



ESOL: Language for life and work

Interactive Module for union reps

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*To save your progress in this interactive module, always open this document in Adobe Reader
(version 9 upwards). Click through on the video images to play them.*
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**ESOL
Nexus**

Introduction

The jobs market in the UK is becoming more and more competitive for everyone. This does not only apply to second language speakers¹ but also to native speakers. The main advantage native speakers have is obvious. It is in the second language speakers' own interest to improve their English skills in order to create a more level playing field. It can also be important for native speakers from settled communities to have the opportunity to improve their English skills. Most employees who are second language speakers will be aware of the benefits of improving their English and will welcome any opportunity to do so.

Union learning representatives (ULRs) play a key role in supporting second language speakers in the workplace.

This module is mainly for ULRs. It gives an overview of how they can support employees who want to improve their English. It also includes advice on how to persuade employees to take up learning and how to persuade employers to make this possible. Interactive activities are included to help you to self-assess and consolidate what you've learned in this module.

The module may also be of use to others who support second language speakers in the workplace, including union reps, negotiators and managers.

How to use the module

You can either work through the module at your own pace, or join with others to look at the content together.

If you are looking at the pdf on your computer you can type your reflections into the boxes provided, and save your progress for the next time you return to the module.

There is a glossary at the end of the module, which explains any words that might be unfamiliar.

Before you begin

Watch this video of Jonathan, a ULR at McVities, talking about the importance of ESOL in the workplace. This module is all about the things that can help you to support ESOL successfully.



Jonathan: supporting ESOL

¹ In this module we use the term "second language speakers" even though for many non-native speakers English may be their third or fourth language

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Glossary

Step 1 Understanding ESOL learning in the workplace

This step will help you to understand second language speakers in your workplace. It:

- » explains what ESOL is all about
 - » gives an insight into ESOL learners and their needs
 - » helps you to understand more about how to gauge someone's level of English.
-

A. What is ESOL?

ESOL means English for Speakers of Other Languages. People who learn ESOL are usually migrants who have settled with family or are working in the UK. ESOL learners need English to function in normal everyday life and to do their jobs effectively.

Activity 1

Why is it important for second language speakers in the workplace to learn English? Write down your thoughts and then watch the video about Jakub.

What does he say about ESOL classes? What tip does he offer for other ESOL learners? (Suggested answers in Appendix 1).

Example: to be able to understand their role



Jakub: ESOL in the workplace

Origins

The community of people we would call 'ESOL learners' includes people from all walks of life. This is because ESOL learners come from all over the world and bring with them their different cultures, skills levels, ambitions, priorities and expectations. One thing they all have in common is that English is not their first language. Another thing they share is that the UK is their new home.

Some of these people have formed their own settled communities. These may include people who may come from Africa, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Poland and the Caribbean. Living in a settled community can make learning English seem less important as most of the people within the community speak the home language. This is especially common for older people and women.

Refugees and asylum seekers have often had to escape some kind of trauma. In doing so, they have already shown that they are determined to improve their prospects. This journey to a new life can continue and grow into a real love of learning.

A large number of second language speakers come from the EU. Some come to work to earn money for a short time and plan to return to their home countries.

Attitude to learning

It's important to recognise the differences in attitudes to learning that ESOL learners bring with them. Here in the UK, it is common for schools to encourage a more learner-centred approach to learning, through experience, play, team-work, problem-solving and so on. Learning is not just teacher-led.

This is quite different to what school was like for some second language speakers. Many of them probably sat in formal rows behind desks, with the teacher standing at the front of the class directing everything.

Because of these differences, sometimes it is a challenge to introduce ESOL learners into the culture of adult ESOL learning in the UK, which leans heavily towards the communicative approach. In this approach learners learn English by practising real-life communication. For example, learners would work in groups and role play a job interview. They would most probably make mistakes but these would be corrected after the role play and not during it.

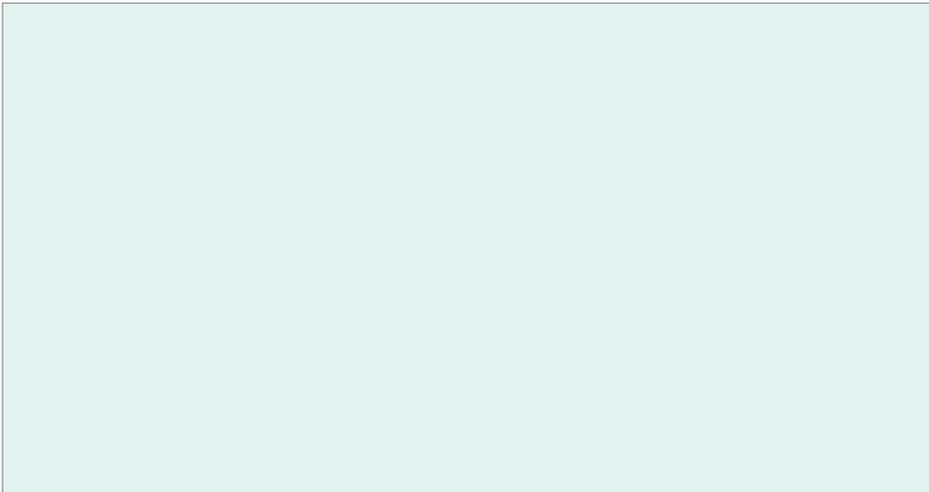
Formal education levels in home countries

Activity 2

What do you know about levels of education and literacy around the world?

Click on the link below to see literacy rates² around the world and compare your findings with the text below.

Click on link to see literacy rates for the world:
<http://world.bymap.org/LiteracyRates.html>



Education systems in EU countries are similar to that of compulsory education in the United Kingdom. Therefore most second language speakers from these countries will have had a full education and so they will be able to read and write in their own language. Workers from other parts of Europe, for example, Kosovo, who were going through the education system during the war in the late 1990s, may have had their education interrupted.

People from many African countries, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India or Afghanistan, for example, may have limited ability to read and write in their own language or none at all, because they never had the chance to go to school. People from countries who have been involved in conflicts, such as Somalia, Eritrea and Ethiopia may also not have had a full education or none at all.

For those second language speakers who come from countries where education has not been possible for various reasons, it is impossible to know if there are also underlying issues with conditions such as dyslexia, as there has been no opportunity to test for this.

² Literacy rates – the number of people in a country who can read and write

On the other hand, a wave of new second language speakers, especially those from Eastern Europe, have completed their education to a very high level and are graduates or post-graduates.

Cultural issues and education for women

Activity 3

Think about countries like Pakistan and Somalia and write down your perceptions of education for women in these countries.

Example: They don't go out to work much

Feedback

Your perceptions may be similar to the following:

In some parts of the world education for girls is not seen as important, is discouraged or at worst, is not allowed. In these a woman's role is to be married, have children and look after the home and the husband's needs. The man is the breadwinner, makes all decisions and controls everything. Sons are given priority over daughters, who are sometimes seen as worthless in comparison. Unfortunately, this culture may be seen in the UK within some settled communities. It can also mean that women, or their husbands, are uncomfortable with male teachers or with male learners being present in an adult ESOL class. It can sometimes be a challenge to introduce the culture and laws of equality that we have in the UK.

Acceptance of this culture can be a slow and gradual process but it can happen. For example, many Somali women, now, attend classes with male teachers and learners and seem happy to do so.

Writing systems/alphabets

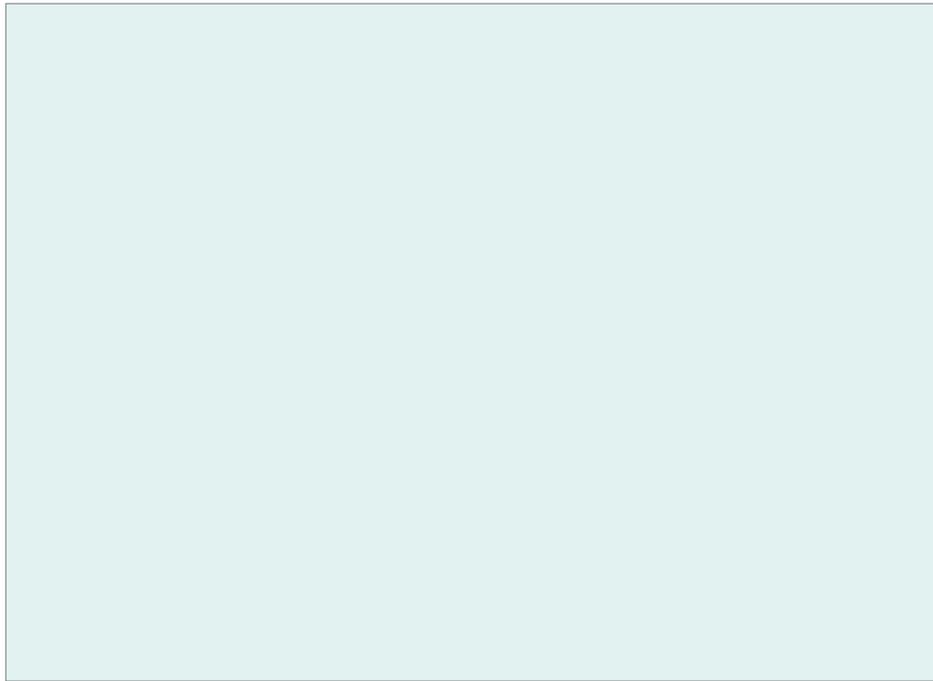
Activity 4

Look at the word, 'English' written in Arabic and Russian. Choose one of these and try to copy it several times on a piece of paper.

