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English in the Workplace: Case Study of a Pilot Program

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The abstract and thesis of Kim Roth Franklin for the Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages were presented May 5, 1995, and accepted by the thesis committee and the department.

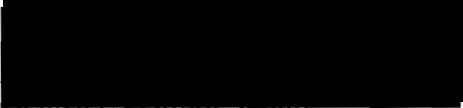COMMITTEE APPROVALS:

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ABSTRACT

An abstract of the thesis of Kim Roth Franklin for the Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages presented May 5, 1995.

Title: English in the Workplace: Case Study of a Pilot Program.

This study is participant observational research focused on a description of an United States Department of Education grant-funded English in the Workplace pilot program. The survey of the literature shows that there is an increasing need to provide educational opportunities for workers who, for various reasons, are not currently being served by traditional education providers.

The study presented here describes a pilot program and asks "How is an English in the Workplace program developed and implemented? What do those characteristics of workplace education programs, as identified in the literature, 'look like' once such a program has been implemented?" The researcher collected data from on-site observation of the classes and staff meetings, interviews, and program final reports and records. The elements that characterize this particular pilot program are common to those described or proscribed in the literature on workplace education. These elements include needs assessment, the physical setting, the participants, the instructional schedule and materials, as well as final evaluation.

This study suggests that employers, by working together with educators, strive to meet the educational needs of employees, specifically, English language instruction, by providing and supporting English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction in the workplace. This study recommends that (1) workplace ESL instructors balance employer and employee needs by considering what the employer and the employees consider the program's purpose to be, (2) instructors supplement a general life-skills curriculum with workplace materials, (3) instructors be trained how to implement an English in the Workplace program, (4) instructors meet with the employees, management, supervisors, and trainers on a regular basis to assess whether the program is meeting the goals of everyone involved in the program.

This study adds to the understanding of workplace education programs by specifically describing the characteristics of a particular English in the Workplace pilot program. However, additional research is needed to better understand the effects of workplace education, not just characteristics. The researcher concludes that future research is needed that examines the potential impact of workplace education programs.

ENGLISH IN THE WORKPLACE: CASE STUDY OF A PILOT PROGRAM

by

KIM ROTH FRANKLIN

A thesis submitted in partial fullfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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in
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

English in the Workplace (EWP) programs are increasing for a number of reasons. This growth is due, in part, to the increasing number of Limited English Proficient (LEP) workers in the workforce. In addition, the increasing interest in English in the Workplace programs is being driven by a perceived literacy crisis and the belief that today's workers do not possess the necessary skills for a changing workplace. According to a number of reports (see <u>Workforce 2000: Work and Workers for the 21st Century</u>, 1987; <u>Business Week</u>, 1988; <u>Workplace Literacy: Reshaping the American Workforce</u>, 1992), the interplay of technological, demographic, and global economic forces is reshaping the workplace in America. First, technology is upgrading the work required in most jobs. Job growth is predicted to be mainly in high-skill occupations which require knowledge that was not necessary 20 years ago. Thus, basic skills levels that formerly were adequate, for example, with assembly line production, are inadequate for employees faced with sophisticated quality control systems and just-in-time production. Second, work is being organized in a new way, changing from old models of assembly-line production to Japanese-style work teams. Third, there is a structural shift in the economy. American industry is moving away from product-based industries to service-based industries. Finally, the demographics of the workforce are changing, as more women and minorities enter the workplace (Johnston & Packer, 1987).

In light of these reports, there is growing concern that today's workers lack the basic skills to cope with the workplace of tomorrow (Lopez-Valadez, 1989; Zemke, 1989; Askov & Aderman, 1991). In response to this increased awareness of the worker literacy issue, employers, unions, and educators have been working together to develop workplace literacy programs. On the surface, the growth in such programs seems to be a good thing. However, many current workplace programs are based on the notion that America's workers are deficient and thus responsible for the failure of American businesses to compete both globally and locally. Hull argues that many current characterizations of literacy at work "constantly emphasize deficits - what people are unable to do, what they lack, how they fail - and the causal relationship assumed between those deficits and people's performance at work" (1993, p. 23). Educators need to be aware of the influence that this deficit perspective may have on employers' perceptions of their workers' abilities; however, it is imperative that educators not adopt this deficit perspective in developing workplace education programs.

In addition to understanding those factors which have influenced the interest in the development and implementation of workplace education programs, it is also important that language educators possess a good understanding of those features which are often characteristic of workplace basic skills programs, as these characteristics also apply to EWP programs. According to Taylor (1994, p. 2), workplace basic skills training is not adult basic education, nor is it a program with pre-packaged materials or solutions. In addition, it is not like sending workers back to school. Finally, such training programs are not usually the entire answer to productivity or quality programs. Rather, workplace

basic skills training is job related, for the purpose of improving job performance and organizational effectiveness. It is also more training than it is education, but utilizes the technologies of both (Taylor, 1994).

As a workplace training program, English in the Workplace differs from other English as a Second Language programs in a number of ways. For example, EWP usually involves the following: (1) a partnership between two or more partners (e.g., management, the union, and the educational provider); (2) an on-site needs assessment, usually conducted by the instructor(s); (3), the development of job-specific learning materials, and (4) an assessment of the participants and the program (Belfiore & Burnaby, 1984; M.Terdal, personal communication, February 1994). In addition, EWP differs from Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL), Adult Basic Education (ABE), and Pre-Vocational English as a Second Language in that EWP is more specific to the general company and the class is usually taught on-site (Burwell, 1990; M. Terdal, personal communication, February 1994).

Although the literature on workplace education offers guidelines for developing and implementing an EWP program, it is unclear what the program, once implemented, "looks" like. In other words, an instructor may know which "tools" to use in creating an EWP program, but still be uncertain how to use the tools to create the end product. By adopting a descriptive case study research approach, I hope to present a clear picture of what one particular EWP program looks like in order to develop a better understanding of this particular area of English language instruction. It is not the intention of this study to prove or disprove any pre-determined hypotheses regarding English in the Workplace

programs. Rather, it is intended to provide a holistic description of those key elements which are considered to be characteristic of English in the workplace. It is expected that this description will uncover areas or issues for further study.

Rationale

The aim of this study is to present a holistic picture of an English in the workplace program. Because EWP is a relatively new field, this type of study is needed to provide professional language educators with a clearer understanding of the key features of an EWP program. If language educators are to work with industry in designing, developing, and promoting EWP programs, then it is essential that they possess a good understanding of those key elements which combine to form the whole of a program. Specifically, language educators need to be aware of the different roles which they may need to assume in a workplace program. As Burwell (1990, p. 61) notes, the instructor's role in an EWP class can be quite different from that of teaching a general or academic ESL class. For example, in addition to teaching, the instructor may also have to act as a consultant. According to Taylor (1994, p. 4), instruction at the worksite differs from the traditional classroom in a number of ways. First, the instructor is often more of a facilitator than an instructor. In this role of facilitator, the instructor is in more of a partnership with the students. There may also be more peer to peer relationships between the instructor and the students, as it is often the students who provide the instructor with information about their jobs and the company culture.

Another difference between worksite instruction and the traditional classroom involves the instructional materials. Instructors in EWP programs are

often required to design work-related materials particular to the specific company. Although the instructor is not required to know everything about the workplace, to use such materials effectively, the instructor must have a good understanding of the particular work processes, as well as the company structure and culture. Finally, if the client (i.e., a decision maker representing the employer or union) is unfamiliar with the processes involved in language acquisition (e.g., the client believes that a worker is "lazy" because he or she has not yet learned English), then the instructor might be called upon to tactfully educate the client about the nature of language learning. As in any business, the bottom line is to "keep the customer happy." A client may expect unreasonable gains in language in a short period of time. To avoid such misunderstandings , it is essential that the instructor be well-informed about the language learning process and be able to communicate this clearly to all parties involved.

In addition to assuming different roles, an EWP instructor must also possess an understanding of business culture. Business is ultimately driven by profit; education, on the other hand, is often driven by less tangible aims. According to Smith (1989, p.14), there are a number of differences between business and education. The business culture places a value on practical answers; therefore, problems are analyzed to find an applicable solution. The academic culture, on the other hand, is more concerned with theory; therefore, experimenting, searching, and testing are valued. In addition, business is a world of action. Academic culture, on the other hand, is a "world of ideas...[a] 'let's study, talk, think about it ' culture" (Smith, 1989, p. 14). Thus, the EWP instructor must possess the flexibility to move between academic culture and business culture.

Another key feature of EWP is the fact that the language educator must consider and balance the needs of both the employer and the workers. In the workplace, both management and the employees are customers. In some cases, the needs of the employer will not match the needs of the workers, and vice versa. It is also crucial that the language educator be familiar with and skilled in conducting needs assessments, developing relevant course materials, and evaluating both the program and the students' progress. Finally, it is essential that language educators be aware of the constraints involved in designing and implementing an EWP program. Without this awareness and background knowledge, even the most experienced ESL instructor might find himself or herself being expected to produce unreasonable results.

Another rationale for this type of study is the hope that such studies could be used to make industry more aware of the existence and benefits of English in the Workplace programs. As was noted in the literature review, there are a great number of employers who believe that their workforce is unprepared to deal with the changing demands of the workplace. As a result, more employers are interested in implementing workplace literacy training. However, the relative paucity of such programs may be due to employers believing that such endeavors are too costly or not designed to meet their specific needs. It is hoped that studies such as this one could be used to demonstrate to potential clients that EWP is a potentially cost-effective investment. Instead of hiring and training new people, it makes more sense to invest in those workers who already know their jobs but who could benefit from language instruction.

Finally, I believe that this type of holistic research can contribute to our understanding of adult learners. This study may also have implications for teaching pedagogy. Many of the limited English speakers in the workplace do not have the time or energy to attend English classes. Therefore, what and how much is known about this population? Many of these supposedly limited speakers of English manage to survive and thrive without language instruction. How does this population survive with limited English skills? How do those who have acquired English without formal instruction manage to do so? Is learning in the workplace different from learning in school? If so, how? I see the workplace as a virtually untapped source of data for increasing our understanding of adult learners and the learning process. What is discovered in the workplace could have important implications for teaching. This belief is echoed by Hull, in her discussion of workplace literacy:

> Rather than assuming that structures and practices for learning literacy must be imported from school-based models of teaching and learning, we might do well to study workplaces and communities to see what kinds of indigenous structures and practices might be supported and built upon. What we learn may enrich our school-based versions of literacy and instruction as well. (1993, p. 41)

GUIDING QUESTIONS

<u>Introduction</u>

The research methodology for this particular study is a descriptive case study. This method was chosen as it is the objective of this study to provide an overall description of an English in the workplace program. According to Yin, "A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon

within its real-life context; when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (1984, p. 24). In this particular study, the "bounded system" (Nunan, 1992, p. 76) is the pilot program, from its inception to its completion. This naturalistic, subjective, and process-oriented study falls within the qualitative paradigm, as defined by Larson-Freeman and Long (1991, p. 13). However, as Larson-Freeman and Long note (p. 17), due to the "observer paradox" it is questionable whether data gathered in observation are indeed natural. In addition, the internal validity of this study may be questionable because the data are subject to the bias of the researcher. As an observer, the researcher must determine what it is that will be observed; thus, the accuracy of the information depends on the objectivity of the researcher. As Nunan (p. 80) notes, internal validity of a case study is of particular concern because of the question of whether the researcher is really observing what he or she thinks he or she is observing. Finally, the external validity of this study may be weak. English in the workplace programs are often specifically tailored to meet the needs of the particular client. Thus, it may be that the information gathered in this study does not have any general applicability. Yin, however, argues that the perceived threat to external validity in case study research is based on a false analogy with survey research:

"This analogy to samples and universes is incorrect when dealing with case studies. This is because survey research relies on statistical generalization, whereas case study research ...relies on analytical generalization" (1984, p. 39). However, in this particular study, it is not the intention of the researcher to make broad generalizations; rather, this study is intended to provide a description of one particular case.

According to Spindler (1982), there are two important aspects of participant observation research. First, Spindler maintains that hypotheses emerge from the work. Unlike other types of research, which are based on research questions, participant observation is based on guiding questions. While it is important for the researcher to have background knowledge of the subject as well as possible initial questions to investigate, the observations guide theory development. Second, instruments should not be designed prior to observations because the observations should guide the research, not instruments. To avoid predetermined results of limited responses, the researcher should avoid designing observational instruments or surveys before the investigation of the study subject.

The requirements for participant observational research are demanding because the researcher must be knowledgeable about the subject while at the same time remaining open to acquiring an insider's perspective of what is being observed. In this type of qualitative research, the researcher, relying on observation, interpretation, and communication skills, becomes the primary instrument. According to Yin (1984, pp.21-22), the amount of time required and the amount of data generated are massive. Despite the limitations of participant observation research, this particular design seems to be the most appropriate to the study under investigation.

Guiding Questions

The initial questions which guided this study were: How is an English in the Workplace program developed and implemented? What do those characteristics of workplace education programs, as identified in the literature,

'look like' once such a program has been implemented? These questions guide the collection of data used to describe a pilot English in the Workplace program. To answer these questions, I examine the following sub-questions, which direct my search for a complete description of this particular pilot program:

I. The Program

    A. What is the impetus for developing and implementing this program?

    B. What are the program goals and by whom were the goals determined?

    C. How is the program supported and promoted?

II. The Partners, Stakeholders, and Participants

    A. Who are the partners in the program and what is their involvement with the program?

    B. Who are the stakeholders and what is their involvement in the program?

    C. Who are the participants in the program and what is their involvement?

        i. How are the participants selected for participation?

        ii. What motivates participation in the classes?

III. Needs Assessment

    A. Who conducts the needs assessment and what type of instruments are used?

    B. Is assessment an on-going process?

    C. How are the results of the needs assessment incorporated into the program design?

IV. Curriculum and Materials

    A. Who designs the curriculum and materials?

    B. On what theoretical foundation is the curriculum built?

    C. What types of materials are used (e.g., general ESL materials, work-related materials, etc.)?

    D. How do the materials meet the needs of a multi-level class?

V. The Classroom

    A. Where and when do the classes take place?

    B. What is the physical environment of the classroom?

    C. What is the relationship between the teachers and students?

    D. What is the relationship between the students?

    E. How is class time structured?

    F. Who controls the structure of the class?

VI. Program Evaluation

    A. Who evaluates the program?

    B. How is the program evaluated?

    C. What areas of the program are selected for evaluation?

    D. For whom is the program evaluation intended?

    E. What are the results of the final program evaluation?

DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

The following is a list of definitions for terms used in this paper:

ESL: English as a second language. This term can refer to those speakers or learners of English whose native language is not English. This term also refers to English language instruction for non-native speakers or learners of English.

ESP: English for specific purposes. ESP is language teaching designed for specific learning and language use purposes. ESP is goal directed; for example, students may be enrolled in an ESP class because they need English for specific study or work purposes. ESP courses, which are based on a needs analysis, emphasize specific vocabulary and discourse styles (e.g., medical terminology).

EWP: English in the workplace. In the literature, EWP is often used synonymously with VESL. In this study, EWP is the term that will be used to describe those programs which are specifically designed for a specific group of participants at a specific company.

VESL: Vocational English as a second language. VESL may include either pre-vocational or vocational training which is designed to provide learners with the necessary English skills to participate in job-training programs.

Academic ESL: ESL instruction designed to meet the needs of students entering or reentering the academic community at the high school, community college, or university level; EAP: English for academic purposes.

Comprehensive ESL: Multidimensional ESL instruction that includes life skills, vocational, and academic components

LEP: Limited English proficient. The use of this term in this paper is not intended to imply that non-native speakers of English have limited linguistic capacity. Rather, the term is used to refer to any person for whom English is not the native language and who has not yet mastered English in everyday conversational interaction.

Life Skills ESL: ESL instruction specifically addressing the assessed needs of students in community settings where they must be able to function in order to manage their daily existence; sometimes referred to as "Survival ESL"

Needs Analysis: A systematic process for determining and ordering goals, measuring needs, and deciding on priorities for action (Carnevale et al, 1990, G.3).

Participants: Participants are those employees who receive instruction or educational services through the workplace education program (Manly, 1993, p.i).

Partners: Partners are responsible for initiating and maintaining a workplace education program. Typically, workplace education partnerships involve at least one decision-maker representing the employer (e.g., a manager or supervisor); the workforce (a labor representative if it is a unionized workforce; or an employee representative, if the workforce is not unionized), and the education partner (e.g., a representative from an adult education program) (Manly, 1993, p.i).

Stakeholders: Stakeholders are individuals with a vested interest in the success of the workplace education program. Typically, workplace education stakeholders include: management-labor-education partners, program participants, and the instructors (Manly, 1993 p.i).

Traditional Classroom: An instructional situation in which the students are generally seated individually behind desks or tables facing the front of the room, where the instructor operates behind a desk or lectern with a blackboard, overhead projector, and other audio-visual aids.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The workplace of today is changing, due to a number of forces. First, technological advances have resulted in jobs becoming increasingly complex. Second, the nature of the workplace is being organized in a new way. Finally, the demographics of the workplace are changing, as more women and non-native speakers of English enter the workforce. As a result, today's workers and employers are faced with new challenges. To meet the challenges of a changing workplace, workers are being asked to acquire new or different skills. However, media reports of a "literacy crisis" in America have resulted in a growing concern that today's workers will not be able to meet the challenges of this changing workplace. This perceived literacy crisis has been an impetus for the increased interest in workplace education programs, especially in the area of English in the Workplace (EWP). This review of the literature on English in the Workplace begins by examining those factors that have led to the growth of workplace education programs. In the literature on EWP programs, much of the focus is on workplace literacy. Therefore, different definitions and perceptions of workplace literacy are also discussed. Finally, definitions of English in the Workplace, different approaches towards teaching EWP, and key features of EWP programs are discussed.

