

Course Overview

Enhanced Language Training for Skilled Immigrants in Engineering, Earth Sciences and Technology

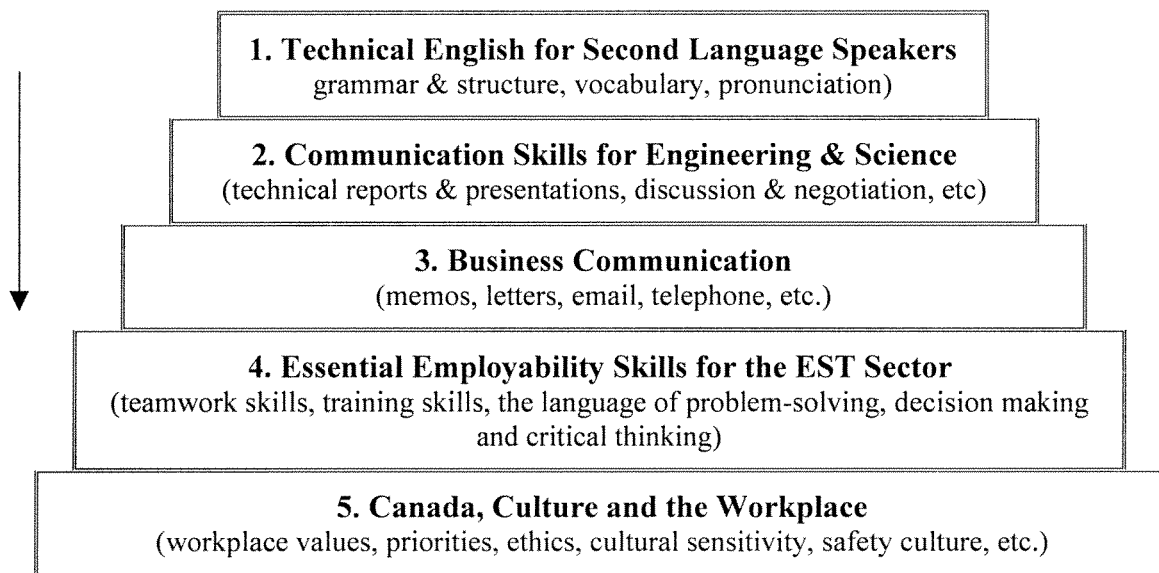
The syllabus outline that follows offers an overview of the program. Appended also is a series of unit outlines providing a teaching sequence.

Focus areas

The following general focus areas will be layered through the duration of the course.

Time allotments:

- Area 1: 30%
- Areas 2, 3, 4: 20% each (60%)
- Area 5: 10%



Thematic Units

Unit 1: Program orientation

Unit 2: The great builders

Unit 3: Earth sciences & exploration

Unit 4: The environment, alternative energy

Unit 5: Machines, transportation, automation

Unit 6: Natural resource extraction: oil, mining, oil sands

The learning model

Profession-specific language tasks

Profession-specific language tasks have been derived from the following sources:

- HRSDC essential skills profiles for engineers, geologists and geophysicists
- National Occupational Classification skills descriptions for these fields
- Canadian Centre for Language Benchmarks descriptors of comparable language tasks (levels 6 to 9)

For examples of the methodology, see *Relating Canadian Language Benchmarks to Essential Skills: A Comparative Framework*, Anderson, et al (2006).

The learning tasks

- multi-disciplinary, multi-level, a mix of team and individual assignments, with a focus on essential workplace skills and tasks as developed by the HRSDC essential skills profiles for engineering, engineering technology and earth sciences.

The learner

- self-directed, independent learners able to serve as leaders and subject matter experts in team projects and presentations
- active learners able to self-assess, develop personal learning plans, demonstrate initiative and display appropriate training behaviours (e.g., questioning, restating, summarizing, seeking feedback)
- positive, productive, skillful team players

The instructor

- instructor as facilitator, resource person, skills analyst, language consultant, “workplace supervisor”

Skill Areas

A skills emphasis

A number of different skill sets are discussed, applied or developed in the program.

- Learning and training
- Foundational and study
- Employability
- Workplace Essential Skills
- Technical
- Interpersonal and teamwork
- Communications in technical and professional settings

Learning styles, communication strategies and study skills

Activities are designed to help learners identify, use, apply, develop and evaluate their skills.