How easy did you find it? Are you satisfied with your results? Which direction did you write in?

الإنجليزية = English

Английский = English



Activity 5

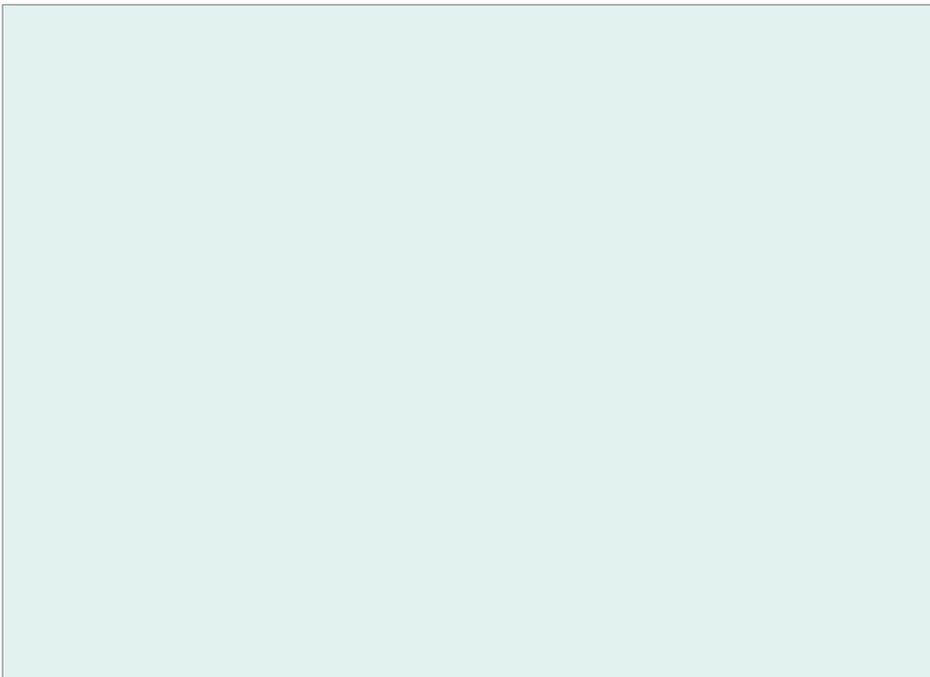
Now experience how it feels to be confronted with having to write your first name and surname in a writing system that is alien to you.

Click on the link below, choose a writing system, type in your name and then copy it. Study the writing and then turn the copy over and try to remember how to write it.

Make some notes below on how you felt whilst you were trying to do this.

http://mylanguages.org/write_name.php

Hopefully, it is now easier to appreciate why some ESOL learners struggle to write their own name.



B. Motivation for ESOL learners

The jobs market

The jobs market in the UK has changed and is now extremely competitive. In the past it was OK to learn your job and leave it at that. However, we are now living in society where things change quickly. This means new things have to be learned in order to not only 'keep up' but be ahead of the game.

However, some second language speakers may lack motivation and feel comfortable about their current level of English. This could be because they already have a secure support network in place, for example:

- » having colleagues as interpreters
- » living and working in settled communities
- » relying on family members, especially children, as interpreters
- » English not being needed to do their jobs.

Activity 6

What arguments would you use to motivate a second language speaker in the workplace to improve their English skills?

Spend a few minutes on this and note down your thoughts.

Example: You might be able to get promotion

Feedback

You might have included some of the following:

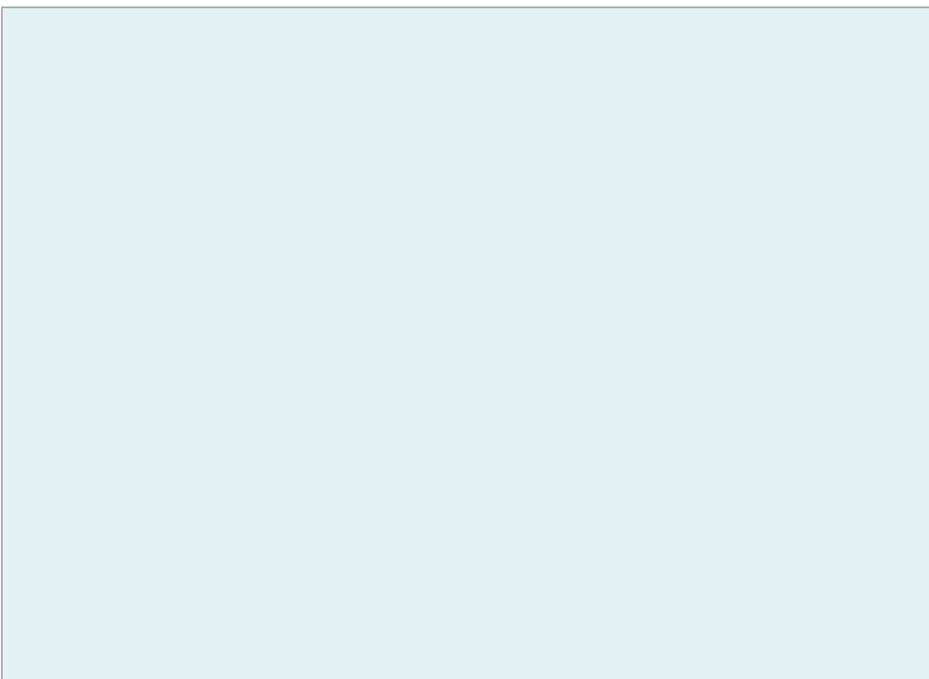
In order to motivate employees who are second language speakers to improve their English, the following arguments can be used:

- » Learning English gives more access to information, involvement in meetings and important decision making in the workplace.
- » In this day and age 'a job for life' is very unusual, in the UK. No-one is safe from losing their job.
- » If parents don't learn English it can have a negative impact on their children's success at school.
- » Failing to learn English means failing to truly integrate within the country in which is now home.
- » Learning English leads to independence.
- » Learning English gives employees more confidence and self-esteem.
- » Learning and improving English is an investment for the future.

Activity 7

Click on the link below and watch the video of Jakub talking about how learning better English helped him to progress.

What doors were opened for him? (Suggested answers are in Appendix 1).



Jakub: English for work

Activity 8

How else could improving English help employees in the workplace?

Write some more ideas here and then compare them with the suggestions below.

Example: they will be able to communicate better with colleagues

Feedback

Improving English skills can open doors to:

- » workplace training
- » improved communication skills
- » improved in interview skills
- » access to more job opportunities both internally and externally, including other countries
- » being part of the language of global business
- » gaining knowledge from the internet
- » understanding technology and software.

Promotion and financial reward

Improved English can also lead to a better standard of living with improved housing, leisure activities including travel and holidays, educational opportunities and security for the future.

An example of how progression and training affects earnings is given below:

Income scale:

Trainee train driver³
£18,000– £22,000 a year.



Newly qualified train driver
Over £30,000



Experienced train driver
£35,000– £48,000



Train driver manager
Up to £55,000

Figures are intended as a guideline only.

Case studies

Read the case studies below to see how these employees have risen through the ranks.

- » **Sasa's Journey** www.unionlearn.org.uk/case-studies/sasa-s-journey
- » **Jacek Jachimowski** www.unionlearn.org.uk/case-studies/jacek-jachimowski

³ www.careersthatmove.co.uk/A-Career-in-Passenger-Transport-and-Travel/Career-Map

Access to further/higher education

Improving English language skills can give employees access to further and higher education, unlocking their potential and advancing the skills they already have, but have been unable to demonstrate because of the language barrier.

In order to access further education, colleges usually expect students to attain a Level 2 (equivalent to GCSE Grade C and above) in English and maths. For those students whose English is not at that level, many providers offer ESOL classes where students can achieve the required English qualification.

Having access to further and higher education can open up a world of opportunity. Many courses run classes in the evenings to help those students who are working full time. Self-access and online courses are also available.

Empowerment

Improving English language skills empowers second language speakers to communicate with colleagues about work and everyday life. Improved English can also help second language speakers to understand their employment rights and responsibilities better. It will also make workplace policies, employment contracts, and policies about equal pay, bullying, discrimination or sexual harassment easier to understand. You might also need better English to fully understand discount schemes and offers from the company or union.

And it doesn't stop there: understanding health and safety, being able to complete accident forms and report near miss incidents, can actually save lives.

When a second language learner is confident about their English, they may feel more able to get involved in workplace decision making by attending meetings, voicing opinions and suggesting ideas.

The empowerment that having good English skills brings can affect every area of life and can make living in the UK much easier. Apart from being able to communicate better, it can allow second language speakers to integrate more easily into the local community.

For those employees who have children, good English skills are fundamental to being able to communicate with schools, attend parents' evenings and fully support their children's education.

The two sides of the coin – employers' and employees' perspectives

Activity 9

*Do employers want their employees to improve their language skills?
If so, why?*

Write some notes here:

Example: sometimes they do because they want to be sure their employees are safe

Feedback

Here are some ideas you might have come up with:

My employee with low level English is getting on well, doing their job without any problems and achieving the desired result, – if it ain't broke don't fix it.

