn in different ways and use a number of "intelligences." Get learners actively involved in discussions, games, debates, research projects, role plays, interviews, use of real-life objects ("realia") taken from workplaces or other contexts, viewing of videos or Web sites, and a variety of other activities in which they are challenged and encouraged to think, be creative, and stretch themselves. <u>Avoid</u> dry lectures and rote learning. We have attempted to provide some sample lesson plans for each theme, but you need to be creative in how you make learning activities relevant to your particular learners.

This guide is not a tightly-constructed "curriculum" but rather a collection of resources for ESOL teachers to adapt for the learners with whom they work. We assume that users of this guide are experienced ESOL teachers and will be able to creatively construct learning activities which use effective adult education practices to help learners:

- develop skills and knowledge they need to perform common communication tasks in a variety of workplace settings and other life contexts;
- build their confidence that, yes, they <u>can</u> improve their skills and their job situation.

This curriculum guide is organized around common communication tasks faced by workers in most U.S. workplaces. Each section presents key skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, writing, and math) needed for that task, along with ideas for instructional activities to teach those skills.

You are encouraged to adapt these sample activities as you see fit, customizing them to the learner population you work with. For example, beginning-level learners will need to focus on simpler objectives than intermediate-level learners; and those interested in, say, childcare worker jobs might focus on vocabulary related to children's health while those aiming for jobs as food service workers might practice vocabulary related to food and kitchen equipment.   We have purposely put these resources in a

large, sturdy three-ring binder. We hope that you will see it as a place to organize a living collection of resources which you can use and share with others.

In the lesson plans developed by CWE activities, we have generally structured each lesson around a series of sub-questions relating to the larger question of that particular theme. We hope that you and the learners will approach the lessons as an opportunity to collectively pool your knowledge to develop answers to these questions together through "collective inquiry." This is in contrast to a more traditional approach in which the learners sit quietly and absorb information which the teacher feeds into their heads. We hope that through this collaborative give-and-take, learners will develop their own answers to those questions while at the same time strengthening particular basic skills they need to get and succeed in jobs.

RESOURCES FOR LEARNERS AND TEACHERS

➢ ESL for Action by Elsa Auerbach and Nina Wallerstein: This is a problem-posing, action-oriented approach to teaching work-related themes. This classic text is geared to intermediate level students, but there are also some suggestions for activities which will work with beginners or advanced students.

➢ Windows 2 Work by CWE's Alvin Realuyo, Marsha Love, Bob Mendelson, and Shirley Lew. This is a job-search curriculum based on What Color is Your Parachute and ESL for Action, and geared for adults with limited literacy.

➢ TV 411 by the Adult Literacy Media Alliance. This Emmy-winning video series shows strategies which intermediate and advanced ESOL students might use to tackle common English-language tasks.

➢ Teaching Adult Second Language Learners by Heather McKay and Abigail Tom. This provides a theory and many examples of theme-based language lessons.

➢ Making Meaning, Making Change by Elsa Roberts Auerbach. This classic guide presents the theory behind a participatory approach to adult ESOL education as well as many examples of good instructional practices.

➢ The Change Agent newsletter, an excellent resource on participatory approaches to adult literacy and ESOL education. Available on the Web site of the New England Literacy Resource Center (www.nelrc.org).

Workplace basic education resources on the Web

ABC CANADA (www.abc-canada.org/) : This Canadian organization pioneered a collaborative approach to workplace education which involved stakeholders - including learners - in defining how basic skills fit into the larger mission and culture of the workplace. Click on "Workplace Education" and "Our Publications."

ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education (www.ericacve.org) Click on Publications for a great collection of online resources for adult educators, including many articles and digests on work-related learning.

National Adult Literacy Database (www.nald.ca/): This Web site from Canada contains many documents on work-related basic skills. Do a search for "workplace."

National Institute for Literacy (www.nifl.gov) : The NIFL site includes the *Equipped for the Future* (EFF) standards, which focus on preparing adults for work, family, and citizenship roles, as well as a listserv and a special "Workplace Literacy" collection on work-related literacy and ESOL.

System for Adult Basic Education Support (www.sabes.org): This Web site of the resource center for adult educators in Massachusetts includes a number of publications from the Massachusetts Workplace Education Initiative, a national model

for a statewide workplace education effort. (Do a search for "workplace" to find those documents.)

Workforce Development Campus (www.wdc.jmu.edu): An on-line training program for workplace educators, hosted by James Madison University.

Working for America (www.workingforamerica.org): The site of the AFL-CIO Working for America Institute provides links to union education programs and other union-related information. Click on "publications" for how to order Worker-Centered Learning: A Union Guide to Workplace Literacy.

ESOL-related resources on the Web

These sites focus on ESOL and civics education for immigrants:

- **Literacy Assistance Center** (www.lacnyc.org): New York City's own LAC has ESOL resources for adult educators.