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE GROWTH OF WORKPLACE EDUCATION

According to numerous sources (see Zemke, 1989; Sarmiento & Kay, 1990; McGroarty & Scott, 1993), the current interest in basic skills and worker literacy is largely due to changes in the American economy, which are altering employment patterns. These changes are the result of three forces: (1) technology is upgrading the work required in most jobs, (2) job growth is predicted to to be mainly in high-skill occupations which require knowledge that was not necessary 20 years ago, and (3) work is being organized in a new way, changing from models of assembly-line production to high performance work organization (Business Week, 1988; S. Copeland & H. Miles, personal communication, April 4, 1994; L. Shore, personal communication, April 4, 1994). A high performance work organization is a way of structuring work that "respects and encourages the full participation of workers in all aspects of an organization (Oregon Works, 1993, p. 13). According to Oregon Works (p. 13), high performance work organization is replacing scientific management, also known as the Taylor model, which was suited to the mass production needs of early 20th century. In the Taylor model, complex jobs are broken down into many small, routine tasks that call for a handful of managers at the top doing the decision making, and many low-skilled workers performing the routine tasks. This is a centralized approach which focuses on low cost, long production runs, and a hierarchical organizational structure (Oregon Works, p.14). In contrast, high performance work organization is characterized by its commitment to customers and quality. These goals are achieved through "flexible processes and teams, shared responsibility for quality, and high-skilled workers who are given ongoing

training and responsibility for decision making" (<u>Oregon Works</u>, p. 13). A similar

description of the changing nature of the workplace can be found in <u>Workplace</u>

<u>Literacy: Reshaping the American Workforce</u>:

> An unprecedented interplay of technological, demographic, and
> global economic forces is reshaping the nature of work in America
> and redefining the American workplace...At the same time, a
> structural shift in the economy is occurring, away from producing
> goods and toward service-based industries. (1992, p. 3)

<u>Workforce 2000: Work and Workers for the 21st Century</u> (Johnston & Packer,

1987), the widely-disseminated and quoted Hudson Institute report, predicts that

the number of jobs will increase by 25 million by the year 2000, mostly in

management, administrative support, sales and service. These new jobs will

require higher levels of education than are required in current jobs. Basic skills

levels that formerly were adequate, for example, with assembly line production,

are inadequate for employees faced with sophisticated quality control systems,

just-in-time production (as opposed to mass production), team-based work, and

participatory management practices (<u>Workplace Literacy</u>, 1992; N. Chally,

personal communication, March 28, 1994; H. Miles, personal communication,

April 4, 1994). In addition, <u>Workforce 2000</u> reports that the demographics of the

workforce are changing, as more women and minorities enter the workplace

(1987, pp. 58-59). The skill levels of jobs is predicted to increase substantially;

however, the workforce is expected to be increasingly dominated by entrants

who possess low skill levels. This has resulted in a widely-held belief that

American industry is faced with a "skills mismatch" crisis (e.g., <u>Business Week</u>,

1988; Zemke, 1989; Carnevale, Gainer, & Meltzer, 1990). Although the extent

and impact of such changes has been questioned (e.g., Mishel & Teixeira, 1991),

much of the discourse on workplace literacy continues to focus on perceived

basic skills deficiencies in the workplace. For example, Zemke (1989) asserts that many workers lack the basic skills to cope with the workplace of today or tomorrow. Askov and Aderman (1991) assert that a gap has emerged between job requirements and workers' literacy skills.

In response to this increased awareness of the worker literacy 'gap,' employers, unions, and educators have been working together to develop workplace literacy programs (Sarmiento & Kay, 1990; McGroarty & Scott, 1993). On the surface, the growth in such programs seems to be promising. Critics (e.g., Hull, 1993; Shore, 1994), however, argue that the discourse on workplace literacy is generally influenced by a deficit perspective, which assumes that America's workers are deficient and thus responsible for the failure of American business to compete both globally and locally. According to Hull (1993), "many current characterizations of literacy, of literacy at work, and of workers as illiterate and therefore deficient are inaccurate, incomplete, and misleading" (1993, p. 21). Many supposedly functionally illiterate individuals successfully manage their job duties (see Cohn, 1993); therefore, it would seem that more research is needed to determine the actual extent and impact of this "skills mismatch."

LITERACY IN THE WORKPLACE

Definitions

When it comes to defining adult literacy, there is an apparent lack of consensus in the literature. According to Taber,

> Between and even within cultures, literacy has disparate meanings.
> To some educators, the definition must depend on a determination
> of need and function within society. Others advance a more

traditional view, tying the concept of literacy to strict standards.
(1987, p. 458)

The functional view of literacy is linked to relative definitions of literacy, in which literacy is measured by the individual's ability to fulfill everyday functions. In contrast, absolute definitions of literacy measure literacy according to years of schooling, achievement on standardized or criterion referenced tests, or demonstrations of a defined set of competencies (Taber, 1987). While absolute definitions of literacy are gradually becoming more functional in nature, definitions which focus on the applications and uses of literacy seem to be gaining wider acceptance, particularly in the workplace (see Taber, 1987; Cohn, 1993).

In a discussion of literacy, Sarmiento and Kay (1990) assert that absolute definitions of literacy do not reflect or measure the literacy requirements of today's increasingly complex and technical workplace. In the United States of 100 years ago, one was considered literate if he could simply sign his name. However, in today's complex world, there is no simple way to define literacy. Sarmiento and Kay also note that discussion of adult literacy is further complicated because "many education researchers believe that it's no longer useful to set literacy standards based on grade or reading level. These experts argue that any single literacy measure or score is too simple" (1990, p. 18). Such single literacy measures like grade-level scores are seen as inadequate because they do not take into account a person's background knowledge. For example, a person enrolled in a M.A. TESOL program might score at a high grade-level when reading materials about teaching pedagogy. However, the same person might have difficulty if he or she were tested on ability to read and interpret technical material related to nuclear physics. Thus, literacy is not an "all or nothing" skill

(Sarmiento & Kay, 1990). Rather, being literate involves many different skills. In addition, an individual may perform the same skills at different levels, depending on the specific situation and prior knowledge about the task. Finally, it is equally misleading to measure adult literacy with achievement tests, because such tests often do not measure the skills adults actually use to function in their jobs.

Another definition of literacy has been proposed by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in 1985, in which literacy is defined as "Using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential" (Sarmiento & Kay, 1990). In defining literacy, NAEP recognizes three distinct areas of knowledge and skills: (1) prose literacy, which involves understanding and using information from texts; (2) document literacy, which involves locating and using information from documents, such as bus schedules, maps, and tables; (3) quantitative literacy, which involves applying numerical operations to information contained in printed materials, such as order forms and advertisements.

Similarly, the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) supports a broad definition of literacy that encompasses different groups of skills. According to the ASTD's 1988 report, <u>Workplace Basics: The Skills Employers Want</u>, employers want workers to be competent in the following seven basic skill groups (Carnevale, Gainer, & Meltzer, 1988, p. 9):

1. *foundation* - knowing how to learn
2. *competence* - reading, writing, and computation
3. *communication* - listening and oral communication
4. *adaptability* - creative thinking and problem-solving

5. *personal management* - self esteem, goal setting, motivation, personal and career development

6. *group effectiveness* - interpersonal skills, negotiation, and teamwork

7. *influence* - organizational effectiveness and leadership

This definition of workplace literacy entails far more than the traditional three R's of reading, writing, and computation. Similarly, Askov and Aderman define workplace literacy as "written and spoken language, math, and thinking skills that trainees and workers use to perform job tasks" (1991, p. 16). Thus, especially in the workplace, "literacy" is often viewed as a set of discrete skills, measured according to an individual's ability to perform a wide variety of basic skills.

Perceptions

The different stakeholders' perceptions of literacy will influence the design of a workplace literacy program. Earlier, the deficit perspective towards literacy was discussed, in which a causal relationship is assumed between workers' deficits and performance at work. This deficit perspective emphasizes what people cannot do. From a deficit perspective, education is seen as a means for remediating the learners' weaknesses (Isserlis, 1991).

Another perception of literacy is the belief that greater literacy will automatically lead to better jobs, increased worker performance, and individual self-betterment. This perception of literacy has led to greater support of learner-centered education, with its focus on addressing the needs of the whole person. The basic tenet of learner-centered, or worker-centered learning is the belief that

an education program should build on and emphasize the skills and strengths that workers already possess (see Sarmiento & Kay, 1990; Isserlis, 1991; Shore, 1994). In the process, it is assumed that workers will gain greater control over their lives. Although such an approach seems better suited to meeting the needs of the worker than a purely functional context approach, the reality is that participatory programs are not widely in place (see Jurmo, 1991). While such an approach seems laudatory, critics challenge that this approach builds on false promises, because it is largely based on the perception that literacy is a source of change (see Auerbach, 1993; Hull, 1993). For example, Hull argues that this perception is a myth because "research on the consequences of literacy tells us that there are myriad complex forces - political, economic, social, personal - that can either foster or hinder literacy's potential to bring about change" (1993, p. 30). These criticisms suggest that literacy education should not be promoted by promising learners that greater literacy will automatically improve their lives; however, it would seem that greater literacy could provide the learners with a tool for perhaps gaining more control over their lives.

A third assumption underlying popular beliefs about literacy is that the basic skills deficit of workers costs businesses and taxpayers billions of dollars (e.g., Business Week, 1988; Zemke, 1989). While such reports are alarming, it seems that the American worker is being used as a scapegoat to explain the country's economic "demise." Indeed, there may be other explanations which are not related to workers' basic skills (see Cohn, 1993; Hull, 1993). For example, out-dated machinery and poor management might also contribute to losses in profits and productivity.

In addition to the common workplace view that literacy is the answer to solving the problem of a deficient workforce, another perception of literacy is the belief that literacy can be defined as a set of discrete skills. This has led to a focus on functional literacy. Cohn (1993) suggests that this narrow view of literacy ignores the social context of literacy. Also, much of the literature on workplace literacy aims to depict the general adult population, while largely ignoring the needs of limited English proficient adults. In the case of limited English proficient adults, problems with literacy are compounded by a real or perceived lack of English skills. Thus, the social context of literacy seems to play an even more crucial role in the situation of limited English proficient adults. In her study of limited English proficient adults enrolled in an English in the Workplace class, Cohn discovered that

> ...[these] individuals often accomplish literacy functions far beyond their individual ability to decode the literacy materials...The results of this study show that people can be "functionally literate" in their workplace - that is, they can accomplish many literacy functions -without being able to read beyond a very minimal level. To do so requires using social networks and interpersonal relationships extensively. (1993, p. 101)

Another discussion of the social nature of adult ESL literacy, as well as a discussion of the issues surrounding adult literacy and the complexity and variety of the literacy-related needs of adult immigrants, is presented in Klassen and Burnaby's (1993) study of Canadian adult immigrants who are new users of English with little literacy experience. Statistics, while providing an overview of this group, say nothing about the realities and needs of the individual learners. Therefore, Klassen and Burnaby suggest the need for a qualitative approach that takes into consideration the social context of literacy. Klassen and Burnaby's assertion that qualitative studies are needed to improve our understanding of the

literacy-related needs of adult learners is echoed by Gillespie (1993), who suggests that more naturalistic approaches might lead to new insights into the process of becoming literate from the perspective of the adult learners.

Klassen and Burnaby (1993), in their discussion of a Toronto-based case study of LEP adults, found that these adults rely on both a network of contacts and a repertoire of strategies to manage in everyday contexts. Similar results are reported in Cohn's (1993) study. In addition, it was discovered in the Toronto-based study that many of these adults place a great value on developing native language literacy, which they believe would help them in later developing English literacy. Guth (1993) notes that there are a number of programs which have approached literacy by providing literacy training in the learners' native language before trying to teach literacy in English. While developing first language literacy has a number of benefits for the adult learner, financial costs and limited resources make this an unfeasible goal for most workplace programs.

A third important finding of the Toronto-based study is the fact that many of these adults, particularly the women, feel a sense of stigma and ostracism as a result of their illiteracy. Klassen and Burnaby suggest that for this group, "it is the experience of feeling stigmatized that defines literacy, not an inability to function in English" (1993, p. 391). Others (e.g., Gillespie, 1993; Jones, 1991) have also noted the damaging effects of the stigma attached to illiteracy and the association of illiteracy with incompetency. Both native and non-native speakers of English seem to suffer from this sense of stigma. For example, Jones discusses how the term "illiteracy" is seen by many as pejorative:

> The starkest example of this was exhibited at a manufacturing firm
> where a wildcat strike was narrowly averted after a television
> feature about this company's progressive literacy program. The term

illiteracy had never been used in describing the program to
participants, who felt humiliated that they had been portrayed on
television as illiterates, 'real dummies'. (1991, p. 36)

This sense of incompetency and a lack of self esteem can be affective "red lights"
which may impede the learners' progress in literacy training. Therefore, program
designers and coordinators must be sensitive to the participants' attitudes towards
literacy.

APPROACHES TOWARDS WORKPLACE LITERACY TRAINING

In designing workplace literacy programs, a common guiding principle is
the belief that there are major differences between school and workplace literacy.
This assumption is based on the belief that school tasks do not necessarily reflect
the real demands on people in adult life (see Cohn, 1993). In addition, it is
believed that the purpose of reading at school differs from the purpose of reading
at work. Drew and Mikulecky (1982, p.2) suggest that workers "read to do"; i.e.,
they typically read to find information to do a task. In contrast, students in
school "read to learn." Thus, Drew and Mikulecky argue that these different
reading purposes require different strategies and that "traditional academic
methods for teaching reading, computation and problem-solving have failed to
give adults the basic skills they need to function on the job. Civilian and military
research indicates that general literacy training is of limited value for the
workplace" (1982, p. 2). Others (e.g., Philippi, 1988; U.S. Dept. of Education,
1992) provide similar arguments for distinguishing between school and
workplace literacy.

Based on this belief that generic instruction (i.e., academic basic skills education) does not improve job performance, a functional-context view of literacy education, with a strong emphasis on literacy task analysis, is an increasingly popular approach towards teaching literacy in the workplace. Such an approach is based on the premise that teaching literacy in a job context is more relevant for workers and therefore more motivating. According to Drew and Mikulecky, this approach is founded on a "growing body of research which indicates that people learn more rapidly and are able to retain more of what they learn when job-related materials and tasks are used in instruction" (1988, p.1). Supporters of a job literacy approach believe that the job literacy approach allows people to draw on their work and life experience so that they can more easily make the connection between what they know and what they need to know (e.g., Drew & Mikulecky, 1988; Philippi, 1988; Carnevale et al, 1990; U.S. Dept. of Education, 1992). The job literacy approach is based on literacy task analysis. Literacy task analysis emphasizes analyzing the aspects of job tasks which require reading, computation, and problem solving. Literacy task analysis is conducted by interviewing and observing the workers on the job, gathering the printed materials workers read to do their job, and determining the thought processes used by competent workers as they use these materials to solve work-related problems. Literacy for the job is then broken down into specific competencies, e.g., "The worker will read and follow correct operating procedures"; "The worker will be able to fill out a purchase order."

Although the rationale for literacy task analysis is supported by sound research, it is a very time-consuming and costly procedure. Another disadvantage, noted by Cohn (1993), is that the literacy task analysis approach

views literacy as a set of discrete skills, with a tendency to ignore the social aspect of literacy. Finally, Hull (1993), in describing a study on the effectiveness of a workplace literacy program which was based on a functional context approach in which literacy instruction was linked to job content, observes that many of the employees disliked the instruction because they objected to being taught things which they already felt they knew. Although Hull is not against work-related literacy programs, she does argue that we need to

> rethink the nature of the instruction we imagine. As we rush headlong to design curricula and programs and to measure reading rates...we pay precious little attention to how people experience curricula and...for what purposes they choose and need to engage in reading and writing. (1993, p. 40)

In other words, the needs, desires and abilities of the worker are often overlooked in the functional context program design process.

ENGLISH IN THE WORKPLACE

Definitions of English in the Workplace

In discussions of workplace ESL programs, there is little consensus in the use of terms used to describe ESL instruction in the workplace. Robinson (1991), in a discussion of the 'family tree' of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), distinguishes between English for Occupation Purposes (EOP), which involves work-related training, and English for Academic Purposes (EAP). According to Robinson (1991, p. 3), EOP can include pre-experience, simultaneous, or post-experience English language instruction. Guglielmino refers to "job-site ESL" (1991, p. 67). Wrigley describes one particular work-site ESL program as a

"workplace literacy" project (1993, p. 16). Belfiore and Burnaby use the term "English in the Workplace" to refer

> primarily to ESL courses which focus on communication in the workplace combined with varying degrees of general ESL/ orientation information. The learners are already employed and although the course may not be offered exactly at their worksite, it does address specific and current communication problems. (1984, v)

In the following discussion, "EWP" is used to refer to those types of workplace education programs that fit the model proposed by Belfiore and Burnaby (1984).

English in the Workplace Models

English in the Workplace programs generally fit into three different types of models (Isserlis, 1991). The *workplace-specific* model focuses on the language and literacy skills needed for specific jobs at specific worksites. This type of model, which is tailored to meet the specific needs of a specific sponsor, can be very costly and time-consuming; however, such a model is typically seen by the sponsor as meeting his or her needs (N. Chally, personal communication, March 1994). A second type of model is the *workplace-general* model, which focuses on more general work-related communication skills, such as seeking clarification, communicating one's needs, and cross-cultural communication. A third model is the *workplace cluster* model, in which a number of jobs are clustered together according to common functions or skills. None of these models is incompatible with the others; indeed, depending on the needs of the sponsor and the participants, it may be that a program for non-native speakers will be both workplace-specific and workplace-general (Isserlis, 1991).

APPROACHES TO TEACHING ENGLISH IN THE WORKPLACE

Belfiore and Burnaby state that "English in the Workplace classes exist because management, the union or the workers have recognized a communication-related problem" (1984, p. 1). In addition, English in the Workplace programs have developed as a response to the immediate language needs of working LEP adults, who, due to a number of reasons, have limited access to ESL classes or have found that general ESL classes do not meet their needs (Applebaum, 1984; La Perla, 1988). As in general ESL programs, EWP programs include a variety of approaches. One type of approach can be characterized as "work-centered" (McGroarty, 1993; McGroarty & Scott, 1993). In the work-centered approach, language instruction focuses on the specific language needed in the workplace. This approach generally reflects a competency-based approach, in which competencies are defined within the workplace context. Critics, however, argue that a limitation of such competency-based, work-centered programs is that they ignore the full communication needs of the workers (e.g., McGroarty & Scott, 1993).