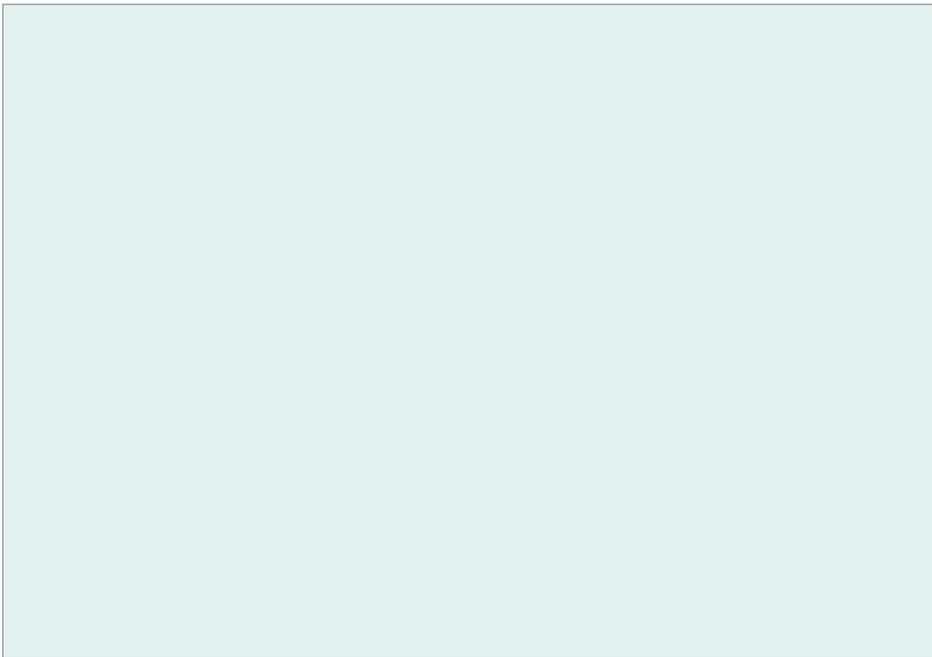
If they become more skilled, they're going to expect more money, aren't they? Or, they'll resign and find a better paid job.

With better English skills, workers become more confident in their abilities, are more adaptable and errors and wastage are reduced.

The employer who demonstrates to its workforce that they are valued enough for investment will gain employee loyalty, which in turn produces workers who will go that extra mile for the employer.

Now watch the video at the link below. Phil, a manager, talks about the benefits of ESOL for his workforce and organisation.

How could you use this to argue the case for English language provision with an employer? (Suggested answers in Appendix 1)



Phil: a manager's view of ESOL

C. ESOL Learners – what level of English?

Try the activities below to see the difference between the levels of ESOL learners.

Activity 10

Click on the first link below and watch Amtul, who is a beginner. Amtul mistakes a 'pen' for something.

What should she have said? When the assessor is talking about her own clothes, Amtul doesn't seem to understand the difference between two words. What are they?

www.trinitycollege.co.uk/site/?id=1999

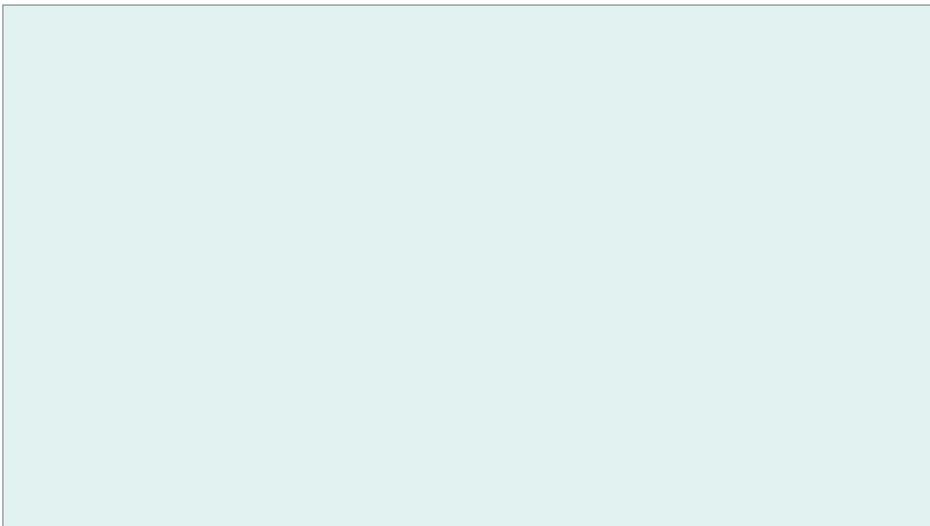
Activity 11

Now go to the link below to see some higher level ESOL learners.

What are the main differences between the two levels?

Think about this, jot down some notes and read the feedback on the next page.

<http://esol.britishcouncil.org/people-us/reading-english>



Feedback

The beginner learner was able to understand basic instructions and used simple vocabulary. At this level the learner could probably form simple questions or give simple statements of fact, for example, 'I come from Pakistan'.

The higher level learners demonstrated their ability to converse fluently. They used natural expressions such as, 'the latest novels'. These learners would be able to keep up a casual conversation and would also be able to contribute effectively in group discussions.

Levels in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

There are five levels in ESOL in the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum for England, Wales and Northern Ireland (AECC). Scotland has a different curriculum.

Three of these levels are called 'Entry level'. These are:

- » Entry 1
- » Entry 2
- » Entry 3

The levels then go up to:

- » Level 1 (which is approximately the same as a GCSE grade 'D' or below)
- » Level 2 (which is equivalent to the level of a GCSE at grade 'C' or above)

Within each level there are four skills. They are:

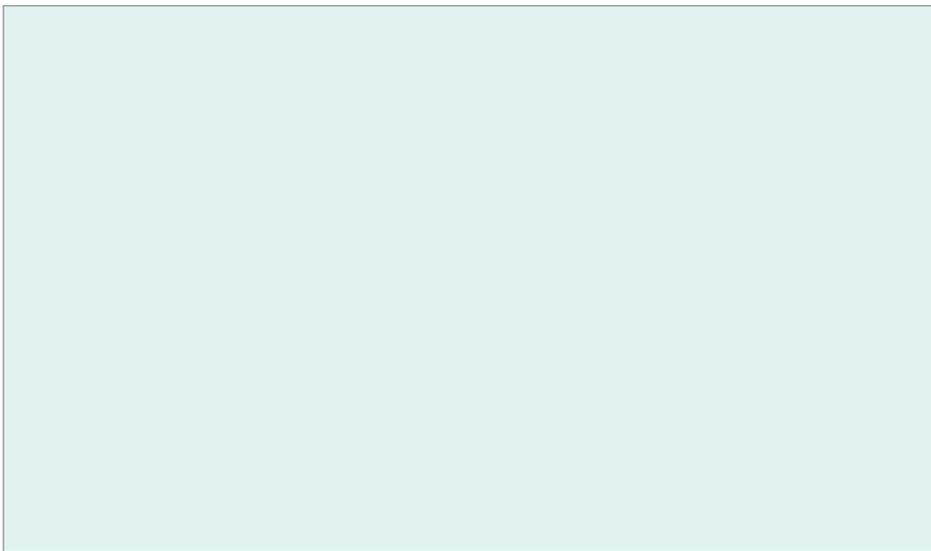
- » speaking
- » listening
- » reading
- » writing.

Activity 12

Think about any experience you have of learning a language.

Which skills would you say were the easiest or most difficult for you?

Write your ideas here and then compare them with the feedback on the following page.



Feedback

'Spiky profile', is a term often used by ESOL practitioners. It means that the four skills are at different levels. If you look at the examples below, you can see what this means:



Arjun comes from India. He speaks very well but still understands more than he can speak. He enjoys reading newspapers in English, so he is quite good at reading. However, he has some difficulty with spelling which means his writing is not very accurate.



Qaman comes from Somalia. She is really good at speaking and listening. Qaman didn't go to school in Somalia but has learned to read simple texts. Qaman has difficulty with forming letters which means she is quite slow at writing.

As you can see, it is extremely unusual to have a learner whose four skills are at the same level. It is also usual for ESOL learners' listening skills to be far more honed than their speaking skills. It is the same for reading and writing; reading being relatively easier to learn.

See the table below for the descriptions of abilities and corresponding levels of ESOL.

ESOL Levels

Level	Description
Level 2	I speak and understand very well but sometimes have problems with unfamiliar situations and vocabulary.
Level 1	I speak and understand well but still make mistakes and fail to make myself understood occasionally.
Entry 3	I can speak and understand reasonably well and use basic tenses but have problems with more complex grammar and need more vocabulary.
Entry 2	I can communicate simply and understand in familiar situations but only with some difficulty.
Entry 1	I can say and understand a few things in English.

Tools for assessing levels

Although you would not be expected to make a firm judgement on someone's level of English, an informal initial assessment is a good idea to help you get a general view of a learner's speaking level and English needs.

What should I ask?

Activity 13

What types of question would you ask a learner at an informal initial assessment?

Write some ideas here and then compare them with the suggestions below.

Example: What's your name?

Feedback

Start with very simple questions such as: 'What is your name?', 'Where do you come from?' and 'Do you have children?' If the learner seems comfortable and is responding well to this level of questioning, move on to more complex questions.

Your initial assessment should stop when the learner is unable to respond or is having difficulty with the level of questions. You could also use pictures as prompts or objects in the room, for example, for a lower level learner you might point to a chair, pencil or clock and ask the learner what it is.

An online initial assessment for ESOL is accessible for free from the Move-on website (see below). The results of this initial assessment do not give separate skills levels for reading, writing, speaking and listening. Instead, one overall level is given. Obviously, this online assessment tool cannot assess a learner's speaking skills.

www.move-on.org.uk/ilr_php/esol/welcome.php

Formal assessments can only be carried out by a qualified ESOL teacher.