- **Dave's ESL Café** (www.eslcafe.com/search/Lesson_Plans/)

- **Center for Applied Linguistics (**www.cal.org/ **)**

- **National Institute for Literacy** (www.nifl.gov) : Go to the Special Collections section and see the ESOL collection.

- **New England Literacy Resource Center** (www.nelrc.org) : NELRC has a Civic Participation Sourcebook, a Civic Participation and Citizenship on-line collection, and The Change Agent newsletter (an excellent resource on participatory approaches to adult literacy and ESOL education).

- **The Literacy Resources/Rhode Island** (www.brown.edu/Departments/Swearer_Center/Literacy_Resources/). This site has some useful civics-related resources.

- **ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education** (www.ericacve.org). ERIC's site has a great collection of online resources for adult educators, including many articles and digests on civics-related learning.   Go to two different sections ("Search ERIC/ACVE Publications" and "Search ERIC Database") and type in such terms as "civics" and "popular education."

- **The System for Adult Basic Education Support** (www.sabes.org : SABES' Web site for adult educators in Massachusetts includes a number of publications related to civics education. (Do a search for "civics.")

THANKS

Thanks to the hard-working teachers, learners, and staff of STEP, the Skills Training for Employment Program at the Consortium for Worker Education. This program served as a proving ground for developing the contents of this resource guide.

Thanks also to the September 11th Fund, CWE's administration, and the partners in this project. Thank you for having the vision of setting up a program which used adult education to help New York City working people get back on their feet.

<u>Giving and Receiving Instructions</u>

<u>Why is "giving and receiving instructions" important</u>?

Whether in a "manufacturing" or "service" job, a worker needs to be able to understand and give instructions. This is a vital function of collaboration between two or more co-workers (e.g., "Hand me the pliers, will ya?") It is also central to an employee's relationship with customers he/he might come into contact with. ("I need three more of those and one of those, please.")

To receive instructions effectively, an employee must have a solid background knowledge of the tasks he/she needs to perform and a good grasp of the vocabulary of that workplace. But the worker must also know how to listen carefully, to pick up key words which will help him/her quickly focus on the message being delivered. Most workplaces allow limited time for repeating instructions. (Co-workers or customers can get impatient having to repeat requests and instructions.) It's therefore important to understand messages quickly and accurately.

Likewise when conveying instructions the speaker needs to quickly ascertain who the audience is, the key elements of the message, and how to deliver that message succinctly, clearly, politely, and in a timely way. The alternative is a garbled message and poor communication and collaboration overall (or a dissatisfied customer).

What basic "instruction-related" language should you focus on?

Remember that beginning-level learners might have virtually no familiarity with even the most basic instruction-related language. You therefore need to keep it simple and not overwhelm them with too many words or overly-complex terms. Here are some categories of instruction-related words.

Verbs
Focus primarily on the verbs needed for the most common categories of orders and requests. These include:

<u>Coming and going (moving oneself)</u>: See the section on "Giving and Receiving Directions to and from Locations."

<u>Giving and taking</u>: For example: "Please give me a pencil." "Take that package to Jesse."

<u>Physical motions</u>: For example: "Stand," "Sit," "Walk," "Lift," "Pick up," "Raise," "Lie"

<u>Making/Creating</u>: For example: "Make," "Do," "Fix," "Repair"

Nouns
When giving instructions, typically some objects are being referred to. ("Give me the <u>paper</u>, please." "Pick up your <u>arm</u>." "Make me a <u>cup of coffee</u>, please.") These nouns will vary, depending on the message being delivered. This is an opportunity to help learners not only learn the verbs used in common instructions, but the nouns (in this case, primarily names of objects) that the learners encounter in jobs they are interested in or other important contexts (e.g., the doctor's office, their homes).

Numbers
Again, instructions also often include some kind of numbers, especially quantities of objects. ("Bring me <u>three</u> pens, please." "Buy <u>twelve</u> bags of cement." This, then, is an opportunity to teach not only key verbs and nouns,

but common <u>numbers</u> as well. These numbers can be used in many life contexts.

<u>Time-related words</u>
Words like "now," "later," "at 1:30," "by 4:00," "tomorrow," and "on Wednesday" are commonly found in instructions. Use these exercises as an opportunity to weave in practice on these kinds of words, too. Reinforce for your students that most workplaces are very time-sensitive and that when a request is made to do something "now" or "by 1:30," an employee should try to stay within that timeframe.

<u>How can you help learners master the basics of "giving and receiving instructions"?</u>

Again, remember to keep it simple. Beginning-level learners need to not be overwhelmed by too much vocabulary or overly-complex or obscure terms. Focus on the words that they are likely to encounter most frequently in a variety of contexts. Show them that instructions tend to follow patterns. Show those patterns through repetition (e.g., "Please give me a _____." or "Put the _____ on the _____.") Fill in the blanks in the patterns with specific words found in particular situations.