An alternative to the work-centered approach goes by a number of names: "participatory," "collaborative," "learner-centered," or "worker-centered" (see Jurmo, 1991). In this type of approach, the program is developed around workers' needs. Workers, often through their unions, are active participants in determining the program design. Proponents of the worker-centered approach argue that it is a more holistic approach, which considers the participants' full social identity, rather than focusing on just their work identity (Sarmiento & Kay, 1990; McGroarty & Scott, 1993). As a result, worker-centered programs try to fulfill

different kinds of learning objectives, from occupational advancement to self-improvement. The benefits of such an approach, according to Sarmiento and Kay, are that

> As workers meet their personal educational goals, they'll also
> prepare themselves for other life situations....A worker-centered
> approach does more than help workers acquire new skills....It helps
> them gain confidence in their individual and collective abilities and
> to assume greater control over their lives. (1990, p. 25)

The type of approach, or combination of approaches, adopted for an English in the Workplace program will depend on a number of factors. If a program sponsor is seeking a "quick fix" to a perceived communication or basic skills problem, then it is likely that a work-centered approach will be adopted. A work-centered approach can often be tailored to meet the specific needs of the particular sponsor. Extensive union involvement would probably result in a worker-centered approach.

PARTNERSHIPS

In the development of ESL instructional programs in the workplace, one particular challenge in funding, planning, and implementing an EWP program is the creation of a successful coalition among the different partners (McGroarty, 1993; Wrigley, 1993). Partnership for a program can originate in a number of ways. For example, a union may initiate a program on behalf of the workers, or a company may initiate a program in order to meet certain goals. No matter how the partnership is originated, it is essential that the partners trust each other and work together towards the same goal (Carnevale et al, 1990; Lewe, 1991). According to Carnevale et al (1990), an effective coalition must include

representatives from all partners, which may include the union, the employer, and an educational institution. In such partnerships, the instructor is often the crucial link, as he or she is in contact with the participants, the educational institution, and other partners (Belfiore & Burnaby, 1984; Kinsey, 1991; McGroarty & Scott, 1993). Lewe (1991) asserts that it is important to strengthen the partnership by (1) establishing the nature of the partnership at the outset, (2) having a common desire to meet the same goal, (3) developing a clear understanding of the processes needed to undertake that goal, and (4) maintaining open communication channels. Finally, because many of the parties involved in the partnership are used to making independent decisions, flexibility is an essential factor. Thus, such programs require that each partner be willing to make mutual efforts to adapt and compromise (McGroarty, 1993).

SUPPORT

Although an employer may understand the problems of the LEP worker, this will generally not be the employer's main motivation for implementing an English in the Workplace class. Rather, the employer's main concern is with profit and production. Thus, the language educator must gain the employer's full support by making the employer aware of the link between communication and the effect this has on production, job performance, and job flexibility (Richer, 1982). In addition to the employer, it is necessary to gain support from management and from the participants. The management, supervisors, and the workforce must be supportive of the program, with active commitment and involvement of all stakeholders (Sauve, 1982; La Perla, 1988; Carnevale,Gainer, & Meltzer, 1990;

Isserlis, 1991; Peirce, Harper, & Burnaby, 1993). Alamprese (1993) asserts that the fit of the instructional program to the workplace and the types of organizational support that are given to the participants influence the ultimate success of a workplace program. Alamprese argues that in workplace ESL classes, support from both senior management and from the workers' immediate supervisors is particularly important. The support of the front-line supervisors is essential because it is these supervisors who can provide the workers with tasks that require the use and practice of those skills learned in a workplace class.

In addition to organizational support, financial support is also essential. According to McGroarty (1993), most workplace language programs are funded by some combination of public-agency, private employer, and possibly the union or community-based organizations. Support can also be in the form of providing the classroom space or paying for materials. A final type of support involves the incentives which are offered to the workers to participate in the program. In some cases, a company might pay the participants for the time spent in class. The more common type of renumeration is to pay the employees for half the class time, with employees volunteering their time for the remaining half (Belfiore & Burnaby, 1984). If employees are given release time or are compensated in some way for their participation, it is more likely that they will attend the class regularly (Belfiore & Burnaby, 1984; Peirce, Harper, & Burnaby, 1993).

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Each organization has its own unique needs. In addition, each organization has its own corporate culture (Isserlis, 1991; Waugh,1991). Because

of this diversity, a needs assessment of the particular worksite is often cited as the most critical phase of any workplace education program (Sauve, 1982; Belfiore & Burnaby, 1984; Isserlis et al,1988; La Perla, 1988; Carnevale et al, 1990). J. Stenson (personal communication, April 18, 1994) defines needs assessment as the research or diagnostic phase upon which training is based. A needs assessment is the first step in the instructional design process. The advantages of a needs assessment are that it can be used to identify needs, build participant commitment, generate support from management, and provide information for evaluation (Stenson, 1994). Typically, the techniques used in conducting a needs assessment include a tour of the site and interviews with prospective learners and representatives of the sponsoring organizations (the employer, management, and the union, if there is one). A visit to the site is crucial for gaining an understanding of the working environment and the workplace culture. An understanding of the organization's values, beliefs, and codes of expected behavior provides the instructor with critical information for knowing how to work successfully with the organization (see Ludeman, 1991;Waugh, 1991; N. Chally, personal communication, March 28, 1994; J. Stenson, personal communication, April 25, 1994).

In addition to observations of the worksite and analysis of the organization, a needs assessment may include surveys, questionnaires, observation of the workers, language assessment, and the collection of the work-related materials (Belfiore & Burnaby, 1984; Carnevale et al, 1990; Waugh, 1991). Once these data have been collected, the next step is to analyze the data. This is a crucial step in determining who the learners are, what they already know, what the identified (or unidentified) needs of the organization are, and what the most

urgent needs are. The results of this analysis provide the basis for determining the content of the program (Belfiore & Burnaby, 1984; Carnevale et al, 1990; Isserlis, 1991; Waugh, 1991; J. Stenson, personal communication, April 18, 1994).

PROGRAM CONTENT

It is generally accepted that the program content should be derived from the results of the needs assessment (Bell, 1982; Belfiore & Burnaby, 1984; Carnevale et al, 1990; Isserlis, 1991). However, there is disagreement as to what the content of the program should be. Some researchers and curriculum designers assert that job-related language training is the most effective and efficient solution to meeting the communicative needs of the workers (see Cruz, Berger, Chertock, Schrage, & Weaver, [no date]; Applebaum, 1984); others (e.g., Isserlis, 1991; McGroarty & Scott, 1993; Peirce et al,1993) argue that a program should address not only the communication needs of the workplace but also general communication needs. Whether the training is linked to communication for the job or for wider communication, the most common type of curriculum seems to be the functional curriculum (Applebaum, 1984), with an emphasis on providing the participants with specific job-related language. In contrast to the argument in support of equipping the workers with specific knowledge (e.g., it costs less and takes less time), supporters of worker-centered education (e.g., Sarmiento & Kay, 1990; Pharness, 1991) advocate educating the whole person rather than providing training in specific skills, arguing that this more general educational

approach may result in the workers learning how to learn in order to pursue their own interests.

If a program's content is going to center on the language used on the job, it is important to distinguish between work-oriented and worker-oriented language. Prince (1984) distinguishes between work-oriented language, which includes job-specific terminology, and worker-oriented language, which includes generic language skills such as clarifying and confirming instruction, asking questions, and describing. Once this language has been identified, activities which incorporate this language can be identified. Suggestions include the use of work-simulated activities which focus on appropriate communication (Gage, 1984). This type of activity could include both work-and worker-oriented language.

In determining the content of a course, it is essential that the instructor balance the needs of the workers and the employer. For example, an employer might insist on job-specific content, while the workers might want less specific content. In this case, the instructor will have to try to reach a compromise between the parties. The instructor may also have to ask him/herself, "For whom am I teaching?" L. Shore (personal communication, April 11, 1994) argues that it is important that the instructor consider this in determining the content of a program.

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

To recruit employees for training, the first step is to gain the approval and support of management, supervisors, and the union. Supervisors' support is especially important to create motivation and encouragement for the employees.

It is important that supervisors reinforce what is being taught (<u>REEP '90</u>, 1990; Alamprese, 1993). Another important element is to make the employees aware of the program by actively promoting and advertising the program. Peirce et al (1993) discovered that one reason for the high number of non-participants in a particular EWP program was the lack of promotion given to the course; therefore, Peirce et al suggest that an EWP program should be actively promoted in the workplace through posters, handouts, and notices written in the native languages of the workers. Similar suggestions for actively promoting the EWP program are found in REEP '90 (1990) and Belfiore and Burnaby (1984).

In order to retain the workers enrolled in the EWP program, it is important to schedule the program so that it does not conflict with the workers' work or home commitments. Peirce et al (1993) found that the the best solution to this time constraint was to schedule a class after hours. By scheduling the class after hours, the workers do not have to worry about lost production or relinquishing their opportunity to socialize with friends during the lunch break.

Finally, it is important to make the class relevant to the workers' needs. If the workers perceive that their needs are not being met, then it is likely that the workers will not continue with the class. In the words of one instructor involved in the program described in this study, "workers vote with their feet" (May 1994).

PROGRAM EVALUATION

A final essential component of any workplace education program is program evaluation (Sauve, 1982; Carnevale et al, 1990). Evaluation, which may be conducted for different purposes, is the collection and assessment of

information. There are a great number of evaluation instruments, including interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, critical incident reports, work diaries, performance records, simulations, observations, and written tests (Marrelli, 1993; J. Stenson, personal communication, April 25, 1994). Askov (1993) suggests adopting a holistic approach to assessment, ranging on a continuum from informal, qualitative assessment (e.g., portfolios) to formal, quantitative information (e.g., standardized testing), because such an assessment provides the most information. However, the type and extent of evaluation are often constrained by a number of factors, including limited time and resources (Turkewych, 1982).

According to Askov (1993), evaluation in workplace programs must satisfy different clients, who may have different interests in the outcomes of the program. For example, the unions may have more global goals, whereas the organization might have more job-related goals. Employers will want to know to what degree the program has met their objectives. (Askov, 1993; McGroarty, 1993) Participants may also want to know how they have benefited from instruction. However, participants may not think that formal evaluation is necessary. McGroarty believes that "the sense of satisfaction and, if the course has been successful for them, increased confidence in their use of the language ...may be demonstration enough" (1993. p. 98). An instructor, who may have to assess the program to satisfy funding requirements, will also be interested in assessing the effectiveness of the instruction. Finally, an evaluation can increase our knowledge about the components of effective EWP programs (Turkewych, 1982).

CONCLUSION

This review of the literature on English in the Workplace shows that there is general agreement as to the rationale for such programs (e.g., Isserlis, Bayer, & Crooks, 1988; Isserlis, 1991; McGroarty, 1993). In addition, there are numerous suggestions for the design and implementation of such programs (e.g., Bell, 1892; La Perla, 1988; Carnevale et al, 1990; Isserlis, 1991; Wrigley, 1993). Finally, there are also a number of papers discussing program evaluations (e.g.,Turkewych, 1982; Askov, 1993; Wrigley, 1993) and curricula available (see Isserlis, et al, 1988; Cruz et al, undated; Burwell, 1990). However, I was unable to locate any descriptive case studies of an English in the Workplace program. I believe that such a descriptive case study is needed to complement the existing areas of research on English in the Workplace.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

STUDY SETTING

Program Selection

The program described in this study, which involved a partnership between a large Portland, Oregon manufacturing firm, a union, and two educational institutions, was part of a larger, federally funded workplace literacy project which shall be referred to as the "Northwest Consortium". This particular program consisted of three 6-week sessions of English language instruction to limited English proficient employees of the manufacturing firm. These employees are also all members of the union partner.

This particular program was selected for this study, first because of its designation as a pilot program to serve as a prospective model for future workplace education programs. A second, more pragmatic reason for selecting this program was that it was the only available program of its type which was still in the developmental stages when I approached the Northwest Consortium about the possibility of observing an English in the Workplace program for this study.

Program Schedule

The English language instruction program took place at the company's two manufacturing sites (referred to as site A and site B) and was originally designed to consist of three six-week sessions, beginning May 23, 1994 and ending on October 27, 1994, as shown in Table I. Classes were offered on Mondays and Wednesdays or Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m.

TABLE I

ORIGINAL SCHEDULE: SITES A & B

SESSION I	SESSION II	SESSION III
Week 1: May 23 - 26	Week 1: July 25 - 28	Week 1: Sept. 19 - 22
Week 2: May 31 - June 2	Week 2: Aug. 1 - 4	Week 2: Sept. 26 - 29
Week 3: June 6 - 9	Week 3: Aug. 8 - 11	Week 3: Oct. 2 - 6
Week 4: June 13 - 16	Week 4: Aug. 15 - 18	Week 4: Oct. 10 - 13
Week 5: June 20 - 23	Week 5: Aug. 22 - 25	Week 5: Oct. 17 - 20
Week 6: June 27 - 30	Week 6: Aug. 29-Sept. 1	Week 6: Oct. 24 - 27
Week 7: July 5, 6, + 7		
Break/Revisions/Reports:	Break/Revisions/Reports:	Final Reports:
July 11 - July 22	Sept. 5 - Sept. 16	Oct. 31 - Nov. 11

Originally, students at both site A and site B signed up to attend either Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday classes.

Site B stayed with the original schedule, offering classes on Mondays and Wednesdays or Tuesdays and Thursdays. Before the first session began, students signed up to attend either Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday classes. By the second session, some students were attending classes every day, while others attended whenever they could.

At site A, the first session followed the original plan, with classes on Monday/Wednesday and Tuesday/Thursday. However, during the second session the original schedule was revised. The second session was reduced to three weeks, due to the hiring of a new instructor. Consequently, the third session was scheduled for ten weeks, as shown in Table II. In addition, classes were scheduled to meet only on Mondays and Wednesdays. Classes continued to be scheduled from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

TABLE II

REVISED SCHEDULE: SITE A

Session III	Monday	Wednesday
Week 1	Sept 5 - No Class	Sept. 7
Week 2	Sept. 12	Sept. 14
Week 3	Sept. 19	Sept. 21
Week 4	Sept. 26	Sept. 28
Week 5	Oct. 3	Oct. 5
Week 6	Oct. 10	Oct. 12
Week 7	Oct. 17	Oct. 19
Week 8	Oct. 24	Oct. 26
Week 9	Oct. 31	Nov. 2
Week 10	Nov. 7	

Study Participants

The study participants include the consortium director, two community colleges, a local union, Company X, and employees of Company X, including corporate and plant management, clerical support, and those employees enrolled in the workplace English program. Company X is an internationally-known clothing manufacturing company, with two manufacturing sites in the greater

Portland, Oregon, metropolitan area. Company X employs many non-native English speakers at its manufacturing sites. Major native language groups include Vietnamese, Chinese, Thai, Cambodian, Laotian, Korean, and Russian.

Participant Selection

Human Subjects Review approval was applied for and granted before any participants were approached for this study. Once Human Subjects approval had been granted, I approached the program director, who approached the instructors about participating in this study. In addition to obtaining permission from the director and the instructors, I also requested and received written permission from the company and the union to observe the classes at the two different sites. The program instructors had some reservations about my role in this study. Primarily they were concerned that I might demand too much of their time. Although several of the instructors informed me that they would have preferred it if I could have acted as a volunteer instructor, they granted me permission to sit in on their classes as a participant observer. They also granted me permission to attend their weekly instructional planning meetings. The program instructors felt that the students had already had too much paper work to contend with. Therefore, the instructors requested that I not approach the students about the study. Instead, the instructors preferred to announce my presence to the students prior to my attending the classes. I then came to the classes and explained to the students the reason for the study and the process involved. No students declined to participate.

Participant Demographics

All of the instructors in this program were Caucasian, as were the consortium director and the community college project coordinator. Management at Company X is also Caucasian. At site A, the original target number of students to be served was 49. Of the original 49 students who signed up for the English classes, 21 were Vietnamese, 7 Chinese, 7 Korean, 4 Thai, 4 Laotians, 2 Cambodian, 1 Romanian, 1 Philippine, 1 Iranian, and 1 Japanese. Educational levels varied, from less than six years of schooling (eight students) to some college. Most students had between seven to twelve years of schooling in their native country, and eight students had received the Graduate Equivalency Diploma. During the third session the target number decreased to 28. On the first day of instruction, 21 students showed up. Of these students, four were Thai, 10 Vietnamese, four Chinese, and three Korean. By the end of the program, the number of regular attendees had decreased to 10 students. Of these, nine of the students were female, and one student was male. Several of these students had attended ESL classes at the local community college.

At site B, the target number of students to be served during the first session was approximately 90; the actual number served was 79. During the second session, 91 students enrolled. It is unknown how many of the 91 students finished the second session. Finally, 93 students enrolled for the third session, with 71 students finishing the program. All of the students at site B were female. Native languages represented include Thai, Cambodian, Burmese, Vietnamese, Chinese, Russian and Ukrainian. Approximately two thirds of the students were Asian, with the rest representing Russia or the Ukraine. No exact breakdown of

the ethnic distribution of students at site B was available. According to Trujillo (The Oregonian, November 10, 1994), some of the students have lived in the country as long as thirty years, others, only a few months. Several students had no educational experience. Employment histories of the students were not available to me; however, based on conversations with some of the students, it would appear that most of the employees have worked at Company X for over five years. I was also informed by the plant manager (personal communication, October 19, 1994) that Company X has a very low turn-over rate.

DATA COLLECTION

Instruments

Because of my role as a participant observer, my primary instrument for gathering data in this study was the use of extensive field notes. During the classes I spent approximately half of the time recording notes of what was transpiring around me. My notes included greetings, attendance, activities, student and teacher interactions, classroom management, leave-taking, as well as subjective recordings of what I was observing. In addition, I also took notes during the teacher meetings and on any other occasions during which I came into contact with study participants. On some occasions, I was asked to refrain from taking notes, especially when personnel issues were being discussed. On another occasion, during the preliminary planning meetings, I was asked to wait outside while a personnel issue was being discussed. For the most part, however, I had free access to all aspects of the program.

Collection of Materials

I had originally intended to gather data by using a combined open-and closed-ended survey; however, I was asked not to burden the students or the instructors with additional paperwork. Several of the instructors told me that they did not believe that the majority of students would be able to understand or complete even a simplified questionnaire or survey. As a result, I have had to rely on material supplied to me by the program partners. Although I requested and was provided with some materials related to the initial contact between the partners as well as the material related to the initial needs assessment, I am not certain if this material represents all of the available and relevant material. According to one partner in the program, such federally funded programs result in "a massive backlog of paperwork - it is inevitable that stuff gets lost or misplaced" (personal communication, August 3, 1994).