- Personal development plans: setting goals, gauging progress, making adjustments
- Active, self-directed learning
- Collaborative and cooperative learning
- Identifying, capitalizing upon and broadening personal learning styles
- Conversation management: managing the flow of information
- The language of training: for example, question formation, asking for and giving feedback, clarifying, restating, summarizing
- Language use as a problem-solving skill
- Finding and using resources: dictionaries, reference materials, online searches

Foundational skills

As these skills are needed for daily activities, they are earmarked for intensive review and development in the program's early stages.

- Previewing
- Note taking
- Outlining
- Paraphrasing
- Summarizing
- Following and giving instructions – checking, clarifying
- Conversational management / training-specific language
- The language of numbers
- Oral presentation skills

Computer software

Program participants will use these software packages.

- MS Word
- MS Excel – graphing and formulas
- MS PowerPoint
- web browser
- email and web-mail programs

Learners will be encouraged also to enroll in concurrent short-courses in MS Project and MS Access.

Functions & gambits

Identify

- Talking about yourself, starting a conversation, making an appointment

Define / Describe / Discuss

- Describing places, describing people
- Ask for information: question techniques, answering techniques, getting more information.
- Conversation techniques: hesitating, preventing interruptions and interrupting politely, bringing in other people

Narrate

- Talking about past events: remembering, describing experiences, imagining what if...

Compare / Contrast

- Talking about similarities, talking about differences, stating preferences

Predict / express probabilities

- Talking about the future: stating intentions, discussing probability, considering what if...

Inform / instruct

- Instructing people how to do things, checking understanding

Modals / Suasion

- Getting people to do things; requesting, attracting attention, agreeing and refusing.
- Offering to do something, asking for permission, giving reasons

Persuade / influence

- Giving opinions, agreeing and disagreeing, discussing
- Making suggestions and giving advice, expressing enthusiasm, persuading
- Complaining, apologizing and forgiving, expressing disappointment
- Dealing with moods and feelings: anger, sadness, indifference. Saying goodbye.

Narrate to entertain / engage / motivate

- Telling a story: narrative techniques, handling dialogue, controlling a narrative

Special discourse features of Technical English

The language of:

- definitions
- physical descriptions: size, shape, etc.
- physical properties: describing sounds, textures, sensations, tastes
- measurement and calculation: numbers, fractions, decimals, proportions, area, volume
- mechanical properties of materials: elasticity, viscosity, etc.
- qualitative descriptions
- directions, instructions, job aids and manuals
- position, location, motion
- processes and procedures
- expressing equivalence
- expressing cause and effect
- expressing conditions and concessions

Rhetorical patterns (Writing)

- General to specific
- Defining things
- Chronological
- Physical, spatial organization
- Describing mechanisms
- Describing processes
- Cause and effect
- Condition / action
- Comparison and contrast
- Order of importance
- Situation / problem / solution / evaluation

Grammar / structure

General grammatical areas for technical English

- modals: permission, ability, obligation, etc.
- uses of active vs. passive voice
- phrasal verbs: carry out, line up, etc.
- compound nouns and adjectives
- comparatives, superlatives
- prepositions
- sequencing and linking terms
- contracted time and condition statements: “If using an oscilloscope...”

Accent and pronunciation

Strategies

- Understanding accent and pronunciation issues in the Canadian workplace
- Taking a problem-solving approach
- Identifying strengths and weaknesses
- Diagnosing problems
- Selecting appropriate responses
- Developing a long-term plan for addressing accent and pronunciation issues

Linguistic features (NB: these are examples, not a complete list)

- Sentence level: intonation, rhythm, pauses, sentence stress patterns
- Word level: stress patterns: stems, prefixes, suffixes, nouns vs. verbs, etc.
- Phonetic issues: vowels, consonants, blends, clear word endings

Using and creating workplace documents

- memos, letters, emails, faxes
- lists, charts, tables, parts assemblies, schematics, etc.
- product specifications and operations manuals
- technical proposals, reports & presentations

Culture and the Canadian workplace

- Canadian culture, current affairs and general knowledge
- Science and technology in the news
- Personal management skills and attitudes
- Comparing workplace cultures: Canada and the World
- Non-verbal communication
- Networking, social factors

Safety in the Canadian workplace

- Workplace Hazards Management Information System (WHMIS)
- MSDS
- Selected safety materials, readings and scenarios

Employment readiness

This will be its own 40-hour component separate from the technical English classes; nevertheless, many language activities will reinforce elements of the employment readiness component.