Here are some examples of activities geared toward beginning-level learners. Note that the same activities can be used to teach various kinds of instructions.

"<u>Coming and going</u>"
See the section on "Giving and Receiving Directions to and from Locations."

"<u>Giving and taking</u>"

Place objects (learned in the section on "Identifying and Locating Objects") on the table or floor in front of the learners. Ask learners to "(Please) give me the _____." and "(Please) take the _____ to Katalina." Demonstrate this several times, then have other learners take turns giving and receiving these "giving and taking" instructions.

As the learners master the basic terms of "give" and "take," replace them with related verbs like:

<u>Give</u>: Bring, Buy, Get
<u>Take</u>: Bring, Carry

Give the learners an oral or written "shopping list" and ask learners to get/buy/bring those items for you.

As the learners master the basic requests, embellish these exchanges with related terms like "Please", "Thank you," "Would you, please," and "My pleasure."

Write the words "give," "take," "get," "buy," "bring" on large cards or sheets of paper. Hand these out to learners and have them give orders to other members of the class who then have to respond appropriately. (For example: "Please give me a pencil." "Bring me two books." "Take the chair to Timothy, please.")

Print words on large cards and then line them up in appropriate order on a table or on the board to create simple requests. (For example: "Please – give – me – two – books" or "Give – Maria – a – flower." Or "Bring – the – chair – to – Shane.") After you have demonstrated these sample sentences and asked the learners to read them to you, mix up the cards on a table and have a learner pick from them to create his/her own sentence. Have the learner display the sentence and read it to the group. Repeat this with other learners.

<u>"Physical motions"</u>

Use similar activities (as those above) to help learners master instructions related to such physical motions as:

- "Sit" and "stand"
- "Walk/go/walk" and "stop"
- "Lie/lie down" and "stand"

As you introduce these verbs, you might also introduce the negative forms of them. For example:

- "Sit here . . . Don't sit there."
- "Go to the corner . . . Don't go to the door."

"Making/creating"

Most contexts (workplaces or otherwise) have particular "lingo" related to "making or doing something" (i.e., transforming the condition of an object into another condition). For example:

- Kitchen workers "bake bread" and "wash the dishes."
- Mechanics "change the oil" and "repair the tire."
- Healthcare workers "change the bed" and "clean the table."

To help learners practice vocabulary they need for various work situations, first identify one or more jobs that the learners might be interested in. Then ask them (if they can do so) to identify various tasks that they face in those jobs. Take their ideas and transform them into simple sentences like those above. Other examples are:

- Childcare workers "change the diapers" and "make breakfast."
- Hotel housekeepers "make the bed" and "vacuum the carpet."
- Carpenters "build a house" and "fix/repair the door."

Use exercises like those described above to help learners master vocabulary they need for jobs they are interested in. However, don't be afraid to also have learners practice terms that are not related directly to jobs that they are immediately interested in. Practicing vocabulary related to a range of jobs will expose them to patterns found in instructions and avoid being pigeon-holed into thinking of themselves as only being able to talk about a narrow range of topics.

Greetings and Personal Introductions

Why are "greetings and personal introductions" important?

Regardless of the workplace, a worker must be able to get to know the co-workers, customers, and other people he/she comes into contact with. This is important during:

- the pre-employment stage (when the worker is making initial contact with the employer and going through a job interview) and

- after the worker is hired (and must get to know his/her co-workers, establish and maintain positive working relationships, and interact positively with customers and others he/she interacts with).

In customer-service-oriented jobs, employers put high value on workers who are polite and friendly and make the customer feel respected and welcomed. In team-oriented workplaces, workers are typically expected to communicate in a friendly, cooperative way with other employees. In both cases, it is important for an employee to be able to greet others and introduce him/herself. It is also psychologically important for the employee him/herself, so he/she feels part of the group.

What "greetings and personal introductions" are appropriate for beginning-level ESOL learners?

When teaching greetings and personal introductions to beginning-level learners, it is important to avoid overwhelming them with too many greetings and terms. Focus on the basic words, phrases, and sentences that one typically uses in work-related situations.

For the lowest-level beginners (Level 1.a.), get started with these greetings and personal introductions:

Basic greetings

- "Hello;" "Hi"
- "How are you?"
- "Fine, thank you."
- "Goodbye"; "bye" (or "See you later.")
- "Thank you" and "You're welcome."

Basic personal introductions

- "My name is . . ." (or "I am . . ." or "I'm" . . .)
- "I live at . . . " (or "My address is . . .")

After the learners have mastered the above "basic greetings," expand their repertoire to include the following:

Greetings for Level 1.b. and 1.c learners

- "Good morning," "Good afternoon", "Good evening."
- "Have a nice day," "Good night", "See you tomorrow (or "See you next week")
- "Can I help you?"