In addition to reviewing the materials provided to me by the partners, the instructors provided me with copies of instructional materials used in their classes. I was usually only given material for those days when I was observing on-site.

Finally, I took part in a plant tour at Site B. Site B offers tours during the week to the general public. During this tour, I took note of working conditions, noise levels, work stations, etc. This tour also gave me an opportunity to speak with several native speakers of English who worked with the non-native speakers. Site A does not have tours for the general public.

Observation of On-Site Classes

Prior to the start of the first session, I observed two of the teacher planning meetings. Due to a time conflict, I was unable to observe any of Session I.

However, I did have access to the curriculum for this first session. During the second session, I observed the Wednesday class at site A and the Tuesday/Thursday classes at site B. During the final session, I observed the Wednesday class at site A and the Thursday class at site B. During these observations, I collected data on classroom activities and materials, student and instructor behavior, and interactions between students and instructors.

Participant Interviews

Although I was asked to refrain from conducting formal interviews with the students, I did have the opportunity to informally interview each of the four teachers as well as the coordinator from one of the community colleges. In addition, I interviewed the union local president and the plant manager at site B. These interviews provided me with valuable observations about the program from the stakeholders' perspective. I also sat in on the interviews between the program evaluator and students

CHAPTER IV

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM: SITE A AND SITE B

OVERVIEW

This chapter will describe the pilot workplace education program that was observed for this study and examine the partners', stakeholders' and participants' involvement in this program. In addition, the curriculum, the materials, the setting, and the classroom structure for each site are described. Finally, the program evaluation and results are presented.

The pilot workplace education program described in this study, which included a partnership between a large Portland manufacturing firm, a union, and two educational institutions, was funded by a federal grant. The program consisted of three 6-week sessions of English language instruction to limited English proficient employees of the manufacturing firm. According to the letter of intent addressed to the company from the consortium director (May 20, 1994), the English classes would take place at two different sites, with classes scheduled for Monday and Wednesday or Tuesday and Thursday. Four instructors provided a total of 54 hours of instruction to an estimated 140 participants. In addition, a total of 540 hours of assessment, curriculum development and instructional preparation were devoted to the project by the time of its

completion. Students were registered for community education credit for the three separate courses (Language Skills I, II and III) during the entire project, through the community college partners. The total cost for the development and delivery of this instructional program was $20, 781.59, including instructor salaries, instructors' books, photocopying and instructional materials. The cost per student was estimated to be approximately $150. Table III highlights the primary differences between site A and site B that are discussed in this chapter.

TABLE III

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SITE A AND SITE B

	SITE A	SITE B
Site Manufactures:	Outerwear (men's and women's jackets and coats)	Men's shirts and women's blouses
Class Schedule	Session I: 6 weeks, with classes on M/W and T/Th Session II: Reduced to 3 weeks Session III: 10 weeks, classes only on M/W	Three 6-week sessions with classes on M/W and T/Th from 3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Instructors	Dan (Sessions I and II) Mary (Session III)	Paul (Sessions I, II, III) Pam (Sessions I, II, III) Kay (Sessions I, II, III)
Classes	1 Multilevel class	Mondays and Wednesdays: 1 lower-level class 1 upper-level class Tuesdays and Thursdays: 1 beginning reading & writing class 1 lower-level class 1 upper-level class
Student Demographics	Primarily female, 1 male; all Asian	Female; generally older population than at site A; mix of Asian and Caucasian students
Target # of students served	Session 1: 49 Session II: 49 Session III: 28	Session I: 90 Session II: 91 Session III: 93
Actual # of students served	Session I: unknown Session II: unknown Session III: 10	Session I: 79 Session II: unknown Session III: 71
Company-related factors affecting participation	1. intermittent lay-offs 2. plant closure	1. mandatory overtime of half an hour for many of the students enrolled in the classes
Planning meetings	None	Weekly planning meetings
End-of-program party	Informal potluck arranged by the students	Community college and company-sponsored party to which all stakeholders and participants were invited

Background Information

In the spring of 1993, the U.S. Department of Education announced the 1993-1994 recipients of grant awards for the National Workplace Literacy Program (1993, p. 1). More than $21 million was awarded to 54 partnerships of business, labor, and education organizations in the Program's fifth funding cycle. According to Workplace Network News, "National Education Goal #5 includes, as one of its objectives, that by the year 2000 every major American business will be involved in strengthening the connection between education and work" (1993, p.1).

The program described in this study, which included a partnership between a large Portland garment manufacturing firm, a union, and two educational institutions, was funded by a U.S. Department of Education Workplace Literacy Grant secured by the Northwest Consortium, which included three community college education partners, ten business partners, various unions, and an evaluation team. According to the Summative External Evaluation Report,

> A need for this project arose from an increasing national and regional awareness of the critical interdependence between workplace literacy training and the quality of the US. workforce. Constantly changing demographics, technologies and rising global competition necessitate the ongoing training of American workers.(1994, p. 3)

The Consortium was an 18-month demonstration project funded by a $438,276 US. Department of Education Grant. According to the consortium's final report (1994, p. 1), the Consortium received notification of funding early in April 1993. However, due to a slow hiring and selection process, as well as difficulty in aligning business partners, activities did not start until September 1993.

A director was hired in September 1993, leaving approximately thirteen months to complete the work program. The director was responsible for coordinating staff training, fiscal administration, producing the Consortium's quarterly newsletter, and other activities.

Various problems resulted in what the report terms a "poorly coordinated effort"(p. 2). For example, one college had three changes in the coordinator position before securing the current coordinator. Another college had chosen a coordinator who had little background and no experience in delivering workplace basic skills instruction. Other delays included a company and labor partner who were unable to move to a commitment to deliver instruction, due to extensive company growth.

According to the project director (Consortium newsletter, Nov. 1994 Vol. 2, #4), the original goal of the grant was for the consortium to become self-sufficient. While this goal was not met, the consortium's various programs served nearly 800 workers, well above the initial goal of serving 500 workers. Although the consortium became dormant after November 1994, a group of community college contract training specialists will resubmit a grant proposal.

Impetus for Developing and Implementing the Program

The business and union partners in this particular program were not one of the original partnerships identified in the Consortium's original proposal.

According to the site A final report (Nov. 1994, p. 3), the availability of workplace training funds as a result of the slow start of services to another company led to discussions at the central labor council where the Union Y business agent identified interest in language training for his membership at Company X. During

an interview with "Peg" (a pseudonym), the local president (August 11, 1994), who also works on the floor at site B, I learned that the business agent had seen a workplace program in Indiana which had "planted the seed" in his mind for a similar program at company X. The business agent met with Peg to discuss the feasibility of such a program. They both felt that such a program would be very beneficial to the workers and the company. According to Peg, "[the business agent] was the inspiration for the program" (personal communication, August 11, 1994). Therefore, it was the union that approached the Consortium for funding of an EWP program.

The Consortium Director met with the corporate human resources manager and plant managers at the invitation of the union business agent and local president to discuss worker interest in basic skills instruction, particularly ESL training. A company-wide questionnaire was distributed to all workers. Responses showed overwhelming interest and a need for language training.

Program Goals

According to the site A final report (Nov. 1994), the company wishes to have better communication to facilitate information exchange and adherence to safety regulations. Some of the company's plants in the Midwest are moving to modular manufacturing processes. Language barriers pose restrictions on the

local plants' abilities to adapt to new manufacturing environments which emphasize teamwork.

In his letter of intent to Company X, the Director stated that the overall instructional goals for the program were as follows (May 20, 1994) :

1. Teach English to non-native speakers of English
2. Strengthen the confidence workers have in their own English
3. Encourage people to use their English
4. Teach people language acquisition skills using the world around them
5. Teach workplace related English (writing, terms, vocabulary, situational language)
6. Teach practical English related to living in America
7. Teach English related to: forms, benefits, procedures, problem-solving and citizenship
8. Increase the efficiency at the workplace through increased communicative English skills and the ability to understand written materials.

In the partnership plan for site B, the instructors stated the following as their goals (no date, 1994):

1. Help students become more confident with the English they have - Use English more at home, work and elsewhere
2. Teach students English for typical work and home situations
3. Teach tools for describing and problem-solving
4. Sensitize students to cultural differences between their own and American culture
5. Help students understand American cultural values and practices

In addition to these formally stated goals, different individuals had their own personal goals for the program. The plant manager at site B told me that he did not care how the instructors taught the students, "as long as it helps them to learn things that we need for them to know, especially upstairs, that will be a big help" (August 11, 1994). The project coordinator for site B wanted to help the students become life-long learners (personal communication, August 3, 1994). In a questionnaire distributed at site A, most of the respondents expressed improved speaking, reading and writing ability as their primary goals. For example, 38 respondents out of a total of 49 respondents stated a need for writing, 39 marked reading, 36 marked speaking, while only 4 students checked teamwork as a goal.

Support and Promotion of the Program

The union had initiated this project and took responsibility for supporting and promoting the English classes at both sites. The union suggested that sign-up sheets be used to recruit students, rather than suggesting potential students to the instructors. Participation in the classes was entirely voluntary and the union did not want its members to feel that participation in the program was mandatory. At both sites, announcements about the classes were made over the loudspeaker system and sign-up sheets were posted in the cafeterias. At site A, 90+ out of 109 of the immigrant women in the plant signed up for class (Atkins, 1994, p. 5). A sign-up sheet was posted on one of the long tables in the cafeteria. This sheet had 45 slots for names and times for interviews. A union representative sat at the table to ensure that only one name was signed per slot; however, the sign-up sheet ended up having names written on the side, on the back, and sometimes written over other names. Several women were upset because there was no more space for them to sign their names. The union had not anticipated that interest in the program would be so great. Finally, the program was also promoted through word of mouth, with supervisors, trainers and other students telling co-workers about the program.

THE PARTNERS, STAKEHOLDERS, AND PARTICIPANTS

Identifying the Partners and Their Involvement in the Program

The partners in this program included the union, the education partners, and Company X. The union, who had the idea for the classes and approached the Consortium about the possibility of providing classes for their non-native English-speaking members at Company X, were actively involved in establishing

and promoting the program. At site A, a union steward participated in one of the classes, explaining how to file an official grievance fact sheet. At site B, the union local president frequently met with the instructors on an informal basis to see how the classes were proceeding. She suggested to the teachers that they help her recruit a student to be on the safety committee when a vacancy on the committee opened up. Finally, union representatives attended the final party at site B.

Company X was primarily involved in allowing the classes to take place and providing space. During the needs assessment, company X allowed the instructors free access to all areas of the plants, provided the instructors with tours of the two different sites, and cooperated in paying the students during the administration of the Basic English Skills Test. The company also allowed the use of the company photocopier; copy paper, however, was provided by the colleges. Finally, the plant manager at site B, at the request of one of the instructors, provided a cake for the party.

The education partners (the two community colleges) provided the instructors for the classes and supplies for the classes, including paper, pencils, and, in the case of site B, notebooks for all of the students. The community college coordinator overseeing site B also provided certificates of completion for the students, as well as hosting an end-of-program party and 'graduation' ceremony.

Identifying the Stakeholders and Their Involvement in the Program

The stakeholders in this program were those individuals with a vested interest in the success of the workplace education program. These included the management-labor-education partners, program participants, and the instructors. According to the program evaluator, the company's involvement was relatively

passive because the company recognized that this was a union-initiated program (1994, p. 2). In contrast, the union had a high-profile role in the program. In addition to initiating the program, the union also arranged the sign-up process, contributed to curriculum development and identified American-born workers to partner with the immigrant workers to practice their conversation skills. Finally, the union wanted the program to be "off the clock" (i.e., after work hours with no company-paid compensation) so as to demonstrate to the workers that the training was provided as a result of union efforts.

The community college partner overseeing site B appeared to be more actively involved in the program than the community college partner overseeing site A. For example, the community college coordinator at site B visited on-site several times, arranged for a reporter with The Oregonian to visit the classes for a newspaper article, provided the students with notebooks and pens, and worked closely with the instructors in planning the end-of-program party. She also informed management at site B that they could contact her if they had any questions or concerns regarding the program. Finally, she met with management and union officials during the third session to discuss the feasibility of either the union or the company sponsoring another English language program.

The program participants were actively involved in the program. Without their voluntary participation in the classes, this particular project would have effectively ended. Their involvement is discussed in greater detail in the next section.

The instructors were actively involved in the program and were clearly concerned with the welfare of their students. The instructor at site A, Mary (a pseudonym, as are all names used in this study), has experience in teaching basic skills in the workplace and was employed by one of the community colleges as a

curriculum specialist. The instructors at site B represented a variety of teaching backgrounds. Paul, the only male instructor after Dan left the program, was actively involved in the peace and civil rights movement during the 1960's. His official training was in the mental health field, although he did work in Japan as an English teacher for one and a half years. Since his return to the United States, Paul has had experience in teaching Basic Skills and English in the workplace. Pam has taught for the past 31 years, with experience in teaching every level from first grade to adults. In 1983, she began working with adults in Los Angeles, teaching GED and ESL classes. In addition to ESL, her interests include teaching basic math, problem solving, and team work skills. Kay has an undergraduate degree in linguistics and completed some of the coursework in the Applied Linguistics program at the University of Los Angeles. Her experience includes teaching ESL for the Los Angeles Unified School District, teaching inmates at the Inverness County Jail, and teaching evening ESL classes for one of the community college partners.

Much of the allotted curriculum development time had been used during the pre-assessment period. These instructors were very dedicated to helping the students accomplish their goals. The teachers met weekly with each other to discuss the past week and to plan for the next week. Most of this was on their own time; however, the instructors felt that these meetings were important for a number of reasons. First, the instructors each mentioned how refreshing it was to work in a team-teaching environment, as they often feel isolated teaching in the workplace. In addition, these meetings provided the instructors not only with a place to develop curriculum and brainstorm on lesson plans but also an opportunity to discuss what was happening in the program and to vent feelings.

One incident in particular that exemplified the teachers' involvement with the program and with their students occurred when the teachers accompanied their students to a union meeting in which the new contract was to be discussed. The instructors had not been informed that this meeting was to take place. They came to class one day prepared to teach their students, only to discover that this union meeting was scheduled to take place during class time. The instructors, who felt it was important for the students to attend this meeting, asked the union local president if they could accompany the students to the meeting. The union local president enthusiastically endorsed this, as student participation in the union and attendance at union meetings was low. The instructors at both sites met with the students, explained why this was an important meeting for them, and urged the students to attend. In addition, the instructors reassured the students that they would accompany them to the union meeting and help them if they could not understand what the meeting was about. This meeting lasted for approximately 45 minutes. The agenda included new benefits, lay-off policies, down-time policy, grievance procedures, mandatory overtime, holiday pay, leave of absence, modifications of the piece-rate system, and the new 401K retirement plant. As a native speaker, I found this meeting very difficult to follow because of the jargon. In addition, I find that company policy is written in unclear language. Before preparing to vote on the new contract, the union representative asked if anybody had any questions. Only native speakers of English asked questions. When the union representative suggested that it was time to vote on the new contract, Pam stood up, asked for permission to speak, and told the union officials that there were six teachers attending the meeting who could help the students understand the new contract if the union would allow them time to discuss the contract with their students before the final vote. She argued that this was

important so that the non-native speakers would not be "voting in the dark." This was a very dramatic moment. After a moment of silence and discussion with the others on the stage, the union representative said, "That would be a great idea. It's time for us to help those with a language barrier." One student teacher mentioned that "It was just like out of a movie! When she stood up for the students, I had goose bumps!" (personal communication, October 5, 1994). The students met with the teachers for approximately 20 minutes and then voted on the new contract. Several students mentioned to the instructors that this was the first time they had ever understood for what they were voting.

Pam, the instructor who stood up for the students at the union contract meeting, was especially active in this program. She worked with the union local president to arrange a conversation partnership between students and interested native speakers of English. She contacted these interested co-workers and met with them during their lunch hours to suggest topics for conversation and guidelines for communicating with the limited English proficient workers. The local union president, the shop steward, two office workers, one trainer, six sewers and three mechanics signed up to act as conversation partners. This was a difficult project to establish because the employees have only an hour for lunch. During this time they need to heat up and eat their food; with only four microwaves, there was often a long wait before one could eat her food. Pam also spent time developing a handout for the volunteers. It turned out that many of the volunteers did not realize that English might be a third or fourth language for some of the students. In addition, many of the volunteers did not have a clear understanding of how different some of the students' native languages are from English. Finally, Pam re-wrote much of the format of the training materials and showed this to a supervisor, explaining that this was how the material should be

written. Pam noted that "The idea of re-writing [company material] is foreign to them. The material they give the immigrants is so intimidating. The immigrants can't possibly understand!" (personal communication, September 30, 1994).

Identifying the Participants and Their Involvement in the Program

The participants in this program were those employees who received instruction through the workplace education program. All of the participants at both sites were female, with the exception of one male at site A. Although the classes were conveniently located at the worksite, many of the participants ultimately had to make an extra effort to attend the classes. For example, at the time the new instructor began the third session classes at site A, the company was beginning its down time. This company temporarily lays off its full-time employees when demand for the product is down or when seasonal changes result in fewer manufacturing quotas. According to the final report (November 1994), "This had a very detrimental affect [sic] on the classes, for the people who most needed the classes were in and out or not at work at all" (p. 7). Despite these layoffs which affected a number of the students enrolled in the English classes, students continued to make an effort to attend class. Other students had to arrange for childcare so they could attend the classes. Finally, some students had to make economic sacrifices by not working at a second job, as many of the students did to supplement their income.

The instructors at site B remarked that they were always amazed at the students' commitment to learning and enthusiasm in class, despite having worked eight hours and having to take care of family afterwards (personal communication, Nov. 7, 1994). One example of the students' dedication was the student who could not attend class one day because she had to take care of her

children. Before leaving work, she went to her instructor and requested the hand-outs for that day's lesson and asked for homework. An example of the students' genuine desire to learn occurred at the end of the third session, when Pam asked her students in the beginning reading and writing class if they would like her to order books for them so they could continue studying on their own. She had expected a few students to show interest in one or two books; instead, many of her students ordered all four levels of reading, at a total cost of $40.00. One student who stubbornly insisted that she could not read when Pam asked her to read "fat" ended up ordering only the highest level reading book. One student remarked on this, saying "And she order book 5!" When Pam tried to encourage her to try a lower level, she insisted that this was the book she wanted and that she would "learn the book."