FIND OUT MORE

More formal paper based initial assessments together with accompanying audio files can be downloaded from:

<http://rwp.excellencegateway.org.uk/ESOL/Initial%20assessment>

Audio files for the initial assessment can be downloaded from:

<http://archive.excellencegateway.org.uk/page.aspx?o=201224>

Qualifications – ESOL or Functional Skills?

There's a difference between ESOL and Functional Skills English qualifications.

The key points to be aware of are:

- » ESOL qualifications were designed for non-native speakers.
- » Functional Skills English qualifications were designed for native speakers.
- » ESOL qualifications are available as separate skills (e.g. “Entry 2 Speaking and Listening”). Functional Skills qualifications assess all skills in one examination.
- » Functional Skills qualifications are based on the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum (not the ESOL curriculum).
- » Functional Skills qualifications are available free to learners with an assessed learning need (at the time of writing).
- » Functional skills qualifications form part of apprenticeship frameworks but ESOL qualifications do not.
- » Functional Skills English does not satisfy the Border Agency requirement (for settlement) of an Entry 3 qualification in ESOL speaking and listening.
- » Lower level learners often struggle with the vocabulary used in Functional Skills examinations.

Traditionally, ESOL teachers have argued that Functional Skills qualifications are not appropriate for ESOL learners. However, this may not always be the case.

Learners who come from EU countries usually use a version of the Roman alphabet, and have a similar educational and cultural background to that of the UK. This gives them a distinct advantage and the ability to progress at a faster rate, especially with literacy skills. These learners may find Functional Skills qualifications appropriate for them, particularly at levels beyond Entry 3.

Taking all of the above into account, the best way forward could be to use ESOL provision up to at least Entry Level 3 and then progress to Functional Skills English. These higher level ESOL learners may well be more able to cope with the demands of Functional Skills English.

Activity 14

Look at the two learner profiles again.

Which qualifications would you advise them to take?



Arjun comes from India. He speaks very well but still understands more than he can speak. He enjoys reading newspapers in English, so he is quite good at reading. However, he has some difficulty with spelling which means his writing is not very accurate.



Qaman comes from Somalia. She is really good at speaking and listening. Qaman didn't go to school in Somalia but has learned to read simple texts. Qaman has difficulty with forming letters which means she is quite slow at writing.

Step 2 Setting up ESOL learning in the workplace

This step will help you to set up ESOL learning in your workplace. It:

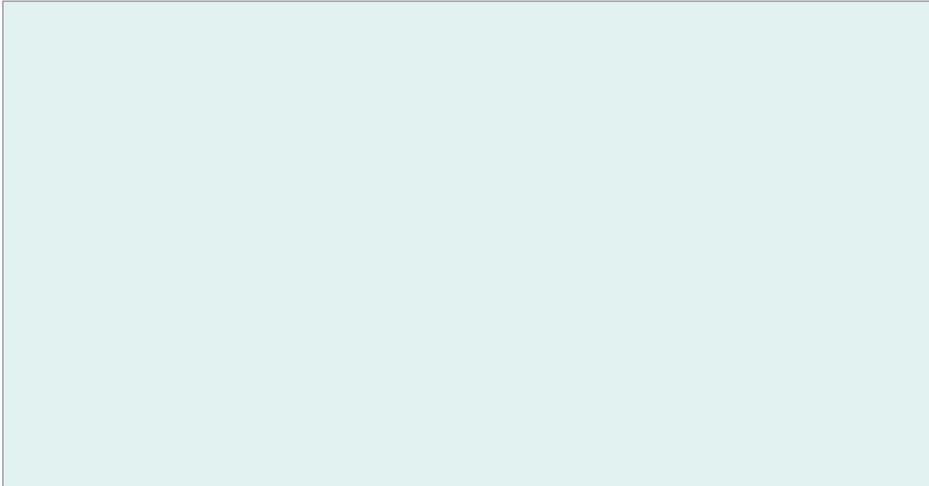
- » sets out the ingredients for successful ESOL learning
 - » shows you how to find local learning providers
 - » sets out the role that workplace translators can play in supporting ESOL.
-

D. Setting up successful ESOL learning in the workplace.

Activity 15

What are the benefits to employers of setting up ESOL learning for staff?

Make a few notes below and then have a look at the feedback following.



Feedback

There are three main reasons that employers give for supporting ESOL learning in the workplace.

- » **Better communication.** This is the most common reason employers give for supporting ESOL. Better communication between managers and employees is good for performance. It reduces mistakes and improves efficiency. Better communication between staff develops teamwork and improves staff morale. It makes people more likely to come to work and stay with the company.

- » **Understanding and meeting standards.** Good English skills mean that staff can understand and meet health, safety and hygiene standards. They will also be able to deal more confidently with customers, meet quality standards and follow workplace procedures for their job and other areas such as holidays, sickness, etc.
- » **Managing change.** Good English skills make staff more confident. They are more willing to take on additional responsibilities, develop new skills, work flexibly and do things differently. They are more likely to understand the reasons for change attend training and briefings and take responsibility for putting the changes into place.

FIND OUT MORE

If you want to find out more about why employers support ESOL learning you can have a look at this case study:

www.unionlearn.org.uk/case-studies/benefits-partnership-working-airsprung-beds

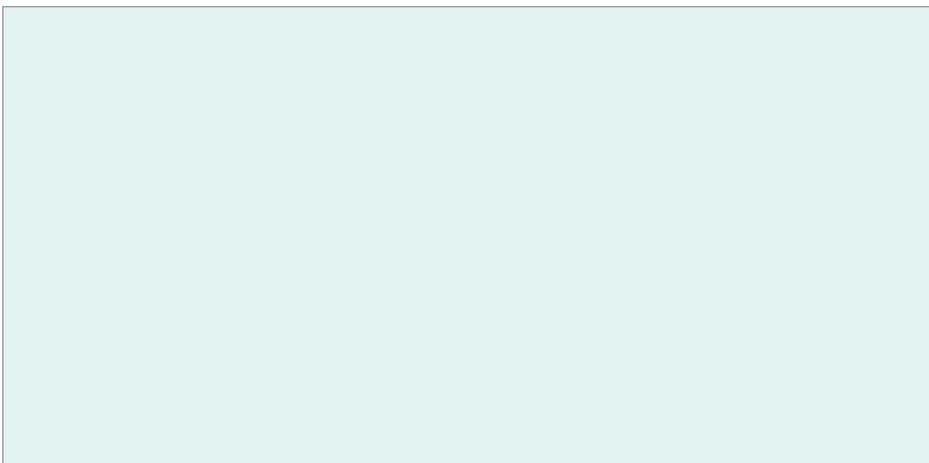
Now you have a good idea of the benefits to the employer of ESOL learning it's time to think about the best way to put it into place.

Activity 16

Take a few minutes to think about what good workplace ESOL learning looks like.

What factors might help to make it successful?

Put your ideas below before looking at the feedback following.



Feedback

Successful workplace ESOL learning has four main aspects.

Partnership

An effective three way partnership between the union, the employer and the provider is the foundation of a successful ESOL programme. To work effectively, the partnership should agree what the programme aims to achieve, how it will be planned, managed and communicated and how progress will be monitored and learning evaluated.

The best way to do this is through a joint agreement setting out the key features of the programme and the roles and responsibilities of each partner. The agreement should set up a joint forum to manage the programme and co-ordinate activities. If you don't have a learning agreement or joint forum in your workplace you may wish to negotiate one. Have a look at this guidance document from unionlearn. There is a section on ESOL.

www.unionlearn.org.uk/sites/default/files/delivering-better-learning-agreements.pdf

If your learning agreement does not cover ESOL or you want more guidance on what to include when negotiating about ESOL, use this link to look at a document which sets out the main things it should cover.

www.unionlearn.org.uk/news/2013/04/24/negotiator-s-brief-esol

Activity 17

You are going to watch a video about how Jonathan, a ULR at McVities, and Phil, a manager, work together effectively to support ESOL.

Take note of three things that could be relevant in your workplace.
(Suggested answers in Appendix 1)

1.

2.

3.



Jonathan and Phil: working together

Commitment

Once the framework has been drawn up you need to get people to make a commitment to learning. The more commitment from each of the partners show, the better the results. Partners show their commitment in different ways.

- » **Learners** show their commitment through regular attendance on the course. Some of this will be in their own time. Learners also show commitment by completing the work expected of them and practicing their skills outside of the taught sessions.
- » **Providers** show commitment by making sure that the course arrangements meet the needs of both the employer and the learners. This might include the level of fees, timing a course to ensure that night workers are not disadvantaged, developing materials relevant to the workplace.
- » **Employers** show commitment by supporting courses and encouraging learners to attend. This might be by subsidising course fees, allowing some learning in work time or arranging for shift swaps when courses are drawn from different areas of the workplace.