Personal introductions for Level 1.b. and 1.c learners

- "My job is _____." "What's your job?"
- "I work at _____." "Where do you work?"

- "I come from _____." (or "I was born in _____.") "Where are you from?" (or "Where were you born?")
- "I am married (or single)" "Are you married?")
- "I have _____ children." "Do you have children?"

How can you help learners master these greetings and personal introductions?

You will need to help learners understand not just the above words, but the situations in which these words are typically used (or not used). For beginning-level learners, you should especially focus on their becoming comfortable using the oral versions of greetings and introductions in natural, real-life situations. But you should also help them to recognize and write key personal information they need to fill out the many documents they face inside and outside the world of work (e.g., application forms, identification cards, mailing labels, sign-in sheets, etc.) Remember that some beginning-level learners might not feel comfortable using the printed forms of English because they either used a different form of writing in their home country or had limited formal education where they come from.

The following are some activities you can use to help beginning-level learners:

- get exposed to basic English-language greetings and personal introductions, to familiarize themselves with the sounds, rhythm, and patterns of these frequently-used forms of speech;
- get practice in using them (through repetition in a safe environment);
- build a basic repertoire of greetings and introductions;
- gradually expand on that repertoire and understand the mechanics and usefulness of using basic greetings and personal introductions;
- become familiar with basic uses of printed English (e.g., sounds of letters, consonants, and words; how to print and write letters and common words);
- get to know other people inside and outside the program;
- have fun using English and thereby build their confidence level, so they are willing to try using the language inside and outside the program.

<u>Listening and speaking exercises</u>

- In your initial class sessions, spend time introducing yourself and having learners introduce themselves. Have them start with simple sentences like: "My name is _____." and "What is your name?"

- Model these exchanges with all learners, then have them introduce each other. ("My name is _____. Her name is _____.") Do a "ball toss" exercise (using a "Koosh Ball" or similar soft object) to randomly get learners to speak. (For example, you can say "My name is _____. What is <u>your</u> name?" Then toss the ball to a learner who then has to repeat what you said in an appropriate way and continue the process by tossing the ball to someone else.) Have learners initially interview only one other student and introduce him/her; then make it more difficult by having them interview and then introduce two or three students at a time.

- Do some variation of this in every class (through role plays in various situations they might face at work or outside the workplace). This gets students to practice these common forms of English and get comfortable ("automatic") using them.   Learners might, for example, role play a typical workplace scenario – getting to know English-speaking co-workers at the lunch table.

- Have learners line up and then have each one step forward to respond to a greeting or question from you (e.g., "How are you?" "Where do you live?" "Do you have children?" "Are you married?" "Thank you." Etc.)
    Or have learners work in small teams to compete against each other. Pose a question or greeting to a team and team members have to work together to figure out which answer is correct. When they give you their "final answer," give them point for a correct answer and no points for an incorrect one. Give a fun prize to the "winning team" at the end.

- Ask learners to bring in pictures of their family members. Have them explain who the people in the pictures are (e.g., "I have two children.

Their names are _____ and _____." "This is my mother. Her name is _____. She is from _____. She lives at/in _____."

- Have learners each prepare a family tree showing close family members. Ask for volunteers to come to the board, draw their family tree, and then explain who the various members of the family are (e.g., "This is my sister, _____. She lives in Brooklyn. She has two children. Her job is _____." [Or "She is a nurse."])

- As they practice, try to model the correct vocabulary, pronunciation, and word order without being overly didactic. Ask other students to "gently" comment on the others' pronunciation, etc., to encourage learners to help each other rather than always look to you as the teacher for guidance.

<u>Reading and writing of personal information</u>

- Have learners create name tags for themselves. Model for them how they should print their names. Have them wear the tags in classes, especially in the first few weeks, so you can get to know their names and so all learners can see examples of a form of written English that is important for everyone: writing of one's name.

- Print out the words for basic sentences on individual, large flash cards (e.g., "My name is _____.") Model the correct word order for those phrases by placing them in the correct sequence on the blackboard or on a table top or on the floor where all can see. Then mix up the cards and have learners place them in the correct sequence and read them back to you. Then have each learner prepare his/her own smaller versions of these word cards and practice putting them in the correct order.

- Provide them with a very basic form which requires for such information as "Name," "Address," "Telephone," "Fax," and "E-mail." Have them practice writing their basic information on this form. Then give them a "test" by having them come to the board and write the appropriate information when asked "What is your name?", "What is your address?" Etc.

- Give learners various types of forms that they might have to complete with personal information. These might include an application for a library card, a driver's license application, a form at the doctor's office, etc.

- Write out simple questions used in greetings and personal introductions on the blackboard. Call on learners to come to the board and read those questions and then respond appropriately in spoken and/or written form.

- Have learners keep a "personal dictionary" containing written versions of the greetings and personal introductions they learn. They can then refer to this "dictionary" as necessary, both in the classroom and outside.