Pam told me that the students' enthusiasm really inspired her: "I am constantly amazed by the women and their eagerness to learn. I'm frustrated because there is so much I want to do for them!" (Teacher's meeting, September 23, 1994). Despite their tired and aching bodies and demands on their time, these participants made an effort to concentrate on the task at hand and to attend classes regularly. One instructor had two students who had attended classes four times a week, never missing one day of class.

Many of the students showed their gratitude towards the teachers by bringing them gifts of food or fruit from their gardens. At the final party for site B, each of the classes presented their instructor with a present. One student was very upset because no one had collected money from her and she had not been told that the others were purchasing a gift for the instructors. Another student made home-made Mien necklaces for each of the teachers. All the students contributed food to the party, many of them making special dishes from their

native countries. It was apparent that the students had grown very attached to their instructors. At the end of the party, many of the students hugged their instructors, telling them to please come back and teach them again. The Mien student shook hands with the plant manager, telling him how much she appreciated the classes. She had tears in her eyes when she left.

At site A, the classes ended rather abruptly because of an unexpected plant shut-down. The students volunteered to come to the plant on a Wednesday, when the plant was closed, for lunch. It turned out that the students had planned a surprise party for Mary, with each student contributing a dish to the potluck.

These students were active participants in their own learning. Many of the students told me that they had always wanted to take English classes but could not fit classes into their schedule. As the third session drew to an end, many of the students expressed their desire to have more classes at work. Others simply assumed that there were to be more classes and were confused to discover that the program was to end in a few weeks. I overheard students asking, "Are we having more classes?" "When do classes start again?" The instructors could not provide the students with a definite answer because they did not know if Company X was going to provide the students with more English classes.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The needs assessment was conducted by the instructors. At both sites a company-wide questionnaire was distributed to all workers. Responses indicated an overwhelming interest in and need for language training.

Assessment instruments included on-site interviews with union representatives, supervisors, trainers, and potential students, and student surveys that were designed by the instructors. The Short Form of the Oral Interview section of the Basic English Skills Test (BEST) was administered to those students who had signed up for classes. The BEST is designed as a 7-10 minute oral skills placement procedure. The Short Form includes 18 items from Forms B,C, and D of the original BEST Oral Interview and represents a variety of topics, functions, and structures. The 18 items on the Short Form require only two types of scoring: Communication and Fluency. Administering the BEST test at each site was a time-consuming effort which took place for 45 minutes after work every day, for a total of three weeks. The instructors unanimously agreed that while the BEST is a good "sorter" test, the most important result of administering the BEST was having the personal contact with the students prior to the beginning of classes. Pam believed that this personal contact made the students more comfortable because they could see who was going to teach them (personal communication, August 11, 1994).

Another assessment tool was a pre-test developed by the first instructor at site A, Dan, and later modified by the instructors at site B. This 4-page test included choosing the best answer to a question out of four choices (e.g., "Which one is NOT a sewing problem? a. bad tension b. inner lining c. skipping d. vibrating), circling words that have the same sound (e.g., so = sew Sue chow show), looking at a sample sewing ticket and identifying the information on the ticket, choosing the correct question word for pictures (e.g., who, what, where, when) and filling in the blank with the correct preposition. This pre-test was a requirement of the grant; however, the other three instructors, Kay, Pam and Paul, had a number of reservations about administering a pre-test. Pam noted that

while she was not against evaluation, she was against this type of evaluation: "This kind of test didn't help me. I'm concerned with people, about getting to know about the population." (personal communication, July 20, 1994). Later, the instructors at site B felt that the test was not an appropriate evaluation tool for discovering what the students already knew. Paul felt that it was more valuable to talk to trainers, students and supervisors to determine their attitudes towards schooling: "The information from the oral interviews was more helpful [than the results of the pre-test]" (personal communication, July 20, 1994). According to Kay, "The only thing the pre-test showed us was that students don't perform well on tests. The format of the test was unfamiliar to them because they haven't been taught how to take tests" (personal communication, July 20, 194).

At site A, the second instructor, Mary, did not have enough advance notice to conduct any needs assessment prior to beginning the classes, although she had access to the BEST results. During the first week of class, she administered a phonics inventory and survey of preferred learning styles to assess the students' needs. The phonics inventory consisted of a list of letters which the students were to write or circle as the instructor read aloud letters or words to the students. The survey of learning styles included pictures of people learning in different situations (e.g., with the whole class, in groups, alone, etc.) and gave students a choice of marking "yes", "no", or "sometimes" in response to "How I Like to Learn English."

Influence of Results on Program Design

The needs assessment conducted at site B revealed the following problems:

1. Class space not conducive to instruction.

2. High student to teacher ratios.

3. Widely varying level of competence of students in various English skills.

In addition, the results of the interviews with management, supervisors and trainers indicated that the number one priority should be to teach the students to ask for clarification. The instructors decided to attempt to meet the demand rather than insist on smaller classes. They also decided to teach all levels, which, according to the Partnership Plan (1994, p. 4), "...meant some decreased quality of instruction in attempting to meet the wide variety of differential abilities of the students for students at the upper or lower limits of skills in the classes."

Similar problems were evident at site A; however, with only one instructor, it was not feasible to have different classes for the different levels. The first instructor, Dan, developed a primarily grammar-based curriculum, based on the results of the pre-test. When Mary took over the instruction, she modified the program because students had commented that the grammar-based material was too difficult. Mary also knew that the first instructor had not been considered very successful because of the high drop-out rate in his classes. In addition, there had been complaints made to the union about the first instructor.

Therefore, the third session at site A had a different perspective, concentrating on understanding and completing forms, conversation, and meeting with union stewards about grievances and the contract. Finally, based on the results of the learning style preference survey and student comments that they were often too tired after working all day to concentrate for extended periods of time on grammar, the instructor planned to incorporate a variety of activities into the curriculum to better meet the needs of the students and to keep them engaged in the activities.

CURRICULUM AND MATERIALS

Curriculum

At site A, Mary identified objectives based on ongoing assessment and questions about workplace and union activities, observation, and company data. Although she did not have adequate time to develop a curriculum, she wanted to develop an instructor facilitated format of instruction with interaction among students. Her ongoing assessment of the program allowed her to remain flexible in meeting the needs of the students. For example, Mary had originally planned lessons that were based on continuing activities. However, because of the problem of fluctuating attendance, due primarily to company lay offs, she had to revise these lessons as there was always someone who had missed the last class and returned for a day or two before being laid off again. Therefore, early on in the session Mary adjusted the classes so that activities could be begun and completed in one class time. However, Mary noted that this was particularly frustrating, as she wanted to build on previous learning (Final report, November 1994).

According to the instructors at site B (personal communication, September 14, 1995), they were free to do whatever they wanted, although they had consulted with trainers and supervisors in developing the curriculum. Kay said that these were workplace classes in that the classes were held at the workplace; however, the classes were not centered solely around the workplace because the students' home lives affect their work, and vice versa. Each of the instructors remarked that it was refreshing to have such freedom in designing the classes. These instructors described their curriculum method as being based on "emergent design"; in other words, they did not have set plans for the entire program; rather,

the curriculum would be developed on a weekly basis. According to the Partnership Plan (1994, p. 1) submitted by the instructors at site B, their curriculum was drawn from instructor creativity, personal materials, workplace material and ESL texts.

Before the start of the classes, the instructors met for several curriculum development meetings. During the first meeting, the instructors examined a number of different texts, brainstormed on ideas for the class, and discussed the logistics of teaching such a large, multilevel class. Suggested areas for instruction included clarification, safety, reporting problems/discussing problems, handling criticism, making friends/social talk, American customs, conflict management, and following directions. In addition, the instructors discussed practical matters, such as access to supplies and storage space at the plants for their materials. Finally, the instructors discussed the issue of what should be the content of the pre-and post-tests. Pam's goal was to develop a test that all students could pass at the end.

During the second of these meetings, the project director met with the instructors to draft a letter to the company to provide them with a 'map' of what the instructors hoped to accomplish during this project. Originally, the director had planned on a group development effort; however, during this meeting he decided to separate the effort for the different sites for a number of reasons. First, the union and management requested that each site program be different, to reflect the uniqueness of each plant. In addition, it was determined that it would be too difficult to schedule group meetings. Finally, the director realigned staffing, with the result that instead of two instructors per site, site A would have one instructor and site B would have three instructors. The director decided that one instructor who had assisted in the pre-assessment process at site A would

remain there to teach. The second instructor, who was originally scheduled to teach at site A, was moved to site B, bringing the total number of teachers at site B to three. This staffing realignment was in part motivated by personnel issues. The instructor at site B had a different teaching style than the other instructors and wanted to have the freedom to deviate somewhat from the original project design.

During this second planning meeting, the instructors at site B decided to have weekly meetings as a mechanism for sharing resources. In addition, they agreed that the "skill of the week" would comprise the 'meat' of the structure. However, the instructors did not feel that it was useful to develop a set curriculum before beginning instruction. Grammar, for example, would be addressed as it came up, rather than planning in advance what grammatical points to teach.

Another issue that arose during this planning meeting was whether the ultimate goal was to have parallel curricula at both sites. The project director argued that this would facilitate pre-and post-assessment at both sites. In addition, the project director expressed a desire for a curriculum to provide to the company and the union; however, the instructors all agreed that such a goal was unrealistic: "Realistically, we can't set up, say, six topics in advance. We need to have plans in mind but we won't know the actual needs until we are in class" (Paul, personal communication, May 5, 1994). As a result, it was decided that each site would be autonomous.

The instructors at site B built a skeletal curriculum based solely on information from the interviews with supervisors, trainers, management, union representatives, and students. The instructors wanted to start with what the students already knew and to build on this knowledge. The instructors were in agreement that if the program had been sponsored and funded by the company,

they would have developed a curriculum that was primarily workplace-based. However, the union had expressed an interest in having a curriculum that was both work and whole-life related. Therefore, it was decided that the curriculum would have more of a focus on the life-related needs of the students. During the preliminary planning meetings, the instructors determined that the curriculum would be focused on certain general areas, with each instructor developing his or her own specific lesson plans. Focus areas included: describing; problem-solving; intercultural communication; basic reading and writing; non-verbal cues; vocabulary building; grammar; pronunciation.

This emergent design allowed the instructors greater freedom in modifying the curriculum to better meet the needs of the students. For instance, after the first 6 week session, the instructors reorganized the class from three levels of English based upon BEST testing results to an upper-level and lower-level class, with the third class being devoted to beginning reading and writing instruction. This change was brought about by the instructors' realization that "several students, even some whose spoken language level was above raw beginner, had virtually no reading and writing skills. Thus, even simple hand-outs were a terrific struggle, often impossible, for them" (Partnership Plan, 1994, p. 4).

The focus of the final six-week session was on pronunciation, social conversation, safety issues, problem solving. During the planning meeting on September 14, Kay mentioned that she felt the classes were becoming very important for the students and they seemed to be enjoying the classes more. She felt this had not occurred during the first session because the instructors and students were still in the process of getting acquainted with each other. Paul observed that he thought much of the material from the textbooks was too

difficult. He believed that the simple lessons were the most "elegant." Pam noted that each of the instructors had discovered that the students knew a bit more than they [the instructors] had thought. She thought there should be more focus on pronunciation during the third session. In addition, the teachers wanted the students to work together in creating a final class project that would build on activities and lessons from earlier classes. For the final, cumulative class project, the students created a poster with drawings of their homelands and stories of their struggles that brought them to the United States. This 40-foot long poster was hung along the walls of the hallway entrance to the women's lavatory, extending into the women's locker room. Pencil and color-marker drawings told the stories of the women's days in refugee camps, of wars in their homelands, and of family left behind when they immigrated to the United States.

During the teacher meeting on September 23rd, Kay remarked that her class had been practicing keeping conversations going. She said it was very exciting because some students whose voices she had hardly heard liked the conversation practice and kept trying to say new things. Pam mentioned that her class had been small that week:

> This week was so much better because I only had eight students.
> This was the first time I could really work individually with the
> students and correct their pronunciation. I can see that they can
> correct themselves with pronunciation - they can make the sounds
> and know how to correct themselves. This was such an easy class!

In preparation for the final poster project, the instructors decided to do some warm-ups involving drawing to prepare them for the collage. Previously, the instructors had the experience that the students, when presented with a wide array of colored crayons, only choose pencils or dark crayons. The instructors felt that this inhibition about coloring was due to the fact that drawing and

playing were a foreign concept for these women. To help the students become more comfortable with drawing, the instructors decided to have the students draw and color their favorite holiday and then describe the holiday to their classmates.

In addition to preparing the students for the final poster project, the instructors discussed possible new songs to teach to the students. It was decided that "Getting to Know You" would fit appropriately with the conversation theme. The instructors also decided to limit the number of new songs introduced to the class during warm-ups because a number of the students did not sing during the song playing. The instructors hoped that by repeating songs from previous sessions, more students would join in the singing.

Types of Materials

Job related materials and activities were integrated into the classes in a number of ways. All written materials given to the employees by the company, as well as materials used in the process of completing the jobs, were collected by the instructors. Some of this material was then incorporated into the lessons. For example, sample shirt and blouse parts were collected. Using these samples, the instructors taught the students the names of all the different parts and also taught the students how to describe what they did with their particular part. This was an important skill for the students because many of the students could not describe their jobs in English.

In addition to using workplace written materials, the instructors created their own workplace-specific materials. For example, the instructors created a handout with pictures of workplace sewing tools. The tool names and functions

were elicited from the students. Students then played a matching game where each student had either a picture of a tool or the name of the tool written on an index card and had to find the partner to the picture or name. This was followed by a handout using Wh-questions ('What is it?'; 'Who uses it?') and pronouns ('I am cleaning my machine'; 'that is my air hose'). In addition, the instructors guided the students in generating workplace-related materials. For example, the instructors provided the students with an example of a problem that might occur at work. Students were asked to brainstorm how they could describe and report a problem and who they should report the problem to. Students drew a diagram of the reporting system at Company X by answering "Who is at top?" "Who has the most responsibility?" "Who do I report the problem to?" Another example of workplace-related materials generated by students included having students discuss and then write down different kinds of work-related health problems they had had or had seen at work.

In addition to workplace materials, the instructors also used a number of different ESL textbooks as sources for activities. These texts included <u>ESL in Action</u>, <u>Purple Cows and Potato Chips</u>, <u>Speaking of Survival</u>, <u>Pronunciation Contrasts in English</u>, and <u>Speaking Up at Work</u>. The instructors used these texts primarily for reference or to supplement other materials. For example, a section on talking with co-workers was copied directly from the text and handed out to the students. Accompanying this handout was an instructor-created handout on different situations in which the students would need to talk with co-workers. If activities were taken directly from a text, the instructors usually personalized it to make the activity more appropriate for the particular workplace. For example, a handout on reading signs included the addition of signs found at the worksite.

Finally the instructors created many of their own classroom materials. Kay, in particular, was very artistic and often contributed handouts with creative and humorous drawings. She created her own drawings of the human body, facial expressions, sound contrasts accompanied by drawings (e.g., a drawing of someone eating for 'chew' contrasted with a drawing of a shoe, for 'shoe'), drawings of workplace sewing tools, and a preposition handout, with drawings of boxes, circles and triangles in different positions. Other instructor-created general life-skills materials included handouts on American cultural practices, identifying parts of the body, describing a physical ailment, giving and following directions, and American holidays.

THE CLASSROOM

Physical Setting: Site A

Site A manufactures outerwear, including men's and women's jackets, coats, and sportscoats. The building at site A consists of a two-story structure with parking facilities in the front and rear of the building. From the front of the building, the structure looks as if it has only one story; however, a side-view of the plant reveals that the building slopes downward to another level. Parking spaces are located in both the front and the rear of the building. The actual manufacturing area of the building is not visible from the main entrance. As one enters the building, a reception office is located on the left-hand side of the hallway.

Down the short hallway is a door leading to the manufacturing area. Although the door remains shut at all times, it only partially filters out the noise from the manufacturing area. A separate entrance to the manufacturing area is

through a door in the back of the reception office. Entrance to the manufacturing area is limited to employees only. The actual size of the manufacturing area is much larger than is suggested from the outside of the building. As one enters the manufacturing area, a loading dock is to the right and more offices are located to the left. On several occasions, the loading dock was left open for circulation. The temperature in the manufacturing area seems to be rather warm and the air feels humid, even during the winter months. Most employees wear light-weight clothes inside the plant.

In addition to some offices which are located in the center of the manufacturing area, there are six different sections on the floor. These are the Cutting Room, Section A (fusing), Section B (pockets, cuffs and other small parts), Section C (linings and shells of jackets), Section D (assembly of lining, shoulder pads, facing with the shell of the jacket), Section E (shipping area and finishing department).The noise level is fairly high, especially in some of the sections. It is difficult to hear someone speaking in normal tones on the floor. In addition to the constant humming of the sewing machines there are the sounds of bundles of clothing being pushed along rails and banging sounds from the pressing area. The cutting area is much quieter than the rest of the manufacturing area.

The stairs to the lower level of the building are located in the center of the manufacturing area. As one goes down the stairs, there is an L-shaped ramp down into the cafeteria dining area. Along the left-hand side of the cafeteria are the restrooms and storage rooms. To the right are vending machines, several microwaves, a refrigerator, and a drinking fountain. On some of the walls are company notices, a birthday calendar, safety regulations, union notices, and other types of notices typically found in company cafeterias.

In the actual dining area are a number of round tables, at which three or four people can be seated. Smoking is restricted to those tables located nearest the windows, which face out towards the back parking lot. There are also two entrances and exits located off of the dining area. To the left of the dining area are the locker rooms.

Location and Atmosphere: Site A

The classes were located in the cafeteria dining area in the basement of the building. Although there is a conference room located off the manufacturing area, it was not available for security reasons. No one other than management and the janitor can be on the manufacturing floor after closing. In addition, the conference room can hold only about 15 people.