A matched time agreement is an excellent way to build commitment. This is where employers allow some learning in company time when employees attend the course in their own time as well. It shows that the company is willing to invest in its staff and that staff are willing to invest in their own learning. Have a look at the Q&A for more guidance.

www.unionlearn.org.uk/campaigns/english-maths-ict/esol/matched-time-esol-qa

Quality learning

Good quality learning which meets the need of the learners maximises the chance of a successful programme. Make sure that:

- » **courses are at the right level for learners** – too easy and they get bored, too hard and they lose motivation. This can be achieved by accurately assessing learner needs and making sure that learners at a similar level are clustered together especially on group courses.
- » **the length of course is able to deliver the outcomes.** Whilst some learners progress faster than others, guidelines suggest that course should last for somewhere between 30 and 45 hours. This does not include work that the learner completes outside the course.
- » **learning is monitored and evaluated.** Good teachers monitor the progress of each student, regularly check that students are happy with the course and evaluate each course at the end so as to improve future courses.
- » **learning materials are appropriate.** Materials should be aimed at adults and based around issues that help them to communicate in the workplace. Consider “customising” materials so that they reflect the processes and issues in the workplace.

Support

Learners will progress much more quickly if they receive additional support to practice their skills. The next module covers this in more detail but you may want to think about how this support can be provided. Some options are:

- » going through an on-site or local community learning centre where learners can access the British Council website and use their materials for additional learning
- » running voluntary conversation classes in the workplace – ULRs will have the skills to do this either one-to-one or in a group when they have completed the final module
- » mentoring through line managers or training staff using work-related situations and materials
- » signposting to other provision available through providers or local community groups.

Case studies

Read the case study in the end of the Q&A to see how exemplary partnerships between employers, unions and providers can achieve great success.

Usdaw working with a distribution company achieved learning success.

www.unionlearn.org.uk/case-studies/esol-success-joint-learning-initiative

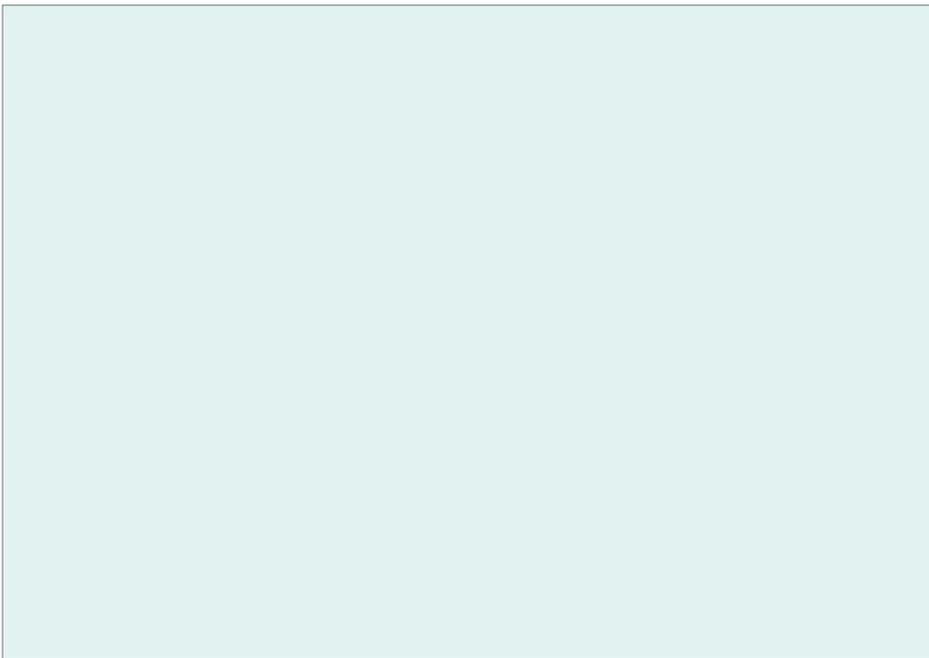
E. Organising a learning provider

Many different organisations provide ESOL learning. Most local colleges run ESOL classes, there are a range of private providers, many local authorities organise ESOL learning and there are now community providers. If your workplace is organised for learning you may already have links with providers. If not you will need to start from scratch.

Activity 18

What things do you need to take into account when choosing a provider?

Make a few notes below.



Feedback

Choosing providers

There are a number of key points you need to consider when choosing a provider.

- » **Cost.** How much will courses cost? They will vary considerably between providers and depends on many different factors. Remember that functional skills courses are free so more advanced ESOL learners may be able to use this route.
- » **Numbers.** What is the minimum number needed to run a course? This too can vary between providers. A high minimum may make it difficult to recruit enough to run the course or may lead to classes which contain learners at widely different levels.

- » **Flexibility.** Are providers able to meet your requirements by running courses at the times and venues you want? Are they able to customise materials for your workplace?
- » **Methods.** How will the courses be delivered? Will they be taught courses, on line learning or a mixture of both?
- » **Experience.** Are providers used to working with adults in the workplace. Where else have they worked?

It is always worth investigating the different providers in your area and asking them to come and talk to the learning committee about how they can deliver to meet your needs. But don't take everything as a final offer. It's always worth negotiating for a better deal.

Activity 19

Watch Jonathan talking about working with providers.

Note down three useful pieces of advice he gives (suggested answers in Appendix 1).

1.

2.

3.



Jonathan: working with providers

Finding providers

To find out about local ESOL provision, the best place to start is with adult community learning, your local colleges and the WEA. These organisations have the knowledge, experience and skills needed to develop work-based ESOL learning.

Activity 20

Using the links and information below, find the website of your local college, the adult community learning service and your local WEA.

You can find out about your local colleges here:

Directory of UK colleges – ESOL accredited

www.asic.org.uk/collegedirectoryUK.php#ESOL

Association of college – search for local colleges

www.aoc.co.uk/about-us/aoc-regions

Another directory of FE colleges

www.schoolswebdirectory.co.uk/fecolleges.php

You can find out about WEA provision here:

www.wea.org.uk/local

Tip

Google search terms:

To find out about adult community provision, you can use the search term ‘adult community learning’ with the name of the place. For example, ‘adult community learning Hertfordshire’.

Another search term you can use is, ‘Directory of ESOL providers’ followed by the name of the place. For example, ‘Directory of ESOL providers Hertfordshire’.

The National Careers Service has a database of providers. You can access the database here:

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/courses/Pages/default.aspx>

F. Informal interpreters within the workforce

Activity 21

How do you think members of the migrant workforce with very strong English language skills could help others who speak the same language?

Write your list here and then compare it with the ideas below:

Example: they can help in crisis situations, where the employee is too stressed to speak English

Informal (volunteer) interpreters within the workforce can be an invaluable tool in all aspects of ESOL provision.

- » It is a good idea to draw up a list of languages spoken within the workplace, and a list of those migrant workers who also speak good English. This in-house resource can be an invaluable tool to assist with low-level speakers of English.
- » Informal interpreters can help ULRs to promote learning opportunities by interpreting information to those learners with low level English skills.
- » Informal interpreters could also be utilised to help ULRs with the recruitment process. For example, in a group recruitment setting, having such a resource would be of great assistance to a ULR who might be dealing with a group speaking many different languages.
- » For ESOL conversation groups, having the assistance of informal interpreters within the group, can not only be of great benefit to the facilitator, but can greatly enhance the ability of the low level learner to progress quickly.
- » It can be difficult and also intimidating for some low level speakers to cope well at their first meeting with English speaking ULR or teacher. For example, it is sometimes quite challenging for an assessor/teacher to explain to a potential ESOL learner that an initial assessment is not a test that results in either a pass or fail, but purely a tool used to estimate a set of skills levels. An interpreter can make a real difference to the teacher and to the learner.

- » It is sometimes difficult for low level English learners to complete forms for enrolment, give personal information or actually ask questions that are important to them. This can be made so much more comfortable for the potential learner when someone they know can translate for them.

Step 3 Supporting ESOL learning in the workplace

This step will help you to support ESOL learners in your workplace. It:

- » gives you some advice for communicating with ESOL learners
 - » raises awareness of one-to-one support needs
 - » gives you some help with setting up informal group learning
 - » introduces online learning and the ESOL Nexus website.
-

Case study

Think about how you could support ESOL learners in the workplace and then look at this case study and compare your ideas.

Natasha Love – ESOL champion

www.unionlearn.org.uk/case-studies/natasha-love-esol-champion

G. Communicating with ESOL learners

Lacking English, or able to speak several languages?

Rather than assuming that a second language speaker is at a disadvantage because English is not their first language, it is more positive to recognise the great potential they have because they already speak another language. It is also common for ESOL learners to get more out of the English language than a lot of English native speakers! This is because it is new and fresh to them – they are learning something new every day. In some cases, second language speakers can do better than their English peers, who perhaps feel that they don't need to change, are maybe afraid of change and also feel that they finished all of their 'learning' at school. Many ESOL learners are not afraid of 'learning' or 'change' because this has become a natural state for them.

Use clear English

Activity 22

Watch this video and then complete the activity below:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxUm-2x-2dM

Imagine that you are going to meet a potential ESOL learner for the first time. What do you think is meant by the term to ‘use clear English’?

Write down some of your ideas and then compare them with those below.

Example: speak more slowly



Do You Speak English?

Feedback

It is important to be aware of the way you speak. The first thing to do is to slow down a bit and form your words more clearly than you normally would. You should also take note of the words you use. For example, “Can I give you a hand?” could be confusing. It would be better to say, “Can I help you?”

Ambiguous words are something else to take into account. For instance, you might think it is better to use the word “hard” instead of “difficult” because hard is shorter and easier to understand. The problem is that hard has several different meanings, the most obvious one being the opposite of soft. So the word “difficult” is actually the better choice.

Body language

When we think of communicating with people we think of speaking and listening. Yet it has been said that between 60 per cent and 80 per cent of communication is through body language, facial expressions, eye contact and hand gestures.