- Help learners to write a small card containing key personal information to carry in their wallet/purse. They can show this card in case of emergency. It is also a reminder of what to say or write when asked to provide basic personal information.

- Write various greetings and responses on separate flash cards (e.g., "How are you?" and "I'm fine, thank you.") Mix these cards up on a table and ask learners to find two cards that match each other. Or give one card to each learner. Have them circulate in the room and find a "partner" whose card matches his/her own.

For more ideas . . .

- See the "Personal Identification" section (pp. 35-53) of Teaching Adult Second Language Learners by Heather McKay and Abigail Tom (Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Dealing with Health and Safety Issues

Why is "dealing with health and safety issues" important?

For several reasons, it is important for workers to know how to use the language needed to deal with health and safety issues:

Self-care: Workers need to take care of their own health – for their own good and for those that depend on them for care and income. In terms of their employability and promotability, workers can't get to work or perform well on the job if they aren't healthy. They need to know how to communicate with health-care personnel and deal with medical documents (e.g., medicines, insurance forms).

For their co-workers, customers, and the public: Workers interact with others – co-workers, customers, and the general public – who might need help in the case of a medical emergency. Workers therefore need to know how to communicate clearly to ensure that others get the first aid or emergency services they need.

For their employers: Employers are responsible – ethically and by law – for providing a safe work environment. Employers therefore want all employees to follow safe work practices and be able to deal with emergencies if they arise. Employers also go to the expense of putting insurance plans and other healthcare procedures in place. They want employees who understand and use those benefits efficiently.

How can you help learners master basic health- and safety-related language?

<u>Start with the parts of the body</u>.

Point to key parts of your own body (e.g., head, arms, legs, feet, hands) and ask learners to try to name them. (This will give you a baseline assessment of their knowledge of this vocabulary.)

Then point to the same body parts and have learners repeat the names for you.

Call on individual learners randomly and ask them to name the parts you point to.

Provide a handout showing a body with the names of those parts printed near them, connected by arrows.   Ask learners to copy those words on to yellow Post Its. Ask a volunteer to come to the front of the room and attach these Post Its to the appropriate place on your body (or on to a drawing you've made on the board or on flipchart paper). Remove the Post Its one-by-one and read what is written on each one. Ask the other learners to say whether the volunteer was correct in where he/she put the Post Its.

Have two learners come to the front of the room and attach their Post Its to their own bodies in the correct places. Have one learner check the other's Post Its, reading them aloud and commenting whether the Post It was placed correctly.

Provide a second handout with a picture of a body but with no words printed on it. Ask the learners to write in the correct name for the various parts you've practiced.   Collect their pages (with their names on them) so you can assess (a) how well they remembered the names of the parts and (b) how well they can print those body part names.

Play "Simon Says" touching the same body parts you've been practicing. (Give a special prize – perhaps a round of applause (a "hand") or a funny picture of a body -- to the winner.)

Using the above kinds of exercises, gradually expand the vocabulary related to body parts to include:

> <u>Parts of arms</u> (e.g., hands, fingers)
> <u>Parts of legs</u> (e.g., feet, toes)
> <u>Parts of head</u> (hair, face, ears, eyes, nose, throat, mouth, tongue, teeth . . .)

Teach basic medical communications.

As the learners begin to master the names of body parts, begin to teach simple phrases and sentences used when communicating in health-care or emergency situations. These include:

> "My _____ hurts."
> "My _____ is bleeding."

Conduct a role play in which all learners are handed a card showing a part of the body. Explain that you are a doctor and each learner has to explain which part of his/her body hurts. (e.g., "My ear hurts." "My foot hurts.") Though simple, it is important for anyone to be able to convey this kind of information, especially in an emergency situation.

You should also teach other vocabulary the learners might encounter in a doctor's office, hospital, or dentist's office. This includes:

> ➢ Doctor
> ➢ Nurse
> ➢ Hospital
> ➢ Doctor's office
> ➢ Dentist
> ➢ Dentist's office
> ➢ Patient
> ➢ Insurance
> ➢ Allergy (allergic)

You might do this by having students play various parts in role plays depicting exchanges in a doctor's office, a hospital emergency room, or a

dentist's office.   Write the names of these personnel and locations on large cards, to set the scene for each role play.

Have the students practice writing on the kinds of forms they would find in a doctor's office, hospital, or dentist's office.

Encourage them to prepare a card containing key information needed in a medical emergency and to keep this card in their wallet or purse.

Preparing for jobs in the healthcare and childcare fields

Some of your students might want jobs in the healthcare or childcare fields. In those kinds of jobs, workers need to communicate health-related information.

For example, a home health attendant has to help people get in and out of bed, get dressed, take care of personnel hygiene and grooming needs, take medicine, eat meals, and go to the doctor. All of these tasks require special vocabulary such as names of body parts, names of medicines, relevant verbs (e.g., "lift," "stand," "put on," "take," "drink," "eat," etc.) It is also important for health and childcare workers to know the "language of caring" (i.e., polite, patient, clear, encouraging questions and orders).