The classes at Site A were originally scheduled Monday through Thursday afternoons from 3:30, the time that workers got off work, until 5:00 p.m. One group of students would attend classes on Mondays and Wednesdays and the other group would attend classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays. When the second instructor began, the second session was reduced from six weeks to three weeks and the third session was planned for nine weeks.

The physical environment of the classes at Site A was very different from that of a conventional classroom. The most obvious difference was the lack of blackboards and desks. The teacher had a flip chart, a stand, and an overhead projector which were borrowed from the community college. In addition, the teacher often used one of the bulletin boards and wall space for hanging up paper. The teacher stood in front of the students, with her back to the windows. On sunny days this presented a problem as the teacher was sometimes difficult to

see, due to the glare from outside. The students seated themselves at tables, which were arranged in a semi-circle. At 3:30, the noise level in the cafeteria was very high because everyone was just getting off work. After the bell rang at 3:30, people would leave through the cafeteria. The doors slammed very loudly each time they closed. In addition, people would be talking to each other as they left. Sometimes, groups of people or individuals remained in the cafeteria as they waited for their rides. The noise of the air conditioning system also contributed to the overall noise in the cafeteria. Finally, the janitor was often still cleaning the downstairs area during the class. I was usually seated only about 15 feet away from the instructor but found that it was often difficult to hear what was being said.

The overall atmosphere at Site A differed from Site B. At Site A, under the first instructor, the difference was especially apparent. I observed the first instructor, Dan, only twice. On these occasions, it seemed that the atmosphere was similar to a formal classroom environment. The instructor allowed the students a few minutes to arrange themselves in their seats. Conversation unrelated to the lesson was kept to a minimum. During the lesson, students seemed somewhat subdued and there was little laughter or social talk. The instructor used a pointer to elicit responses, as well as a number of non-verbal gestures. Finally, there was little interaction between the instructor and the students at the end of class.

In contrast, the second instructor, Mary, seemed to encourage more social talk at the beginning of the class. There was also more social interaction between the instructor and the students. The atmosphere appeared more relaxed and informal, with frequent laughter or smiling on the part of the students and the

instructor. However, unlike the students at site B, it did not seem that the students were well-acquainted with each other. In addition, I did not observe or learn of any incidents in which the students discussed personal problems with the instructor.

Physical Setting: Site B

Men's shirts and women's blouses are manufactured at site B. The building at site B, which is a much larger building than the building at site A, consists of a two-story structure with parking facilities in the front and rear of the building. Unlike site A, which is located just off the street, site B is set much further back from the street. Located in front of the structure is a large unpaved parking lot. Signs are posted on the building, directing visitors to enter the building from the pathway along the east side of the building. Entering the building, one finds oneself in a small entryway. To the right of the entryway is an entrance to the cafeteria; a stairwell to the left leads up to the offices and manufacturing area. Directly ahead are entrances to the men's and women's locker rooms.

The upstairs manufacturing area is divided into three primary areas: the cutting area in the back, women's blouses to the right, and men's shirts to the left. As one goes up the stairs to the manufacturing area, one takes a sharp turn to the right to find the offices. One's first impression is that the noise level is very high. One must almost shout to be heard over some of the machines. It was also warm and humid in the manufacturing area.

The main floor consists of the cafeteria, the restrooms, the locker rooms, a storage and supply room, the manager's office and a conference room. The cafeteria is a large room. On the left side of the cafeteria are the vending

machines, a double-sink, cabinets, and the drinking fountain. In the center of the room are two long, rectangular tables. These tables are used primarily for parties and as a place to post announcements or sign-up sheets. To the right of the room are shelves and three microwaves. Windows along the right side of the wall look out onto some trees and a stream that runs by the plant. Much of the wall space is covered with company notices, a birthday calendar, safety regulations, safety goals and union notices. Some of the safety regulations are printed in other languages, including Spanish and Vietnamese. On one wall is a large picture of former President Bush shaking hands with the plant manager. The union has its own designated bulletin board. At the time of this study, the board included a poster urging union members to shop only at union-approved grocery stores and a list of in-company employees who could act as translators. There was a low, constant humming sound from the generator that was just loud enough to be distracting.

In the actual dining area are a number of round tables, at which three or four people can be seated. No smoking is allowed in any area of the dining room. Smokers sit outside under the windows that face the trees and the stream. In the middle, left-hand side of the cafeteria is an entrance that leads to the manager's office, the women's locker room, an exit outside to the front parking lot, the storage room, and the meeting room. This appeared to be a high-traffic area, especially at closing time.

Location and Atmosphere: Site B

The classes were located in three different areas: in the cafeteria dining area, the women's locker room, and the conference room. The three teachers at

site B had originally planned to hold their classes in the cafeteria; however, the cafeteria, despite its large size, was not ideal for three classes because of acoustic problems. As a result, only the upper-level class met in the cafeteria while the other levels took place in the locker room and in the conference room.

The classes at site B were scheduled Monday through Thursday afternoons from 3:30 until 5:00 p.m. On Tuesdays and Thursdays there were three teachers and three classes; there were only two teachers and two classes on Mondays and Wednesdays. On Mondays and Wednesdays the two teachers held their classes in the locker room and the conference room. The cafeteria was used only for the group warm-up activity.

The physical environment of the classes at site B, like site A, was very different from that of a conventional classroom. The teacher who used the conference room had a flip chart and dry-erase board at her disposal. Students were seated at a rectangular conference table and at an office desk. This was a small room with little space for physical movement. As a result, students generally remained seated throughout the class. This was the most private of the rooms available. On a few occasions, the manager entered the room for a few minutes to retrieve some item from his desk.

The teacher in the women's locker room had very limited resources; however, she preferred the intimate environment of this room to the other areas. She wrote on large pieces of paper taped on the wall, as there was not sufficient room for a flip chart or a dry-erase board. Students did not have any writing surface because there were no desks available in the locker room. Instead, students seated themselves in a half-circle on chairs that they brought in from the cafeteria. The students were seated in front of the rows of lockers, about three

feet away from where the teacher stood. The sound of toilets being flushed could be heard nearby, as the restroom was located right off the locker room. In addition, female employees who were not in the class would occasionally walk into the locker room to retrieve items from their lockers.

The teacher in the cafeteria used the space at the far end of the dining area, away from the main area of traffic. He used available wall space for taping up pieces of paper. Students were seated at the round dining tables, usually arranging themselves in a semi-circle. At first, the loud humming from the generator made it difficult to hear the students or the teacher; however, he eventually discovered that the generator could be turned off during the time that the class met.

The classroom environment at site B appeared to be conducive to learning, primarily due to the three teachers' efforts at creating a warm, supportive atmosphere. There seemed to be a genuine bond between the instructors and the students; the instructors appeared to be truly concerned with the welfare of their students. Students would often tell their instructors of their personal problems. For example, one student told her instructor, Pam, that she could not attend class that week because her husband had recently been beaten up and she needed to be home to take care of him. The instructor asked the student if there was anything she could do to help her and suggested that the student call the police, if she had not already done so. Another student told one of the teachers her problems with her husband. Apparently, he wanted her to come home to take care of the children; she, on the other hand, had a strong desire to learn more English. During one class, the husband came into the class and pulled his wife out of class. She did not attend classes again.

At site B, it seemed that many of the students were well-acquainted with each other. This may be due to the fact that many of the women had worked at the company for many years. These students tended to be older, as a group, than the students at site A. Students appeared to enjoy laughing at each other and teasing one another. If someone made a mistake, some students would laugh. Nobody, however, seemed to be offended by this. One student in particular would tease the instructors. The instructors often told the students, "That's great! That's excellent. Very good, everyone." This student would then respond, "Oh, everyone very good. Everyone always good!"

At first, the Asian women and the Caucasian women kept apart from each other. The Russians and Ukrainians often sat together, several tables away from where the other students and instructors were. The Asian students tended to sit closer to the instructors. The instructors would encourage everyone to "Come closer! Join the group!" During the third session, I noticed that the Russians and the Ukrainians mingled more with the other students. In some cases, a Russian or Ukrainian would be seated at a table with Asian women. I had not noticed this during the second session. Two or three Russians continued to sit by themselves away from the group.

During the warm-up activity, there was a great deal of laughter and social talk. It appeared that this was an opportunity for the students to "unwind" after work. This behavior continued once the students broke up into their classes. At the end of class, students thanked the instructors and helped them re-arrange the chairs and tables. The overall atmosphere at this site seemed to be warm, informal, friendly, and relaxed.

Structure

At site A the class structure under the first instructor, Dan, seemed to be more rigid than the class structure under the second instructor, Mary. Dan planned his class around the order of his prepared handouts, which progressed from mechanical (using a chart to elicit verb conjugation) to cognitive and creative, with students making up their own sentences.

On August 8, 1994, Dan had seven women and one man in class. This was his last day of teaching with the program. Dan arrived at class at 3:00 to set up the classroom and organize his lesson. The bell rang at 3:30 and it took about five minutes for the students to settle down for class. On this particular day, students seated themselves in a half circle. Dan greeted the students and began the lesson.

First, Dan pointed to different sized yellow sticks to elicit days of the week. Next, he drew a picture of a sun on the dry-erase board. He then used a pointer to point at a particular student, and then pointed at the drawing and then to "D" on an alphabet chart that was hanging behind him to elicit "Sunday." With fingers to his lips, gesturing for the students to be silent, he wrote "Sunday" and "sundee" on the board, explaining that many people say the latter. As he was explaining this, I saw a student pretending to point with a pointer while making a comment in her native language. This caused several other students to start laughing. I do not know if Dan noticed this; if he did, he did not comment or react to this behavior.

After reviewing the days of the week, Dan showed the students a clock, asking them "What time is it?" The time was 3:30. On the dry-erase board he had written a "?" and "or". He then pointed to the "or" to elicit other possible

responses. This activity continued for five minutes, with students responding to a variety of time expressions. Dan also explained that "4:15" or "A quarter after 4:00" would be more common responses than "A quarter past 4:00." Students seemed to be competent in expressing alternative time expressions.

At 3:50, Dan passed out a handout with "time" words meaning "now" or "past." He explained the handout to the students and then told the students to work together, figuring out which expressions meant "now" and which meant "past." As the students worked together on this, Dan stood in front of the class and waited. After five minutes, he warned students that some of the words can mean both "now" and "past". The "now" words or phrases included "Today", "currently", "presently" and "these days." "Past" words included "a year ago", "last week", "2 minutes ago" and "on Sunday." Words meaning both included "this morning" and "in 1994." Dan asked the students if everyone agreed and, if not, they would discuss questionable expressions. Some students indicated that they did not fully understand the handout. Dan explained that these expressions can be "past" or "now", depending on the time of day. Dan was interrupted at this point by the 4:00 o'clock bell. Employees who had been working overtime exited through the cafeteria and one more woman joined the class.

At 4:05, Dan asked "Anybody angry?" The context for this question was unclear to me. I was seated behind the students so I could not see their expressions. No one responded to this so Dan moved on to the next activity by asking "How do we make past?" "What's the rule?" When none of the students responded, he wrote "-ed" on the board. Next, he passed out a handout with the instructions "Write Present and Past" on the top of the page. He asked students to help each other fill in the correct verb forms. Beneath these spaces were

sentences with blank spaces for the students to write the correct form of the verb. At 4:45 Dan went over this handout with the students. Dan used his pointer to point at those students whom he wanted to write their responses on the board. After a student had written a sentence on the board, Dan asked the other students if the sentence was correct. If students did not respond, he silently pointed to any mistakes and looked to the others for correction. During this part of the lesson, Dan used some hand gestures which I did not understand. For example, he held out his hands, palms down, gesturing away from himself. A student told him, "Teacher, I don't understand!" Apparently, this gesture was meant to indicate "going to."

At 4:50 p.m., Dan pointed at Mary, who had been observing the class, asking if the students remembered her name. Mary had assisted Dan in the pre-assessment process at site A and was a familiar face to the students. After being introduced, Mary explained to the students that Dan was going to another class and that she would be the new teacher. Apparently, the students were not aware of this change and seemed surprised, asking him why he was teaching them for such a short time. Dan explained that a company he had worked for previously wanted him to come back and teach. At 5:00, Dan passed out his business card and said his farewells to the students.

The class structure under Mary differed from Dan's in that it seemed more relaxed and proceeded at a slower pace. For example, students seated themselves wherever they wanted. At first, some students continued to arrange the tables in a semi-circle; later, however, this practice was abandoned. Mary spoke with individual students, generally waiting until the students seemed settled before

beginning class. On a few occasions, however, Mary would signal that class was ready to begin by raising her voice to greet the students.

The class generally began with a conversational warm-up or a game, such as "Simon Says". This was followed by reading, pronunciation or grammar activities. The last 15 minutes of class were generally spent writing in journals or singing a song. These students really seemed to enjoy learning new songs. Mary would explain any unfamiliar vocabulary for the students and then lead the students in singing the song. During the last five weeks of class, Mary had a student teacher, Anne. When Anne was present, Mary tried to plan writing or reading activities in which the students would be divided into two levels for at least half of the class time. Anne taught the higher level students. She also taught the class as a whole several songs, including "Old MacDonald" and "The Bear Went Over the Mountain." Finally, Anne taught the students about table manners and how to follow directions for making gift boxes out of magazine paper. Occasionally, Mary assigned homework to the students.

The program at site B was different from site A in the way the classes were structured. There were two levels on Mondays and Wednesdays, with Kay teaching the lower level students and Pam teaching the more advanced level. On Tuesdays and Thursdays there were three classes and three teachers. Paul taught the intermediate and advanced students, Kay taught the beginning students, and Pam taught a literacy class for about 15 students with little or no ability in reading and writing.

I observed Pam's class during the second session. Pam's reading and writing class was the only class to be given homework on a consistent basis. The other instructors stopped assigning homework because only about 50% of the students returned the homework. All of Pam's students, however, seemed eager

to be given homework. At first, Pam asked the students if they wanted homework - the response was "Yes!" Eventually, Pam no longer asked the students if they wanted homework because they had come to expect it.

Pam began her class by taking roll and then handing back homework. The homework always included encouraging remarks, such as "Very well done!" or drawings of smiling faces. Next, Pam reviewed what had been introduced or practiced in the previous class. If students were not on task, Pam asked students to please listen. In addressing the class as a whole, Pam used the term 'ladies' or 'women' to refer to the students. This was in contrast to the manager and many of the supervisors and trainers, who referred to the women as 'girls'.

When reviewing or introducing new words, Pam repeated herself several times and then asked the students to repeat after her. Pam wrote words on the flip chart, calling on students to read or write down the words. After introducing or reviewing words, Pam had the students practice with the old and new words. This practice included writing sentences or short paragraphs, putting together strip stories made up of simple sentences, or filling in the blanks on a handout.

In addition to teaching the students to read and write new sight words, Pam helped the students learn to produce and write different sounds. For example, in introducing the [o] in 'olive', Pam brought a box of toothpicks to class and had each student take a toothpick. Next, she held up a can of olives and a can opener and asked the students to identify the objects. After writing these words on the flip chart, she asked one student to open the can, take an olive, and pass the can around the table. She explained to the students that "when you eat an olive, the olive is big so you have to open your mouth wide!" After demonstrating this, Pam asked students what sound 'olive' begins with.

She concluded this practice by having the students open their mouths wide and saying 'olive'. Finally, Pam told the students to contrast this sound with the sound of 'a' in 'apple' (a sound learned in a previous lesson) in front of a mirror at home.

The students in Pam's class appeared to be highly motivated to improve their reading and writing skills. Pam encouraged the students to actively participate by always making sure that every student was on task. In addition, Pam gave the students a number of 'pep talks', constantly telling the students that she was impressed with their achievements and encouraging them to try to achieve more with every class.

I observed Kay's class during the third session. The structure of Kay's class was to begin with a review of what had been learned in the previous class. Next, Kay would introduce a new topic or add to a previous lesson. Each lesson usually began with teacher-modeling of a concept or topic, followed by student practice, choral and individual responses, and some group or pair work. Kay was a very physical teacher, using her body and face to convey meaning. For example, to illustrate the meaning of 'fever' Kay put her hand to her forehead, saying "Hot!" To illustrate the concept of 'yesterday' Kay used her hand to wave over the back of her shoulder. To explain 'today' she used her index finger, pointed down at the floor. To indicate 'tomorrow' Kay used her hand, waving it away from herself. This appeared to be an effective method for reinforcing these concepts in the minds of the students. I noticed several students using these gestures as they tried to recall the correct words. In addition to these physical gestures and acting out of concepts, Kay was adept at drawing pictures on the paper taped to the wall behind her to illustrate concepts.

During a group activity in which the students were to discuss pictures of their families, Kay observed that many of the students had formed groups with others speaking the same native language. To encourage more use of English, Kay split the students into different language groups. At first, there appeared to be some resistance to this, particularly among the Russians. To counter this resistance, Kay physically moved the students' chairs so the students would be in different language groups. Later, Kay told the project evaluator that "at first, the groups weren't mixing It wasn't easy, but they are now coming together, whereas in the beginning, they weren't" (personal communication, September 30, 1994).

In addition to encouraging the students to speak more English amongst themselves, Kay actively encouraged students to participate in class. If she noticed that students were not participating, she would call on them by name to respond to a question. Kay offered her students a lot of encouragement. For example, she patted them on the back if they volunteered to perform in front of the class and told students "Very good!" or "Yes! That's excellent." If students did not know how to respond to a question, Kay asked the class if anyone could help provide an answer. If students seemed to be having difficulty with a lesson, Kay reassured them that it was okay to tell her if they did not understand. The students in Kay's class seemed relaxed and generally interested in the topics. Students appeared to be comfortable with one another, often laughing and teasing each other if someone made a mistake or did not know the answer to a question.

At site B, management introduced mandatory over-time of half an hour for many employees, including many of the students who were enrolled in the classes. As a result, the instructors had to revise their original class structure to

accommodate this over-time by planning a group warm-up for all of the students who finished work at 3:30 p.m. This group activity needed to be at an appropriate level for all the students from the different classes to be able to participate. In the beginning of the second term, the instructors tried to begin the group activity promptly at 3:35 p.m. Eventually, however, it became apparent to the instructors that the 3:30 students needed some time to unwind after work. Towards the end of the second term and throughout the third term, the instructors gave the students a few more minutes to prepare themselves for class. This group activity was planned by Kate and Pam, the instructors who taught Monday through Thursday. The third teacher, Paul, taught only on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The same activity was used for the Monday/Wednesday and Tuesday/Thursday groups. Kay and Pam generally led the group activity, while Paul assisted them.