If we think about it, body language, or, non-verbal communication, can signal a lot of information about our attitudes and how we are feeling; far more than words can.

Number one on the list when communicating with second language speakers is to smile. A smile is welcoming and this is universally understood. Strong eye contact is also a significant tool in letting someone know that they have all of your attention. It is equally important to stand or sit in a positive way. If you're leaning on your elbows and resting your head on them, this can give the impression of being bored.

Be a sympathetic listener

A 'sympathetic listener' is a term often used by ESOL teachers. Obviously, it is important to listen carefully and to use facial expressions to convey kindness and understanding, but the first step to becoming a sympathetic listener is to not get embarrassed. This might seem ridiculous but many people who are not used to dealing with non-native speakers tend to panic because they feel embarrassed on behalf of the non-native speaker, who might be having some difficulty in finding the right words. The way to avoid this is to take your time and accept that you might not understand everything at first.

In order to be a sympathetic listener you will have to interact with the non-native speaker. This involves helping them if they are looking for words. However, it's important to not jump in straight away. Give them a bit of time and then suggest a word or phrase that might help them.

It's also helpful to really listen to the speaker's accent. Through experience you will begin to recognise common features of different accents and understand them better. For example, some Somalis still pronounce the English sound 'p' as 'b'.

Check with the speaker that you have heard them correctly. For example, you could say, "So, you *can't* do a class in the evenings?" This will then give the speaker the opportunity to either agree or correct you by saying, "No, I *can* do a class in the evenings". Don't forget you can also write down what you've heard. Some ESOL learners' reading and writing skills are better than their speaking and listening skills.

Here are some other ideas about how to listen sympathetically:

- » Try not to interrupt. Give the speaker their turn to speak.
- » It is difficult to listen to more than one speaker at a time, so make sure that there are no other distractions.
- » Try not to think too much about what your responses will be. If you do this, you will not be concentrating fully on listening.

- » Encourage the speaker with your ‘listening body language’ which should be open and welcoming. For example, show interest by slightly leaning towards the speaker. Nod or shake your head at appropriate times, maintain strong eye contact and use facial expressions to transmit sympathy, understanding and friendliness.
- » Let the speaker finish and allow them to indicate when they want a response from you.

Check understanding regularly

Activity 23

If someone says they understand what you’ve said then you normally accept this. Unfortunately, this is not the case with all non-native speakers. They quite often say they understand when they don’t. How could you check understanding? For example, you’ve just told them how to get to their ESOL class.

You’ve told them:

“You get the 38 bus and get off at the town hall. You walk up the high street towards the cinema and the venue is on the left. Go into reception give them this form. You will also need to show your ID. They will tell you where your class is. Don’t forget to take a notebook and a pencil or pen.”

How would you check that this employee has understood?

Write down your ideas here and see if they are similar to those following.

Example: ask “do you understand?”

Feedback

Ask questions that need definite answers and not just a “yes” or “no”, for example, “What do you need to show at reception?”

Make statements that are false, for example, “You get the 34 bus, yeah?”

Ask them to tell you what you’ve just told them.

Encourage dialogue

To begin a dialogue you have to ask a question and then wait for an answer. With second language speakers you might have to wait a bit longer. This may seem obvious but it takes practice. At first it is easy to be afraid of silence and rush in to fill in the gaps. It’s important to remember that the employee will probably be trying to find the right words before they speak so you must give them time. Try to wait 10 seconds before prompting for an answer. Count 10 seconds in your head now. It can seem like a long time to you but it’s not for the second language speaker. If the dialogue doesn’t continue after 10 seconds, then it’s time to try some prompting. Once the employee begins to feel comfortable in the knowledge that you will wait for them, the questions and answers can be built into a real dialogue and conversation.

If a dialogue is proving to be difficult and you’ve waited 10 seconds for a response, you can help by rephrasing the question, miming, showing pictures of real objects or by modelling the answer. For example, perhaps you’ve asked the employee how they come to work. To model this you would say something like, “I drive to work/I walk to work” and then ask “What about you?”

A good way to start a dialogue is to ask the employee about something they know well. This could be their job or a particular task within their job. Tell them that you are really interested in learning about their job. This will give them a sense of being equal because they will be giving you information that you do not know. They will be teaching *you* something. It is also a perfect opportunity for you to ask lots of questions, remembering of course, to keep the questions as simple as possible.

List of Dos and Don'ts

Do	Don't
Speak clearly	Speak louder thinking that this will create a better understanding
Speak more slowly than usual	Cover or hide your mouth. Listeners will want to watch you pronounce your words
Repeat and rephrase – if someone doesn't understand	Use ambiguous words, 'correct' is better than 'right' which could be confused with, 'write', or as the direction, 'right'
Check understanding regularly	Run words together, eg: Dya-wanna join-un ESOL class?
Write key vocabulary down. It can help an ESOL learner to understand. It also gives them a chance to write it down themselves and look it up in a dictionary	Use too many idioms (the coffee machine's <i>on the blink</i>) or colloquialisms (wait there and I'll be <i>back in a jiffy</i>)
Correct the content of an ESOL speaker if necessary <i>after</i> the speaker has finished speaking	Use phrasal verbs, such as, 'Please <i>hand in</i> the form to me'. It's better to say, <i>give</i> the form to me
Smile	Use incorrect/pigeon English
Use intonation in your speech to make important words stand out	Use unnecessary words in sentences
Pause after sentences to indicate when you're moving on to a new point	Confuse low English proficiency with low intelligence or lack of experience
Use non-verbal cues (such as gestures, pictures and concrete objects) to aid understanding	Have your arms folded when speaking and listening. This can be seen as a barrier
Praise them!	Ever get impatient!
Show interest when listening	Worry if you don't know something. You can ask/find out later
Use body language to demonstrate your friendliness and interest	Correct someone whilst they're speaking. Do it afterwards if necessary

Tips on asking questions

It's a good idea to have a note book where you can jot down the questions you want to ask, remove any unnecessary words, note down any similar words you could use if the first word was difficult to understand and you have to rephrase the question. Then try them out. You can then highlight in your note book the more successful ways of asking questions.

Here are some simple questions that give the best chance of being understood. These questions use simple grammar and tenses.

1. What's your name?
2. When did you come to the UK?
3. Which country do you come from?
4. What work did you do in your country?
5. Which languages do you speak?
6. Did you go to school in your country?
7. Did you learn English at school in your country?
8. Can you read and write in Turkish/Urdu etc?
9. Can you read and write in English?
10. Can you write your name in English?
11. What work did you do in your country?
12. How long have you worked in this job?
13. Where do you work? (on the shop floor/the machine room/the canteen etc)
14. Do you work part-time or full-time?
15. What time do you start work?
16. What time do you finish work?
17. Do you speak English at work?
18. Do you speak Turkish/Polish at work?
19. Why don't you speak English at work?
20. Do you like learning English?
21. Do you want to learn English?
22. Why do you want to learn English?
23. Do you want to go to an ESOL class?

H. One-to-one support

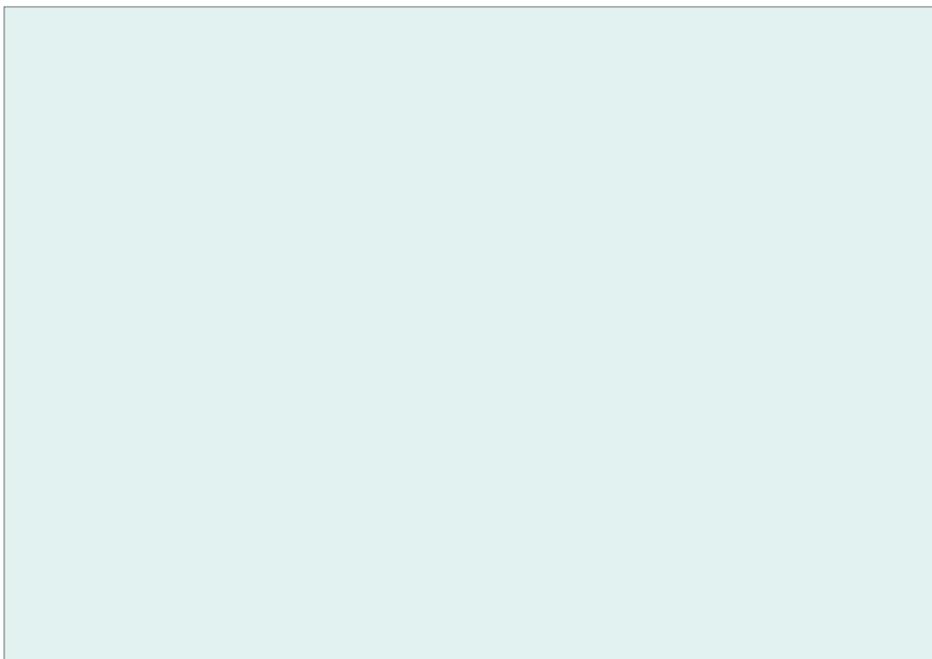
It's important that non-native speakers taking part in learning programmes in the workplace know that there is additional support available to them. You can support them in various ways on a one-to-one basis. The first step is to ensure that all employees have your contact details and that they know that they can come to you to discuss various problems, that you are there to help and that your one-to-one service is confidential. It is equally important that the provider/teacher of the learning programme knows about your one-to-one service and can therefore refer learners to you. Don't forget that your pool of translators in the workforce can be of great assistance to you to support your one-to-one service.