You can help your learners develop those skills through:

- Demonstrations (with repetition)
- Pictures
- Role plays
- Use of "realia" (real-life objects like medicine bottles, beds, chairs, toothbrushes, etc.)
- Videotaping and/or audiotaping of learners in action (so the class can review the tapes and critique their "performances")

For more ideas . . .

➢ See the "Health" section (pp. 156-178) of Teaching Adult Second Language Learners by Heather McKay and Abigail Tom (Cambridge University Press, 1999).

➢ See <u>The New Oxford Picture Dictionary</u> for several pages of pictures related to body parts and health care.

Identifying and Locating Objects

Why is "identifying and locating objects" important?

In any workplace, it is important to:

- know the names of the objects (e.g., supplies, products, tools and equipment) one interacts with and
- know how to locate (i.e., place or find) those objects.

"Where is the _____?" "Can you get me some _____?" and "Three ____'s, please." are typical workplace exchanges.

How can you help learners master the language needed for identifying and locating objects?

<u>**Do some research**</u>.

Each workplace is filled with different objects, so it is important for you to try to be clear about the type of workplace(s) your learner(s) want to prepare for. This can be done in the initial needs assessment.

If you then need to do some research to clarify the objects found in those jobs, then do so by reviewing training manuals related to those jobs or by talking with one or more people with knowledge of those jobs. In your research ask:

- What tools does this job require?
- What supplies are used in this job?
- What products are made in this job?

This research will allow you to develop lists of vocabulary that you can cover in your lessons. As you develop those lists, focus on common, important, and easy-to-pronounce terms, if possible. Keep the initial lists short and reasonable, rather than overly-complex and too demanding for a beginner.

Teach common tools and objects found in most workplaces.

In addition to job-specific objects, you should teach names of tools found in most workplaces and in many homes. These can include:

Office tools
- Scissors
- Stapler and staples
- Tape
- Paper
- Pen
- Pencil
- Computer
- Telephone (phone)
- Fax (fax machine)
- Desk
- Chair

Hardware tools
- Hammer (and nails)
- Screwdriver (and screws)
- Wrench (and bolts and nuts)
- Pliers (and bolts and nuts)
- Saw

- Wire
- Knife
- Tape measure

Use a variety of instructional activities.

It is important for workers to be able to name (and recognize the spoken name of) the tools and other objects they work with. In many cases, workers must also be able to read and write the names of those objects.

Here are some activities for teaching that vocabulary:

Demonstrate, Draw, and Write:

Bring in some of the tools, products, and supplies that you have identified in your research. (Or bring in pictures of those objects.)

Show 5-10 of these objects to the class and ask them to tell you the names of each item. As the students do so, record those names on cards or sheets of paper and tape them on or next to the item. Skip the objects that no one knows the name of and then come back to them after you have gone through the entire list. Go back to the hard-to-identify objects and tell the learners the names of those objects.

Have the learners draw the various objects and print the objects' names in their notebooks or on a blank sheet of paper.

Give the learners some handouts with simple line-drawings of the same objects taken from Clip Art.   Have the learners write in the names of the objects.

Play a game of "Concentration."

Cut out pictures of the objects and the printed name of each object. Put these pieces of paper face down on a table and have learners take turns turning over pairs of the papers. If they find a matching pair, they keep the two pieces of paper. If they don't get a matching pair,

they return the papers to the table face-down. Students take turns turning over the papers until all the papers have been matched. The student with the largest number of papers "wins." (You might give a fun "prize" like a tool catalog, a toy tool, or a chocolate in the shape of a tool, etc.)

Use the picture dictionary.

Encourage the students to use a picture dictionary (e.g., The New Oxford Picture Dictionary) as a reference for the kinds of tools and other objects they might use in the workplace or in their homes.

Teach common phrases and sentences.

The learners will need to know more than just the names of workplace objects. They will also need to know how to understand and respond to simple commands and requests for locating and moving those objects.

These phrases and sentences include:

"Please get me (or bring me) _____?"
"Where is the _____?" (or "Where can I find the _____?")
"Put the _____ in the _____."
"Can I have a _____?"

Write these phrases on the board and have the students repeat them to you. Then "fill in the blanks" in the various phrases with the names of the objects and ask learners to respond appropriately. (You can either use actual objects or pictures of those objects.)

Do a role play in which you play the role of a customer who wants to purchase a number of objects for sale in a store. The student plays the store owner who has to retrieve the various objects that you request.

Create other role plays appropriate for other kinds of objects related to the jobs that your students are interested in. (A home health attendant might search for and retrieve food items, or clothing, or other objects for

the "patient." A food service worker might be asked to put away several food items or utensils or other items found in a kitchen.)