At 4:00, the rest of the students finished work and joined the others. The 4:00 o'clock bell was a signal for the students to go to their respective classrooms. It took about five minutes for the late arrivals to get settled for class. These students, then, had only approximately 55 minutes of instruction per class, rather than 90 minutes. At the end of class, students returned their chairs to the cafeteria and left. The teachers remained behind for about 15 minutes, clearing away their teaching areas.

Classroom Management

At site A, the first instructor used primarily non-verbal gestures to manage the class. If the students were not on task or if he wanted silence he would raise a hand as if gesturing to "stop" and then put his index finger to his lips to indicate

"shh." To indicate that he was ready to begin the lesson, the instructor would stand silently in front of the students until he had their attention. When he wanted students to listen, he would cup his hand behind his ear. To generate individual responses, the instructor would point his pointer at a student and then at the question mark signal written on the dry-erase board. On other occasions he used a hand, gesturing toward himself, much as one gestures for someone to come over or to follow.

The second instructor at site A, Mary, communicated verbally with the students. Before class began, she wrote a list of the class activities for the day on the board. As students settled themselves down at the tables, she wandered around to the different tables, returning journals and greeting students. She signaled she was ready to begin the class by saying "OK everyone, let's begin" or "Good afternoon! How is everyone today?" This acted as a signal to the students that class was ready to begin. Mary would then go over the planned activities with the students. Mary was generally fairly tolerant of students speaking in their native languages to one another during group activities; however, on several occasions she said "OK everyone, let's speak in English!" or "Let's try to discuss this in English!" Mary tended to ignore it when students were conversing among themselves during a lesson because this generally did not last for an extended amount of time. If students appeared to be socializing during group work or during an activity, Mary would call on those students to respond to a question or ask them if they had a question. Students often giggled if they were not on task when she directed her attention towards them. If students were not participating in choral responses, Mary would call on those students, encouraging some kind of response. Some students in class would also occasionally assist in classroom management by telling others to be quiet.

On the first day of class, Mary wrote the classroom rules on the board in different colored markers. These rules included: "Have fun!" "OK to make mistakes" "Speak English!" "Laugh!" She explained these rules to the students, stressing the fact that it was OK to make mistakes and to have fun in class.

At site B, it appeared that there was a greater need for classroom management techniques to be employed. Perhaps this was due to the more informal relationship between the instructors and the students. In addition, the number of students was much greater than at site A and thus perhaps more difficult to control. It also appeared that some of the students had close relationships with each other. These students often spent the beginning of each class socializing with each other because there was no opportunity for socializing on the manufacturing floor.

Many of these students did not seem to be familiar with behavior that is deemed appropriate in the traditional classroom. For example, one woman sometimes left the warm-up activity, taking her chair to where her class met. During another warm-up activity in which students were standing around a table identifying common household objects, two students simply left to sit down. About one minute later, several other students sat down as well and started to eat some fruit that a student had brought from home. Several other students stood in a group, conversing with each other. At this point, the instructor asked, "Has it been a tiring day?" Most of the students, some of them laughing, answered that it had been a long day. Throughout the group activity, the teachers often had to tell students who were talking to each other to be quiet and to listen. Students who tended not to be active participants in the group activity often had to be encouraged to participate.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Type of Evaluation

The primary outside evaluator, Jim, met with the instructors at site B on September 30th to discuss their concerns about the evaluation process. He explained to the instructors that his evaluation method was subjective, as his primary interest was to add personal observations to information available. These personal observations would be incorporated in a capsule-form description of the company and the setting. According to Jim, "This is not a simple, straightforward thing to assess; rather, this will be more of a narrative of what I think worked and didn't work. My approach is really loose and subjective; I just try to get a feel for what makes a program work well" (personal communication, September 30, 1994). Jim's task was to observe and conduct interviews at the 15 different programs involved in the Northwest Consortium project. A summary of this information was provided to Jay (a pseudonym), who wrote the actual evaluation for the Consortium's Department of Education grant. Jim explained to the instructors that Jay had been hired two weeks previous to this meeting and he was trying to write the evaluation but he did not have any frame of reference for workplace education and would thus need to observe the classes to get a feel for what was going on in the classes.

During his interview of the instructors on September 30, 1994, Jim asked the instructors what their goals were and what their philosophy was. One instructor retorted that "I'm not eager to deal with this jargon!" Rather than discussing their philosophy of teaching, the instructors compromised by telling Jim what they hoped they had accomplished. Kay and Pam both mentioned that they hoped they had given their students the confidence to continue learning

English and helped them learn how to learn better. Pam described their approach towards teaching as being "Student centered, based on an emergent curriculum. In other words, we listen to the students, talk to them about their lives, and proceed from there. We take their lead because they are partners in building the curriculum. Also, lots of listening. That's the key."

Two teachers wanted to know how they could meet the post-assessment requirements of the grant without having to administer a paper and pencil test to the students. Jim agreed that some type of assessment that the instructors felt comfortable with was needed so that they could make some statement of what happened in the classes. The BEST instrument for measuring English language proficiency was considered for use as a post-test assessment instrument; however, due to time constraints this instrument was not used. Ultimately, no written assessment was collected; instead, the instructors submitted their own impressions of the program based on their personal judgment.

At site A, Mary determined that the outcomes for the program included 10 out of 10 students' showing improved communication skills and increased self-esteem. During the last week of classes, Mary handed out a post program participant survey sheet which the students were to fill out at home and return to Mary the following week. Mary had also planned to administer the BEST test; however, due to an unexpected plant closure she was unable to do so.

The instructors' plan for assessing student progress at site B was based on an on-going assessment process, in which the instructors met on a weekly basis to discuss student response and modify and plan curriculum. In addition, the instructors planned to measure the program impact on the workplace by meeting periodically with the plant manager and the union representatives to assess how the program was developing, whether any changes needed to be made, and how

the progress of the students was perceived (Partnership Plan, 1994). At site B, the instructors submitted their final report ("Partnership Plan") before the start of the third session, due to time constraints related to the grant. No report was submitted at the conclusion of the project.

Results of Evaluation: Site A

Based on the interviews and observations, Jim concluded that site A had had some problems:

> The teacher first assigned there had a more traditional approach to the classroom and apparently there was a significant retention problem. He eventually left and was replaced by another teacher, but the program had not accumulated the momentum that [site B] had. This site is much smaller and makes different lines. There are currently intermittent layoffs going on which makes continuity difficult. The class currently has an attendance of about ten out of a roster of thirty. It is also not the same ten in each class. Planning and continuity are a problem. The physical site is the cafeteria with a very noisy conditioning system. It is very difficult to hear, particularly a problem in an ESL class. In spite of all these limitations, the students who are there are actively engaged and there is a good feeling and energy in the class. Lacking the critical mass of numbers and continuity, it isn't as boisterous as [site B], but it is still a very warm environment and the interaction between the teacher and the students is very personal and connected. Like [site B], it is very apparent that the teacher really likes and cares about the students, an important ingredient in any learning situation.
> (Final Report, November 1994, p. 6)

As part of the program evaluation, Jim conducted two sets of student interviews in groups of three with both beginning and more advanced students. His rationale for this interview structure was that this would allow for someone to translate the responses of the beginning level students. Jim stated that these interviews were "extremely difficult in terms of getting in-depth responses to

questions" (Final Report, November 1994, p. 4). In discussing the results of his interviews with the students, Jim noted that there were several themes clearly expressed: 1) the teachers did an excellent job; 2) it was very difficult to come to class after working all day; 3) homework was difficult because the students had home responsibilities to take care of; and 4) students felt that the classes were helping them both at home with their families and on the job (p. 4).

After conducting these interviews, Jim noted that the general language level was significantly higher at site A. Three of the four students informed Jim that one of their main goals in taking the class was to improve their pronunciation so they could be understood both on and off the job. In addition, the students noted that they wanted to get better jobs that required English. While all of the students felt they had made progress, they felt that they had much more to learn. Three of the students indicated that they found the use of workplace vocabulary and situations helpful in the learning process. Finally, one woman told Jim that she particularly wanted to learn the names of the parts of her sewing machine so she could tell the supervisor what was wrong when it broke down   Finally, all of the students interviewed said they enjoyed the classes and that while the classes had made some difference in their level of understanding on the shop floor, they still needed to learn more (Final Report, p. 7).

Jim noted that "barriers to the learning process included the background noise in the classroom and the difficulty of having a class after one working all day. One student emphasized that it was important to not try to learn too many new things at once because she got confused" (p. 7).

In her meeting with Jim on September 30, 1994, Mary noted that the biggest complaint at site A was that the classes had been too difficult under the first instructor. There had been a high drop-out rate and there had been

complaints made to the union about the instructor. This teacher was transferred to another site and Mary was brought in after a two-week break. Mary mentioned that she had inadequate time for curriculum development. Another problem was the company-related or controlled factors, such as lay-offs or down time. This had a negative effect on the continuity of the classes at site A. Finally, the abrupt termination of the classes when the plant went on an unscheduled shutdown did not give her a sense of closure with this class.

Despite these problems, Mary felt that the work with the union contract, the appearance of the chief shop steward at class to talk about grievance procedures and the additional activities on how to process a grievance form helped the students understand more of their rights at the plant.

In addition to the evaluation results contained in the Final Report, I asked stakeholders at site A if they felt the classes had been helpful. Stakeholders made the following comments towards the end of the third session:

The Head Supervisor:

> The ESL class has been helpful to the employees who participated. Some of the students have shown a new interest in communicating and understanding their work here at [Company X].

Another Supervisor:

> I feel the classes were a help to the operators who went. I haven't noticed much verbal improvements as of yet, but I have overheard them joking about how they say things and how they should say things.

Office Supervisor:

> I feel that the classes have been a benefit inasmuch as the operators seem more relaxed about communicating with us on a day-to-day manner, not so timid or shy even though I haven't heard much improvement in their English.

The general tone of the responses at site A seems to convey a slightly less enthusiastic endorsement of the program. Perhaps this is a reflection of this site's more passive involvement with the English classes.

Results of Evaluation: Site B

Based on his on-site observations and interviews with stakeholders and participants, Jim concluded that the strengths of the program at site B were the following: 1) apparently highly motivated and enthusiastic students; 2) instruction broken into three levels, including one section emphasizing reading and writing; 3) teachers extremely dedicated, creative and responsive; 4) low tech, inexpensive materials; 5) the weekly meeting for teachers to debrief, plan and adjust goals and curriculum; and finally, 6) the team teaching aspect of this program.

Weaknesses in the program were the following: 1) the mandatory overtime, which reduced class length to one hour for many students; 2) the very poor classroom conditions, with crowding, no blackboards, etc.; 3) the apparent passive participation by the company. In the overall assessment of institutional support by partners in the Northwest Consortium project, the project evaluator concluded that

> the allowance by most companies for instructor presence and influence within the workplace, and the provision of space, time and pay, all increased the likelihood that learners felt comfortable and motivated to train....[Company X] was an apparent exception to this support, with passive participation by the company (Summative External Evaluation Report, December 1994, p. 39).

Jim in his general notes and reflections submitted for the final External Evaluation (November 1994, p. 4), asserted that "For workplace education programs to really

work, all the stakeholders have to be truly involved, not just nominally, in developing and implementing the educational program." In this particular case, the company appeared not to be truly involved in the program. This apparent passive participation on the part of the company was an impression shared by the student teacher at site A. She noted that she felt that

> the company was passive about the classes, not quite suspicious, but giving a sense that the people presenting and the time for the class interfered with the company's real purpose of production and profit maintenance....On the couple of occasions when I interacted with the company staff in different offices or positions, I found them to be very detached from the program, as if it was a slight imposition rather than the very thing that would help (personal communication, October 31, 1994).

As part of his assessment of the instructors, Jim observed the instructors at both sites and later interviewed two of the instructors from site B together. He concluded that the instructors at site B were extremely dedicated, creative and responsive:

> These are very special teachers in a very special project. The phrase that kept coming up in my mind was 'the extra mile.' These people are willing to go the extra mile to get the background information they need to pick the lock of the learning process...The teachers have no false pride. They will do anything to get their point across. I saw a teacher on hands and knees digging like a dog to illustrate the word shovel. Another fed her students black olives to demonstrate the sound. Students know that the teachers are totally for them. (Final Report, November 1994, pp. 2-4)

In his assessment of the instructors at site A, Jim did not have the opportunity to observe the first instructor. After observing and interviewing the second instructor, Mary, Jim asserted that "Like [site B], it is very apparent that the teacher really likes and cares about the students, an important ingredient in any learning situation" (Final Report, November 1994, p. 4). In his final, overall

assessment of the instructors in this project, Jim concluded that the instructors were one of the primary strengths of the program:

> It was clear that these classes were based on great mutual respect and appreciation. This fundamental recognition of the dignity and value of the learner is a very active ingredient in the whole mix....the mutual respect was built on the willingness of the teachers to be learners about the workplace and their ability to honestly appreciate the knowledge and contribution of the learners. Teachers need to like and respect the people they are teaching. You can't teach that, but you can identify it and make teachers more aware of the impact of expressing that respect and affection when it honestly exists. What is happening at the sites range from good to exceptional. The key factor is that the teachers have taken the particularities of the situations they have found themselves in and made the most of it. They are engaged, creative and obviously very committed.

Based on these comments, it would appear that Jim considers an instructor's sincere concern and care for student progress, as well as genuine respect for the learners, to be essential ingredients in creating a successful learning environment. The instructors in this program possessed these qualities and deserve to be recognized as being a primary strength of this project.

At the end of the classes, I was able to informally interview some of the stakeholders to learn their final assessment of the program. The following comments were recorded during the closing party at site B on October 27, 1994: The local union president:

> I hated to see the funding end. I hope other funding can be found because I really think this program made a difference. It was a big help. It increased the workers' confidence. They're more likely to stop and say something to someone and give the language a try. You notice differences on the floor - it's not just a smile, it's a conversation. It's great!

One of the instructors, Kay:

> I never fail to be amazed at how the human spirit is revealed in
> English class with perseverance and hope. At the beginning levels,
> people come to class with nothing or next to nothing and end up
> with a real belief that they can do things that they couldn't do
> before. I think the program was more successful than any of us
> could've hoped for.

The Northwest Consortium project director:

> The team of instructors at [Company X] were world-class. I
> recognize that the success of any workplace education program has
> as much to do with 'caring' as with any other factor.

The community college coordinator:

> The U.S. Government funded this project for over 100 students from
> China, Korea, Russia, Viet Nam, Thailand, Cambodia, Romania, Laos,
> Japan, and the Ukraine. They did it to help workers become lifelong
> learners who will continue to learn and will be able to learn new
> skills. I believe that this is what has happened here in this program.

Pam, an instructor:

> The different ethnic groups are able to talk among themselves,
> where before they couldn't understand each others' English. It's
> been a real privilege to be a part of a project that brings positive
> change into people's lives. By learning English the women can feel
> more connected to the other people that work here and they can
> take control over their work lives.

Union local vice-president:

> Everyone that took the class learned a lot and had fun while they
> were learning. I've enjoyed watching them and talking to them.

> There has been a definite improvement in the amount of
> conversation.

Plant manager:

> The classes have been very helpful to the students. It's been a pleasure to give them an opportunity to learn English. Many people will practice English during breaks and lunch. I've watched the operators during breaks and they would speak English! I hope there will be more funding down the road to continue the English classes.

Students' comments generated during an activity in which they were asked to say if they did or did not like the English classes:

1. "I like English class because I learned more words and I learned more things and to speak better."

2. "I like English class because I like my teachers and to learn English."

3. "I like English class because I learn right way to speak and pronounce too."

4. "I like to learn English because when they say something I don't understand. I want to understand the people."

5. "I like English class because I really need to learn English. And I can read the book. Watch T.V. and I can looking for a good job."

6. "I like English class because I live in the U.S.A. and work and I go out to store and meet friends."

7. "I like English class because easy for me to communication with American people. I want to understand the new in the T.V. I want to speak good English and read English very well."

8. "I like English class because I like my teachers and like English langrich too, I dream to meet a nice, honest American man for married!"

One of the student teachers who taught at site B during the third session made the following observation:

> I noticed that at the end of the six weeks, there was noticeably more communication was happening between the different ethnic groups. At the beginning, they couldn't understand each other's English. At the end, they were asking each other questions and were able to write down the responses. The Union officials, plant manager and supervisors were all commenting on how much more communication was going on and how excited they were about the success of this project (Personal communication, Nov. 11, 1994).

The Northwest Consortium project director felt that the program was a success. He noted that having the teachers at the union meeting was an example of "profound intervention for learning. This was a real learning moment for every one...the instruction became part of the culture, of the community of learners. This learning in context was a real transformation" (personal communication, Nov. 1994). He asserted that the company benefited from the funding but its investment in the program had been only marginal. As a result of the incident involving the union meeting, the company saw a clear result of improved communication. In his opinion, this had the added and hoped-for benefit that the company probably 'bought in' to the program because of this experience. The project director felt also that the union incident created a greater sense of alliance between the instructors and the students.

In addition, the program director felt that the "histograms", i.e. the students' personal stories, had a profound impact on everyone involved in the program because these gave the students an opportunity to "get their story out to the company, which made a real difference. This let the rest of the group [the other employees] accept this group 'into the fold'. Otherwise, immigrant workers are often isolated from the mainstream culture of the workplace" (personal communication, November 1994).