Of course, you won't have the answers to all problems and that's why part of your one-to-one role should be to have a secure signposting network for referral, i.e. "I don't know, but I know a man that does". It's essential that your list of agencies and organisations are checked out first as it can be frustrating and demoralising for an employee to go to another agency for help only to find out that the agency they've been referred to doesn't cater to their needs. This means in most cases that you will make the contact first and set things up. For second language speakers, it is a good idea to have a list of services specific to the employee's home language. You can use Google to search for such services, for example: 'Somali Community Centre Manchester'. You will find links to services for second language speakers in the Appendices.

Activity 24

A Somali employee is having problems with debt. They also don't have a computer. Go on to Google and put in the search term: Somali Community Centre Manchester. Navigate the website and find out when the debt and welfare drop in centre is open. Then find out if there is any support for learning computers.

Write your answers here and compare them with the feedback below:



Feedback

The website address is: www.somaligolden.org.uk

The welfare and drop in centre is open on Thursdays from 11–2pm

There is a computer suite with eight PCs with internet access that can be used for free.

Some employees might be struggling on their learning programmes and need extra support. This can be for a variety of reasons but you can play a key role here by:

- » liaising with the provider to find out who would benefit from your one-to-one service
- » supporting learners with building confidence and self-esteem.

Activity 25

Some ESOL learners may suffer from low self-esteem because of their educational disadvantage, for instance, or negative stereotyping of migrants.

What do you think people with low self-esteem might say about themselves?

Write your ideas here.

Example: "It's not worth me applying for that promotion"

Feedback

Log on to the link below where you will find a complete self-help programme on self-esteem. Access the first module of the self-help programme for self-esteem and compare your answers.

There are many activities for self-esteem and confidence building on the internet. The website below is particularly good as it provides free worksheets. Take a look and see how these worksheets could help you to help learners.

www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheets/selfesteem/adults

» Barriers to learning

- › Helping learners with any issues that are creating barriers to learning, for example, you may have a learner who is not confident in using a computer. In this instance you could set up some one-to-one sessions and teach the learner how to do this and help them to set up an email account. In your plan of action you could arrange to send and receive emails for a period of time in order to familiarise the learner with the practice of email. You could check that the learner is accessing their email by asking them at their one-to-one sessions, 'What did I say in my email to you yesterday?'

» **Building conversation skills**

- › Watch a soap and talk about it.
- › ‘Get it off your chest!’ sessions.

» **Action plans**

- › Draw up action plans to outline goals and achievements.

I. Group learning

A relaxed and informal atmosphere is the ideal setting for a conversation class, perhaps with tea, coffee and biscuits to set a welcoming tone.

The first thing to be addressed is what you’re going to talk about. At the first meeting, after introductions, it’s a good idea to ask learners what interests them. This could be the first topic of the conversation class in itself. To start off you could tell the class what interests you and if appropriate bring in pictures or objects to stimulate conversation. This would be a good opportunity for learners to practise asking you questions. You could then ask the learners to discuss their own interests in pairs and write up their ideas on the board/flip chart. Putting people into small groups or pairs first to prepare the arguments for the discussion is not only a time-honoured trade union way of learning things but also gives the quieter ones an opportunity to have their say & the confidence to speak. You could also add your own list of suggested topics for learners to discuss. Learners could then decide and agree on topics to be discussed for the programme.

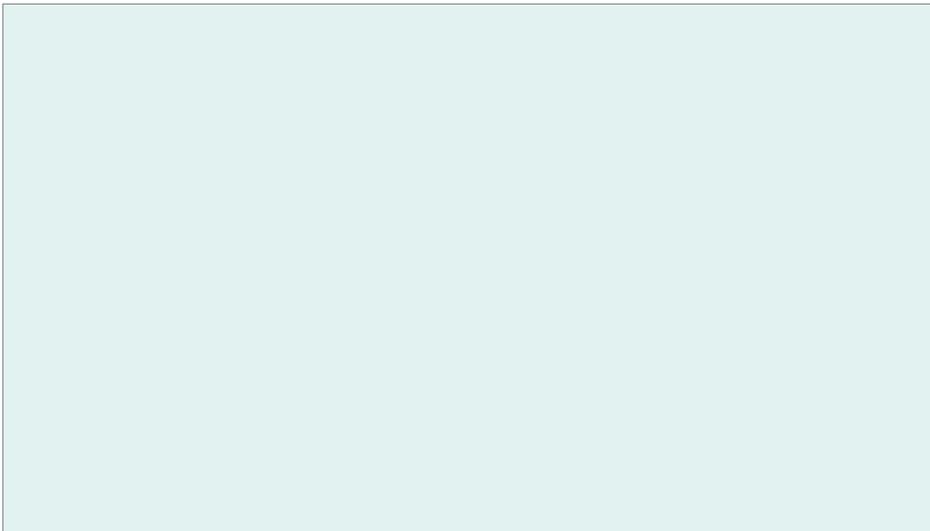
Activity 26

Not only will *you* have to ask the learners questions but you might have to teach *them* how to *ask* questions also. Take a look at the question words and try out the activity on the British Council website:

<http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/grammar-reference/question-forms-subject-object-questions>

Name the five 'wh' questions types.

Write your answers here:



Activity 27

What kind of topics would you suggest for a conversation class?

Write your ideas here. You can then compare them with the list in Appendix 2.

Example: holidays

Although the conversation class should be informal it does need to be structured in order to give a similar pattern for each session. See the structure below as an example:

1. Warmer

Start each class with a fun warmer, such as:

- » talk for one minute on... write subjects on cards, such as, 'talk about a dream/about the weekend/what you had for dinner last night/describe your house'
 - you could also have a 'short straw' card where a learner has to talk for two minutes or do something else, like make the tea and coffee

2. Something to learn and practise

Give the learners 'something to learn' and try to use during the conversation class. This could be things like:

- » 'asking questions' – you could write a few question types on the board, for example, What/Where/Who/When/Why/How many/How much/Do you, etc.
- » 'speaking in the past' – I went/I watched/I was/etc.

You could write examples of 'something to learn' on the board and ask the learners to repeat for practise and pronunciation. They could then try to use what they've learned during the class.

3. First conversation activity

Let's take royal families as a topic for conversation. You could start off with a mingling exercise. This means that learners have to 'mingle' with each other and collect information. So, you could give each learner a card with questions, such as: Do you have a royal family in your country?/Who are they?/Do you like them?/Do you like the royal family in the UK? etc. After the activity you could ask learners questions, for example, how many people said they liked/didn't like/ weren't sure about/the royal family and/or, how many people said they had a royal family in their own country?

4. Second conversation activity

You could then put learners into pairs or small groups to discuss and find out as much information as possible about the royal family in the UK, using some 'wh' question types for prompts, for example, 'where does the royal family live?', 'what do they do?' 'how much do they cost the economy?', 'how much do they contribute to the economy?' etc.

5. Third conversation activity

This could be in the form of a presentation. Pairs/groups could present their findings to the class.

6. Feedback from you

During the conversation activities, you should take a few notes of what you overhear. It's best not to overly correct learners whilst they're in the middle of discussions. You can do this now. It is best to try to focus on the 'something to learn' aspect of the lesson. So, for example, if the 'something to learn' part was 'speaking about the future' and you've overheard learners saying things like, "...the next King *is* Harry...", you could highlight 'will be' or 'is going to be'.

7. What has been learned? Any questions?

This is where you ask the learners what they have learned in the session. Ask them what they thought of the lesson and if they have any questions.

8. Preparation for the next class

This is where you can discuss any preparations needed for the next class, for example, learners may need to bring in photos, objects or perhaps prepare some homework.

The above example was more of a discussion class. There are other types of conversation classes, for example, debates and role plays.

Materials you could use

Prompts for conversation

Activity 28

Learners are going to debate a topic but you want to give them some suggestions of what they could say.

What sort of prompts could you write on the board/flip chart?

Write your ideas here and then look at the suggestions below.

Example: what do you think about...?

Sample prompts for a debate

- » To add to what _____ said...
- » Another example is...
- » Another reason is...
- » On the other hand...
- » On the other side of the argument...
- » Can someone explain why...
- » I disagree with _____ because...
- » I agree with _____ because...
- » I can see where you're coming from but...
- » Could you say more about...
- » But have you thought about...

Picture prompts

A picture paints a thousand words. For example, if the topic of conversation is travel, and you back up with pictures of the learners' countries, then you have a conversation on your hands!

Pub Quiz

Learners love this. It also teaches the culture of pubs in the UK and the fact that it's not all about getting drunk!

Realia

What's 'realia'? It's a term used by ESOL practitioners and it means something that is real. A real loaf of bread is 'realia'. Whatever the 'realia' is, it will have an impact and the learners won't forget it. It's real, they can feel, touch and recognise it and talk about it.

J. Online learning and the ESOL Nexus website

Advantages and challenges of online learning for second language speakers

On the face of it, online learning can offer a number of advantages for employees who find it difficult to attend a regular class:

- » **Time:** working online at your own convenience, for short or long periods of time – good if you work shifts or are too busy to attend a regular class
- » **Pace:** working online at your own speed, revisiting activities as many times as you like
- » **Choice:** a wide range of activities that match your own particular interests or needs
- » **Location:** as long as you have access to a computer, tablet or smartphone you can carry out online learning activities wherever you are
- » **Affordable:** most online learning is either free, or cheaper than going to a class.

Activity 29

For second language speakers, however, online learning can present some challenges.

What do you think some of these challenges might be?