Encourage your students to take notes of the vocabulary they need to identify and locate objects in their personal dictionaries.

<u>For more ideas</u> . . .

- ➢ See the "Food" and "Clothing" sections of <u>Teaching Adult Second Language</u> Learners by Heather McKay and Abigail Tom (Cambridge University Press, 1999).
- ➢ See <u>The New Oxford Picture Dictionary</u> for sections showing vocabulary for tools, household supplies and furnishings, clothing, supermarket and restaurant terms, and foods.
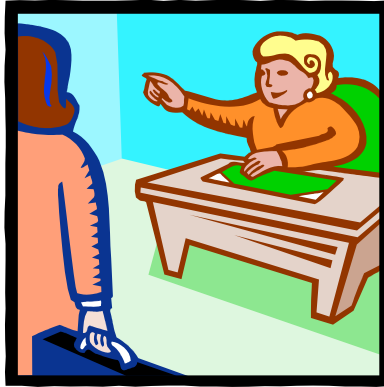
Giving and Getting Directions
to and from Locations

Why are "giving and getting directions to and from locations" important?

Regardless of the workplace, a worker must be able to communicate location-related information. For example, a worker must be able to:

> - Understand what others mean when they tell the worker to go to or come from a particular location or place an object in a particular place (or retrieve an item from someplace);
> - Give directions to others to tell them how to get to someplace or bring an object to a particular place (or retrieve an item from someplace).
> - Read and write basic names of locations outside or inside a workplace (e.g., addresses, room numbers, floors).

This kind of vocabulary is very important for delivery persons, hotel workers, security personnel, and many other kinds of workers. It is one of the more common forms of oral and written communication in most workplaces.

It is also important for students to understand how to follow basic instructions for moving around the classroom or education program facility.

Practicing such language in the classroom setting can prepare the learner for using similar language out in the real world.

How can you help learners master "giving and getting directions to and from locations"?

This is an opportunity for you to get your students up and walking around. Not only can you thus help them learn valuable language skills, but you can get their blood moving and inject some energy into the class.

<u>Directions inside the classroom</u>

You might start with focusing on the language needed to handle the logistics of moving people and objects around your classroom. This gives learners practice in using meaningful location-related language while helping you as the teacher communicate basic directions to the learners.

When teaching location-related language to beginning-level learners, it is important to avoid overwhelming them with too many terms. Start with the basic words, phrases, and sentences that one typically uses to "direct traffic" in your classroom.

<u>For the lowest-level beginners (Level 1.a.)</u>, get started with these location-related terms:

<u>Verbs</u>
- Come
- Go
- Stand
- Sit
- Bring
- Put

<u>Prepositions</u>
- To
- From
- On
- In

- Under
- Around

<u>Locations</u>
- Here
- There
- Room (classroom)
- Door
- Window
- Table
- Shelf
- Board (blackboard, whiteboard)
- Corner
- Light

Use "TPR" ("Total Physical Response") activities to mime various physical actions while describing what you are doing in simple declarative sentences. For example, show them (and tell them): "I go to the door," "I sit under the light," "I stand in the classroom." Write these simple sentences on the board to demonstrate vocabulary and word order (the pattern for such sentences).

Then switch to the imperative voice and give basic commands to a volunteer, using the same basic vocabulary you used in the previous exercise (e.g., "Go to the door." "Sit under the light." "Stand in the classroom." Then have the same volunteer give commands to you and follow his/her commands.

Have pairs of learners come to the front of the room and give each other commands for movements around the room.

Write these words on cards or large sheets of paper. Have a student randomly pick one of the nouns and make up a sentence with that word in it. Do the same for the prepositions.

<u>Directions inside the building</u>

Now go outside the classroom into the larger indoor environment of the building. This gives the learners the opportunity to expand the number of locations (i.e., nouns) they know. These might include:

- Hall
- Stairs
- Bathroom
- Closet
- Exit
- Elevator

Take the students out for a walk around the building and go through similar activities that you did in the above "Directions inside the classroom" activity.

Demonstrate simple declarative sentences (e.g., "I go to the elevator." "I stand in the closet." "I go to the exit." "I sit on the stairs.") Have one or more students follow your lead and make the same movements and repeat the same sentences.

Then switch to the imperative voice and give simple commands to volunteers (or students you select), using the same basic vocabulary you used in the previous exercise (e.g., "Go to the elevator." "Stand in the closet." "Go to the exit." "Sit on the stairs.")

Have pairs of students demonstrate giving commands to each other.

In subsequent classes, repeat the above "inside the classroom" and "inside the building" activities. Each time, give as many learners as possible a chance to use the declarative and imperative forms of the verbs. Each time, add a few more verbs (e.g., "walk," "run," "bring," "carry," "wait," "drive"), nouns (e.g., objects in the room, titles of people in the building), and prepositions (e.g., up, down, with, next to).