The impact of this final poster project and the program are best expressed in the words of one of the students at site B, "Sae", who put an enormous amount of effort into depicting her story. Sae could barely read or write because she grew up in Laos, where the Mien people had no written language. Sae was a stubborn person, claiming she could not read or write even when ultimately able to write and read all of the sight words her instructor had taught her. However, she had great pride in her culture and took great joy in sharing her culture with others. Throughout the last week, she continually added to her portion of the story, drawing pictures of palm trees and her house in her country. She dictated her life story to her daughter and then brought this story to class, sharing it with all of the instructors and other students. Taped next to these drawings was a note she had asked her children to write to the plant manager and her supervisor: "Mr. F. and D., Thank you for helping me with the language class. I'm glad for the teachers and the help they gave me. Thank you." When a reporter from The Oregonian came to visit the classes in November, Sae took her on a personal tour of the poster. This reporter was so impressed with Sae's story that she devoted much of the subsequent article to her:

> [Sae] learned her job by observing. The Lao immigrant studied
> other workers, following their hands as they pressed the collars of
> plaid shirts at [Company X]. For 11 years, she worked this way,
> learning to communicate by pointing or signaling. As time passed,
> [Sae] learned simple phrases: "machine broke" and "too tight." She
> wanted to learn English, but with a husband and three children, she
> had little time for classes. [Sae] learned to do without. "I knew the
> way around it," [Sae] said. "I could guess about something at work.
> You go so long not knowing something, you learn to live that way.
> I didn't know where to go, how to say I wanted classes."
> (Oregonian, November 10, 1994)

When Sae learned of the English classes, she enrolled without hesitation. According to Sae, "I was no longer afraid. My kids were grown, it was right here, it was time to do it." (Oregonian, November 10, 1994). This was the first opportunity Sae ever had to go to school. Now, Sae wants to take more classes. As for her feelings about the program, Sae remarked that "I no longer have to stay quiet when I don't understand something....Even if I still wonder how to say some words, it's so much better now" (Oregonian, November 10, 1994).

The reporter later wrote that "The stories, even if only a sentence or a paragraph with grammatical errors or misspellings, are accomplishments" (Oregonian, November 10, 1994).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of Chapter IV was to provide enough descriptive data to answer the questions, "How is an English in the Workplace program developed and implemented? What do those characteristics of workplace education programs, as identified in the literature, 'look like' once such a program has been implemented?" The description pointed out how this particular English in the Workplace pilot program was developed and implemented. From Chapter IV a reader would understand the characteristics of workplace education as well as the advantages and limitations of this type of education.

In this chapter, I will move away from the specific data of the study and examine the limitations of this study. In addition, I will look at the conclusions and recommendations I have drawn from the experience of this participant observation research. These include four areas of discussion:

1. Recommendations for developing and implementing an English in the Workplace program.

2. Conclusions regarding the differences between teaching in the workplace and the traditional classroom, as well as recommendations for instructors in the workplace.

3. Conclusions concerning the benefit of participant observation research.

4. Recommendations for further research.

Developing and Implementing an English in the Workplace Program

After the experience of observing and participating in the pilot program described in this study, I believe that this research supports what others have said regarding developing and implementing an English in the workplace program. The following conclusions and recommendations are based on the literature, as well as on findings from this study that support the literature:

1. A successful program is one that is flexible and remains responsive to the individual needs of the workers (Sarmiento & Kay, 1990; McGroarty, 1993; McGroarty & Scott, 1993; N. Chally, personal communication, 1994). Some workers may need English for purposes other than work. Perhaps workers need to learn how to communicate with their children's teachers. Other workers may need assistance in developing or expanding their writing or reading skills. Some workers may want to learn more about American culture and appropriate workplace behavior. In the pilot program described in this study, the instructors met the workers' needs for English for purposes other than work by incorporating general ESL activities into the curriculum. For example, the instructors introduced the students to the importance of small talk in American culture. Other activities included learning about American holidays, learning the names of common household items, and discussing why some people are uncomfortable if others are using languages which they do not understand in their presence. Finally, some workers may have a good command of the language, yet require additional practice in making their speech more intelligible to others. In this program, the instructors recognized the need for pronunciation practice and incorporated this into the class content.

The importance and benefit of remaining flexible when teaching in the workplace was exemplified in this study by the union meeting incident.

The instructors had not been informed of the meeting; nonetheless, they managed to turn the meeting into a genuine learning experience for everyone involved in the program. Their intervention on behalf of the students provided all of the stakeholders and participants with a concrete example of how instruction at the workplace can have a direct impact on the company. After the meeting, the instructors incorporated the content of the meeting into subsequent lessons.

2. Instructors in the workplace must balance the needs of the employer with the needs of the target population, and pay close attention to what each group considers the program's purpose to be. Instructors should consider the motivation of the students because students may not always want to talk or learn about work. McKay notes that "employees may have literacy needs regarding such issues as legalization, certification requirements, or job mobility, which go beyond the scope of management's expectations for literacy" (1993, p. 68). This program met the needs of both the employer and the employees by developing an emergent curriculum that included both workplace and general ESL instruction.

Instructors should also consider the motivation of the employer in providing workplace education classes. For example, if the employer is funding a workplace education program in the belief that a workplace-specific program will help the business run more efficiently, then the employer may not recognize the value of implementing a workplace-general program that includes more general skills, such as seeking clarification or complaining about unfair treatment (Richer, 1982; Alamprese, 1993; McKay, 1993).

3. It is essential to educate the company about the necessary steps involved in a successful workplace education program (Caulder, et al [no date]; Krusemark, 1990; Lewe, 1991; Hellman, 1995). The company needs to have a better understanding of the value of funding sufficient curriculum development time

and needs assessment time. This was not a consideration in the program described in this study as the program was funded by a federal grant. The instructors and project director must ensure that management's expectations of the program are reasonable. For example, if management expects the instructors to teach the workers English in four hours, the instructors need to inform and educate management about the realities of learning another language. In this program, the project director negotiated with the company to provide language instruction over three 6 week sessions. Finally, employers should be encouraged to support ESL instruction in the workplace as a long-term improvement strategy, not a "quick fix" solution to a perceived communication problem. During the final six week session, the project coordinator for site B met with the company's corporate management to discuss the feasibility of providing the workers with additional language instruction.

4. Negotiations for at least 50-50 release time for the workers should be agreed to during the planning stages (Krusemark, 1990; N. Chally, personal communication, 1994; Hellman, 1995). For example, a worker taking a two-hour class would be paid for one of the hours, with the second hour as volunteered time. If employees are given release time or are compensated in some way for their participation (i.e., bonuses, pay for skills, etc.), more participation and steady class attendance are likely to occur (Sauve, 1982; Belfiore & Burnaby, 1984; Isserlis et al, 1988; La Perla, 1988; Hellman, 1995). At site A, the number of students participating in the classes might have been greater if the students had been given some type of incentive to attend class; however, the union had stipulated that it did not want the company to pay the students to attend classes because it wanted participation to be completely voluntary.

5. Advisory committees should be created to assess whether the program is meeting the goals of everyone involved in the program. Workers may feel intimidated by the presence of supervisors and management; therefore, there should be several committees, with one made up of workers and the other made up of supervisors, trainers and management. In the meetings with the latter, the instructor should keep the supervisors, trainers and management up to date on classroom activities and lesson plans. In the meetings with workers, the instructor should discuss with the students which lessons have successfully met their needs. These committees should meet at the beginning, middle, and at the end of the program. There were no advisory committees formed in the program described in this study. The lack of advisory committees to assess whether the goals of everyone involved in the program were being met, as well as any formal final evaluation, were perhaps the major weaknesses of this pilot program.

6. Instructors should be chosen who are comfortable with making the transition from the traditional classroom to the workplace (Caulder et al, [no date]; Sauve, 1982; Chally, 1994; Hellman, 1995). The instructors in this program were all experienced workplace instructors and did not appear to have any difficulties making the transition from the traditional classroom to the workplace. Such a transition can be facilitated through a greater understanding of the main differences between instruction in the traditional classroom and instruction in the workplace. These differences are discussed in greater detail in the following section.

Differences Between Teaching in The Workplace and The Traditional Classroom

Workplace ESL differs from traditional classroom ESL in the preparation, instruction, and evelation of the program. Table IV, adapted from Morton and

Gee (1995, p. 1), highlights the primary differences between the traditional ESL classroom and the workplace ESL classroom:

TABLE IV

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TRADITIONAL ESL & WORKPLACE ESL

	Traditional ESL	Workplace ESL
PREPARATION		
	1. Review of curriculum 2. Assessment of learner's needs (placement testing) 3. Selection of teaching materials	1. Tour of facility 2. In-depth needs analysis 3. Assessment (how to group workers; accountability to grant) 4. Collection and development of workplace materials
INSTRUCTION		
	1. Physical environment of the traditional classroom 2. Support from colleagues, program staff and administration 3. Focus on life or academic skills	1. Physical environment and schedule determined by the company 2. Support varies, depending on the situation 3. Focus on workplace-specific or workplace-general skills
EVALUATION		
	1. Measuring success: retention rate, learning gains, advancement to next level 2. Accountability to various constituencies: (a) students (b) program administrators (c) educational agency	1. Measuring program success: (a) formative (on-going assessment) (b) summative assessment 2.Accountability to various sources 3.Must demonstrate impact on learner and company

In preparing for a traditional ESL class, the instructor can often build from or adapt curricula from previous classes at the same level. In the workplace, however, the instructor must conduct a needs analysis to determine the appropriate course content and delivery.

Instruction in the traditional ESL class usually takes place in a classroom with desks or tables, a blackboard, etc. In addition, the class schedule is usually determined in advance. In the workplace ESL classroom, the instructor may find himself or herself teaching in the cafeteria, in a basement room, a meeting room, or wherever the company has space. The workplace instructor may also be asked to teach at different hours, rather than following a pre-determined schedule.

Evaluation in the traditional ESL classroom is usually determined by students' demonstrated learning gains and advancement to the next level. These are generally determined by written tests or placement test scores. Instructors are accountable to the students, the program administrators, and the educational institution. In contrast, the EWP instructor faces the challenge of developing a site-appropriate method for measuring success. In addition, the EWP instructor must determine how to demonstate the impact of the program on both the students and the company. Finally, the EWP instructor is accountable to various sources, including management, the participants, supervisors, program directors, the educational partner, and the grant, when applicable.

Because of these significant differences, ESL instructors coming from a traditional classroom need training in order to be prepared to implement an EWP program. Although ESL instructors bring a high degree of teaching expertise and experience with them into the workplace, they must also possess other skills. The EWP instructor needs the following:

1. Ability to communicate with all personnel in the workplace.

2. Understanding of the company's culture and organization.

3. Ability to articulate the place of English language instruction within the company's goals and needs.

4. Ability to promote greater cross-cultural understanding and communication.

5. Knowledge of needs assessment procedures and how to incorporate the results of the needs assessment into the curriculum.

6. Ability to develop workplace-specific and workplace-general learning materials suitable for the target population.

7. Flexibility. Productivity comes first in the workplace; therefore, classes may be canceled unexpectedly. Attendance may also fluctuate due to production or personal needs.

8. Sensitivity towards the students. Workplace students may have a high level of fear about taking classes.

Study Limitations

This descriptive study has attempted to portray a holistic picture of one type of EWP program. However, this study was constrained by a number of limitations. First, due to scheduling conflicts, I was unable to observe the program from start to finish. The agreement between the partners and the needs assessment had already been concluded by the time I learned of the project. As a result, I had to rely on second-hand reports of how the program agreement was reached and how the needs assessment was conducted. These reports, as well as written material, were difficult to gather because of the number of different people involved in the Northwest Consortium. It was not always clear through which channels one had to go to access information.

A second limitation of the study was that I was unable to observe the program in its entirety. The first of the scheduled three sessions began while I was attending Spring term at Portland State University. In addition, while I observed all of the second session and part of the third session, classes were scheduled for both sites at the same time. Therefore, I was not able to observe all of the classes.

The third limitation involved my role as a participant observer. Yin notes that "Participant observation provides certain unusual opportunities for collecting case study data, but it also involves major problems" (1984, p. 87). One advantage of acting as a participant observer, according to Yin, is that the researcher is able "to perceive reality from the viewpoint of someone 'inside' the case study rather than external to it" (p. 87). In this study, my participation included working with individual students during paired or group activities, assisting the instructors with materials preparation before the beginning of classes, and participating in the group warm-up activities.

Problems with participant observation have to do with the potential biases which such an approach might produce. Yin discusses three such potential problems: (1) the investigator may have "less ability to work as an external observer and may, at times, have to assume positions or advocacy roles contrary to the interests of good scientific practices" (p. 87), (2) the participant observer may become an impartial supporter of the case being studied, and (3) the participant observer may not have enough time to take adequate notes. In this study, I experienced the second and third of these problems. As I became more familiar with the program and with the participants, I did indeed find myself supporting the 'case'; in this instance, the case being the pilot program. My role as a participant observer may have resulted in my being less impartial than if I had

just been observing the classes. Another limitation was that I did not always have time to take adequate notes. For example, when I participated in group activities, I had to rely on my memory (I could not immediately record field notes).

Perhaps the biggest limitation in this study involved my own personal limitations as a researcher. First, as an advocate of classroom research, I had not considered that other instructors might not share my enthusiasm for this type of research. Although the instructors could objectively recognize the value of such research, they did not necessarily want it occurring in their classrooms. I was not adequately prepared to meet this type of resistance.

At first, the instructors were suspicious of me, wondering if I had a "hidden agenda." This was also the case with the project director. Even though the project director had given me the initial permission to observe this project, he later told me that trust was an issue. He did not know me personally; therefore, how could he trust me? Because of this issue of trust, I cannot be certain that I was given complete access to the program.

In general, the instructors at site B tolerated my presence; however, one instructor, who joined the project four weeks before instruction was scheduled to begin, had not been informed of my participation in the project. I had been told by the project director that all of the instructors had agreed to let me observe their classes. Unfortunately, this particular instructor had not been told that I would be observing the group and thus she did not know who I was or what I wanted. Her main concern was that I would place demands on their time that should be devoted to students. I later discovered that the instructors had agreed to my observing the classes because it was their understanding that I would help them teach the classes. The instructors originally wanted me to teach a class by myself; however, this was at cross purposes with the objectives of my study. Although I

cannot specifically determine how, I am certain that these misunderstandings placed certain limitations on this study because I had not considered the political implications involved in this type of study. I would recommend that a researcher involved in case study research have meetings with all stakeholders and participants to clarify his or her role in the study. A written statement of one's objectives might help prevent future misunderstandings.

A final limitation of this study was my inability to always remain objective in recording what I observed. As I could not always ask the students how they felt about a particular class or activity, I had to base my judgements on their actions and expressions. For example, the instructors at site B thought that the group activity in which they taught the students how to do the "hokey pokey" was fun for the students. I, on the other hand, observed that some of the students seemed embarrassed and uncomfortable with this activity. Several students were unwilling participants, participating only when they were drawn into the circle by the instructors when they noticed that these students were hanging back. In addition, there were some other activities that I did not feel were particularly effective; this may have resulted in personal bias influencing how I recorded these events.

Benefit of Participant Observation Research

Participant observation research seems to be a particularly beneficial research tool to instructors. The instructors could be taught how to use this type of research in their own classroom or in other instructors' classrooms. As an instructor, the teacher is already a participant in the classroom. By consciously observing their own behavior and that of the students, instructors could begin to view the classroom as a social setting that can change.

In addition, instructors might feel more empowered because they would become aware of how individuals affect settings and how settings affect individuals. They would see how small changes or adaptations in their behavior or in the classroom environment could result in significant learning changes. For example, perhaps an instructor who is accustomed to giving weekly written tests to evaluate students' learning could try another format for evaluating students' progress. After this 'trial run' the instructor could ask the students how they feel about the new format. The instructor might discover that some students believe that written tests do not adequately reflect their abilities. By actively involving the students in their own learning process, both the instructor and the students could gain valuable insights which could result in significant learning changes.

Another benefit of participant observation is that this type of research is conducive to promoting greater self-reflection and awareness about one's teaching. Perhaps instructors would become aware of contradictions between what they said they were interested in fostering in their classrooms and the actual practices they employed. For example, perhaps an instructor maintains that he or she is interested in the personal lives of the students, but avoids discussing personal issues. Instructors who support communicative learning might discover that their instructional style stifles, rather than promotes, communicative learning.

Finally, there are practical benefits of participant observation research. By offering to participate in or simply to observe other colleagues' classrooms, an instructor could provide colleagues with insights into their classroom. In addition, an instructor can add to his or her teaching repertoire by discovering new ideas or approaches to incorporate into his or her own classroom. This type of research is a practical way for instructors to be actively involved in their own and in their colleagues' professional development.

There are a number of benefits of participant observational research that should be explored by instructors, including self-reflection and a greater understanding of the classroom as a social setting. The tools of qualitative research (observing, interviewing, interpreting) can be readily adapted to fit any teaching environment.

Recommendations For Further Research

This study added to the understanding of workplace education programs by specifically describing the characteristics of a particular English in the Workplace pilot program. In this study, I was focusing on the intrinsic characteristics of workplace education. I did not examine or consider the potential impact of these programs. For example, knowledge of English can give workers increased power and greater ability to contribute to the company. Thus, perhaps a consequence of an EWP program is that it might change the dynamics of the company culture by giving the non-native speakers increased participation in the company.

Another possible impact of an EWP class is that it may have a possible negative effect of increasing separation between native speakers and non-native speakers. McKay, in her discussion of problems in implementing workplace literacy programs, notes that

> Several unions are ambivalent about the inclusion of English in the workplace and about release time for such courses. This is primarily because the co-workers of language minority workers are often openly hostile to the idea of language minority workers getting what they see as 'preferential treatment'. (1993, p. 67)

Further research might examine how co-workers feel about EWP programs. McKay's observation suggests the need for more articulation to the other workers

so that they do not feel that the non-native speakers are receiving special attention. For example, management could inform the native speakers that they are offering these classes to non-native speakers to try to integrate them into the company.

In addition to the need for research exploring other facets of workplace education, I support the Center for Applied Linguistic's Adult Immigrant Project's recommendation for "developing a network of experienced practitioners in workplace, vocational, and certification...ESL to share 'what works and why', and pinpoint research, materials, and training needs in the field." (ESL Notes, Spring 1994, p. 2) In this study, the instructors agreed that working as a team was one of the primary advantages of the pilot program. They suggested that this teamwork was a refreshing change from their previous experience of working in isolation (personal communication, September 30, 1994). A network would help alleviate instructors' feeling of isolation by providing instructors with a forum for discussing workplace education.

Although this study may have limited applicability to other workplace programs, it has provided a description of one particular pilot English in the Workplace program. The characteristics of the program described in this study are context-bound because the focus is on one company. Because the characteristics of this program reflect the context in which the program took place, the study is not generalizable. A researcher studying another program in another context might discover elements not identified in this study. Therefore, it is recommended that other descriptive case study research of programs reflecting other contexts be conducted. Finally, additional research is needed to better understand the effects of workplace education, not just characteristics.

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