Think about everything you have learnt in this module and make some notes.

Example: what do you think about...?

Feedback

You may have come up with some of the following points:

I don't know how to use a computer

I don't know what my level is

I haven't got a computer at home

I don't know what to look for on the internet

I can't follow the instructions because my English is not good enough

- » Second language speakers with a low level of English may have difficulty understanding the instructions for online learning activities.
- » Learners may not have very well-developed computer skills.
- » Learners with little experience of education can sometimes struggle to learn on their own.
- » ESOL learners don't know which websites are likely to suit them.
- » ESOL learners sometimes struggle to know where to start – they don't always know what level they are or what language they need.

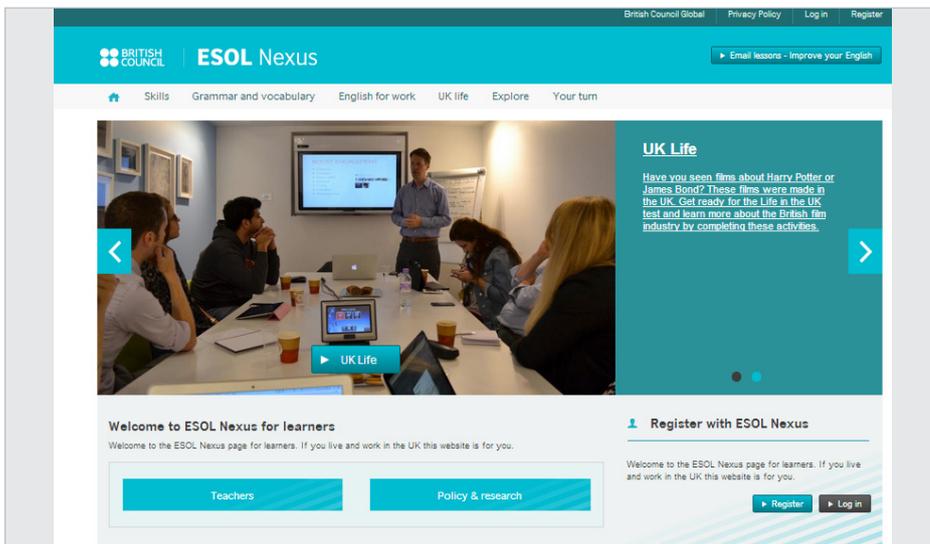
Supporting second language speakers with online learning

How can you help learners to access online learning? Here are some simple tips:

- » Find out about some useful websites.
- » Try some activities yourself so you know what to expect.
- » Create a list of activities for different levels (with links) that you can give to learners as a starting point.
- » Try create an opportunity for learners to try out online for the first time with your help – for example in a computer suite or one-to-one using a tablet or smartphone.
- » Make sure they can hear! You may need to provide headphones or loudspeakers.
- » Ask learners what they would like to study, and be prepared to help them to find it if it's not on your list.
- » Resist the urge to grab the mouse! Demonstrate what to do, then let learners try for themselves.

The ESOL Nexus website

The ESOL Nexus website; <http://esol.britishcouncil.org> has been specially developed to support second language learners with their English language learning. The content on the website includes interactive self-access activities, videos, listening, writing, speaking and writing practice. There are also sections dedicated to many aspects of UK life and work, and a special section for beginners. All the content is available free of charge. There is also a dedicated page for teachers, including lesson plans and professional development resources (including lots that may be of use to union learning reps and others who support ESOL in the workplace).



Activity 30

Explore the ESOL Nexus website and try to find activities that might suit the following learners:

- » Someone working as a cleaner who needs to recognise health and safety signs in the workplace and what they mean.
- » Someone who wants to watch a video about what happens at a job interview.
- » Someone who wants to understand what to do about racism at work.

Feedback

The correct links are:

<http://esol.britishcouncil.org/content/learners/english-for-work/cleaners-o>

<http://esol.britishcouncil.org/content/learners/skills/writing/what-happens-job-interview>

<http://esol.britishcouncil.org/content/learners/english-work/your-rights-work/racism-work>

Appendix 1

Suggested answers

Jakub: ESOL in the workplace

Jakub says that his classes are really nice and that he likes the teacher. He studies Functional English, which includes writing CVs and covering letters, and talking about basic topics that are useful for everyday life. The classes have really helped to make him more confident.

His tip for other ESOL learners is to learn as much as you can and to help others.

Jakub: English for work

Jakub was able to get a job at McVities, having started out at a car wash, and now “Everything is going really well”. He has gained in confidence, did really well in the company skills test, and has now been promoted to a much more responsible role. He has to use the telephone a lot and to communicate confidently with people.

Phil: A manager’s view of ESOL

Phil highlights a number of benefits of ESOL in the workplace:

- » It helps employees to understand the spoken and written word.
- » It helps them to work to agreed standards.
- » It helps them to progress.
- » It improves morale.
- » It helps team communication.

Jonathan and Phil: working together to support ESOL

Some key points include:

- » Partnership working shows people that it’s not just the union that supports learning.
- » Good communication and trust are vital.
- » ESOL contributes to employee retention – people stay in work longer.
- » Management commitment to learning is vital to make things happen.
- » Regular meetings are important.

Jonathan: working with providers

Jonathan offers the following advice:

- » Use service level agreements to make sure providers understand your requirements.
- » Make sure providers understand the needs of the business.
- » Providers need to be flexible.
- » ULR organises classes and liaises with individuals/management.
- » Regular steering meetings provide feedback on progress.

Appendix 2

Topics for conversation

Travel	Cooking
Sport	Hobbies
Gardening	Home
Films	Favourite TV programmes
Book	Happiest moments of your life
Superstitions	Phobias
Embarrassing moments	If you ruled the country
Neighbours	Ambitions
If you won the lottery	Music
Favourite celebrities	First impressions of the UK
Things that annoy you	Current issues in the news
Amazing things you've done or that have happened to you	Something you have never done but would like to do
Answering problems as an Agony Aunt/Uncle	Fairy stories/folk tales from your country
Democracy and the meaning of freedom	Debates about controversial subjects
Crime and punishment	Learning English
Sex education at school	The European Union
Understanding Health and Safety at work	Workplace forms/ vocabulary
Unions	Workplace meetings

Appendix 3

Links to websites/courses

Free online ESOL Courses:

www.alison.com

All learning on ALISON is free. However in order to provide this free service, extensive advertising is used. This can be distracting but there is an option to study without the interference of advertisements by paying 30 Euros.

ALISON provides a wide-ranging list of courses, including ESOL and English. There is a complete suite of British Council online ESOL courses including pre-intermediate, intermediate and upper intermediate levels. You can also access a course, again provided by the British Council, to prepare for the exam skills required to pass the FCE (First Certificate in English) at intermediate level.

ALISON also provides a variety of English courses, including grammar, tenses and English pronunciation.

www.nln.ac.uk

NLN offers complete online courses from E1 to L2 – click on 'ACL' to find the ESOL courses.

Free online interactive lessons and activities, including interactive listening:

www.esolcourses.com

www.esoluk.co.uk

These sites offer interactive listening lessons, reading exercises, quizzes and games.

www.move-on.org.uk

The move-on website caters for ESOL and English learners.

Free online lessons and activities:

www.anglo-link.com/index.php?/home

Video lessons for ESOL learners.

http://a4esl.org

Quizzes, tests, exercises and puzzles to help you learn English as a Second Language (ESL).

www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish

This site is for ESOL learners.

www.bbc.co.uk/learning/subjects/english.shtml

www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/english

The above BBC sites lean more towards English learners with bite size chunks of learning for GCSE and English. However, there are resources starting from Entry Level 1 on the Skillswise website.

www.englishclub.com/learn-english.htm

In the Learn English section there is a variety of resources for ESOL learners from, lessons, including listening lessons, to games and chat.

www.englishgrammarsecrets.com

English grammar lessons.

www.dictationonline.com

This site offers a selection of dictation. The learner will listen to a passage read at normal speed so that they can listen for gist. After this, each phrase of the passage will be read slowly twice, including punctuation, for the learner to write. The learner can then listen again to check their writing. Finally the written text is shown so that the learner can check for any mistakes.

Glossary

Assessor

An assessor can conduct and evaluate the results of an initial assessment.

Communicative approach to learning

The communicative approach to learning means using real meaning and situations to learn a language. It is based on the language the learner needs in order to function in society. Being able to communicate is more important than using accurate grammar.

ESOL

English for Speakers of Other Languages.

EU

The European Union.

Home language

The first language of an ESOL learner. The language of their home country. See also “mother tongue”.

Initial assessment

An initial assessment is a tool used to find out a learner’s level of English.

Literacy/literate

If a learner is literate in their home language it means that they can read and write in their mother tongue. If a learner is non literate, it means that they can’t.

Model/modelling the answer

If you model an answer, you are giving examples of how to answer a specific question. For example, if you ask a learner, “What time do you finish work?” – You can model the answer by saying, “I finish work at 5pm – do you finish work at 5pm?”

Mother tongue

The first language of an ESOL learner. The language of their home country. See also “home language”.

Provider

An organisation that offers ESOL tuition (usually for a fee to your organisation or to individual learners). This could be a further education college, a training provider or a private school.

Settled community (in the UK)

A community of people living in the UK who come from the same country and speak the same language.

Sign-posting

Being able to refer learners to different organisations for assistance, guidance and information.

Task-based learning approach

Using 'real' language in a real situation or task. For example, the task could be to visit a library and ask about English language learning books.

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