Initially focus on using the oral forms of these words, but then print the words on the board or on large cards for learners to read. They can then transcribe these words into their "personal dictionary."

Pass out cards containing one of the verbs or prepositions. Have the learners (a) say and act out a phrase or sentence with those words or (b) give a command to another learner (or to you) which that person then eeds to act out.

Focus initially on the present tense and imperative voice (command form) of the verbs. Avoid confusing learners with past tenses, since many of these verbs (e.g., go, come, stand, sit) are irregular.

Gradually add second and third person pronouns and verb forms. Show them the pronouns and verbs on a chart like this:

	go	come	sit	come
I We	I go We go	I come We come	I sit We sit	I come We come
You You	You go You go	You come You come	You sit You sit	You come You come
He, She, It They	He/she/it goes They go	He/she/it comes They come	He/she/it sits They sit	He/she/it comes They come

Directions outside the building

Take learners on a walk around the block or around the building. Go through exercises similar to those for "Directions inside the building" above. For example:

Demonstrate: "I go to the parking lot." "We go to the mailbox." "I stand at the corner."

Command: "Go to the restaurant." "Stand at the corner."

Additional activities

Adapt the following activities to teach location-related language for inside the classroom, inside the building, or outside the building.

- <u>Make a map or diorama (model)</u>.
  Draw a map of the classroom, building, or neighborhood on a large sheet of paper. (Or make a model of the actual neighborhood or a fictional neighborhood.) Use small figurines representing people to have learners describe what the figurines are doing as you move them around the map or model.

- <u>Conduct a scavenger hunt</u>.
  Place objects around the building. Give oral or written directions to learners, telling them how to find the objects. Have learners work individually or in teams to follow the directions. Give a fun prize to those who find the objects (and maybe those who simply tried).

- <u>Go on a "walk-about</u>."
  Walk around the neighborhood or building complex for 5-15 minutes with the learners without saying anything. Their job is to try to remember as much detail about the journey as possible. When you return to the classroom, ask them to try to describe the process they took on the walk. If necessary, let them use the present tense, since they might not yet know the past tense. (e.g., "We go to the corner. We stand at the corner. We go to the supermarket. We go to the mailbox. We come here.")

<u>For more ideas</u> . . .

- ➢ See <u>The New Oxford Picture Dictionary</u> for several pages of pictures related to the interior of buildings and street scenes.

A P P E N D I X
Possible Learning Objectives for Beginning-Level Students

	Greetings and personal introductions	Asking for and giving directions to locations	Dealing with emergencies and safety issues	Identing and locating objects	Giivng and receiving instructions
Listening	-- Understands basic, common greetings with strangers and acquaintances -- Understands basic information about others.	-- Understands common names of destinations (indoors and outdoors), prepositions, and motion verbs when spoken by others (in isolation and in authentic usage).	-- Understands common emergency-related nouns, verbs, and phrases.	-- Understands names of objects typically found in workplaces and homes. -- Understands prepositions and verbs used to locate objects.	-- Understands common instructions for giving/taking, physical motions, and making/creating.
Speaking	--Clearly says very basic personal greetings with strangers and acquaintances. -- Says basic information about self.	-- Clearly says common names of destinations (indoors and outdoors), prepositions, and motion verbs (in isolation and in authentic usage).	-- Clearly says common emergency-related nouns, verbs, and phrases in realistic situations.	-- Clearly says names of objects typically found in workplaces and homes. -- Clearly uses prepositions and verbs used to locate objects.	-- Clearly says common instructions for giving/taking, physical motions, and making/creating.
Reading	-- Reads own name and address and names of family members. -- Reads other basic biographical information about self (e.g., jobs held).	-- Reads common names of destinations (indoors and outdoors), prepositions, and motion verbs (in isolation and in authentic usage).	-- Reads common emergency-related nouns, verbs, and phrases.	-- Reads names of objects typically found in workplaces and homes. -- Reads prepositions and verbs used to locate objects.	-- Reads simple messages related to giving/taking, physical motions, and making/creating.
Writing	-- Writes own name and address and names of family members. -- Writes other basic biographical information about self (e.g., jobs held).	-- Writes common names of destinations (indoors and outdoors), prepositions, and motion verbs (in isolation and in authentic usage).	-- Reads common emergency-related nouns, verbs, and phrases.	-- Writes names of objects typically found in workplaces and homes. -- Writes prepositions and verbs used to locate objects.	-- Writes simple messages related to giving/taking, physical motions, and making/creating.
Math	-- Names and understands personal numbers (phone,addresses)	-- Names and understands address-related information (addresses, numerical street names, numbers of miles/ blocks).	-- Reads, writes, and calculates common emergency-related numbers.	-- Reads, writes, and calculates numbers needed to locate objects typically found in workplaces and homes.	-- Reads, writes, and calculates basic numbers used when conveying simple instructions.