

Workplace Literacy: An Old Idea Presenting Opportunity for Current Growth

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Workplace adult education and literacy activities



Collaboration with employer or employee organization (e.g. union)



Designed to meet the *employer's* goals and improve efficiency of the workforce



Curriculum generally contextualized, task-based, English for specific purposes (ESP)



Result in employees gaining skills that may make them eligible for pay raises or promotions



MSG 4 progress milestones are *verified by the employer* (letter, progress report, completed training checklists, workplace assessments, etc. uploaded to student portfolio in ADVANSYS)

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Ideally...

- Employees are paid to attend and have input into course design
- Collaborative & participatory
- Career ladder is clear
- Milestones are celebrated
- Data is useful for both company & provider
- Program leads to measurable improvements in productivity, promotions, retention, safety, etc.

Benefits

- Improves follow-up outcomes for employment & earnings after exit
- Reduces NRS testing burden if you use Alternate Placement



- Serves employers
- Students gain recognition, skills, and advancement opportunities
- MSG 4 outcomes

Literacy Together



- ELA class at Mills Manufacturing
- Two hours once a week, led by volunteer tutors
- Curriculum is both general & workplace English, including safety, record keeping, industrial sewing equipment, processes & patterns

A-B Tech



- ELA class at System Logistics
- 12-week class, Thurs. mornings
- Curriculum includes essential English grammar, workplace safety, company policies, and career growth opportunities

Surry Community College

- ELA class at Applied Polymerics
- Curriculum designed around skills checklist and selected NC ABE/ASE Content Standards
- Outlined with MOU
- Certificates given to recognize student achievement milestones

Workplace English Skills Progress Checklist

This checklist is designed to track employee progress toward key communication goals in the workplace. Each goal is broken down into smaller milestones to help guide instruction and measure achievement. Supervisors may use the notes section to provide feedback or observations. All milestones will be conducted by the employer in an interview assessment.

Milestone	Met? (Supervisor signature, date)	Notes
Able to report an equipment malfunction/issue. Identify and name basic equipment/vehicle parts in English.		

Blue Ridge Community College

- ELA class 3-8 hrs/wk in 4-8 week sessions
- General ELA + company-specific vocabulary, safety protocol, HR processes, etc.
- Company commitment to growing internal talent through training, mentorship, stretch assignments, etc.



- Company goal for 70% of new positions to be hired from within.

Fayetteville Tech



Photo by Master Sgt. Alexander Burnett, 82nd Airborne Division

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Darren Wallace, 82nd Airborne Division

Photo by Sgt. Steven Galimore, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade

**Fort Bragg
Education
Center**



**SUPPORTING THE
STUDENT
WARRIOR
IS WHAT WE DO!**

- 1-month class
- Helps soldiers improve GT scores to be eligible for promotion
- Math, reading, vocabulary
- [Basic Skills Education Program \(BSEP\) :: Fort Bragg](#)



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READINESS

Which providers have offered Workplace Literacy recently?

A-B Tech Community College
Blue Ridge Community College
Edgecombe Community College
Fayetteville Tech Community College
Guilford Tech
Literacy Together
Mayland Community College
McDowell Community College
Surry Community College
Wilkes Community College

Surry Community College ran a Workplace Literacy advertisement in the college's Workforce/ConEd Catalog/Mailer.

Attend local HR Association lunch & learn events to network.

Spread the word to NCEdge and ApprenticeshipNC connections.

Lean on your Local Workforce Development Board to help you get the word out.

Workplace Literacy

NEW

ATTENTION EMPLOYERS!

The College and Career Readiness department offers a no-cost, on-site Workplace Literacy program designed to meet the specific literacy needs of your organization. In partnership with your team, customized goals and clear milestones are established to support a skilled, productive, and confident workforce.

Instruction may include job-specific English language training for non-native speakers and/or high school equivalency preparation. All services are delivered at your location with minimal disruption to daily operations.

To learn more or discuss how this customizable program can support your workforce development goals, please contact the College and Career Readiness department.



Designing the Program

- Tour** the workplace & talk with HR, supervisors, and employees. What do they hope to achieve with this class? Are they also working with another partner (e.g. NCEdge Customized Training, ApprenticeshipNC)? What is the potential career ladder? What skills would employees need to develop in order to be competitive for the next promotion?
- Agree** upon program length, timing, location, how employees will be recruited/selected, whether or not they'll be paid, and what the agreed-upon learning outcomes should be. **Establish MOU.**
- Complete** IET Template for Workplace Literacy (MSG 4) and **submit** it to the Career Pathways Moodle Portal. Include employer letter on letterhead and/or MOU.

Designing the Program, Continued

- ❑ **Gather** relevant artifacts from the workplace (photos, sample dialogues, job descriptions, employee handbooks, etc.)

- ❑ **Select** or design curriculum and assessments. Consider task-based assessments. Are results meaningful to employer? Could results be added to employee's résumé or file, providing evidence of skills for potential future promotion? Examples:
 - HSE subtest or diploma
 - WorkKeys CRC subtest at bronze, silver, or gold
 - Demonstrating speaking & listening skills in real communication task like sample interview, reverse job fair, training new hire, assessing staged accident and completing incident report, handling fake customer complaint. Use rubric.

Designing the Program, Continued

- Identify & orient** instructor to the teaching site, class requirements, and the plan for achievement and documentation of measurable outcomes. Share the company's "why" for the program.
- Discuss** ideas for program culmination – graduation party, reverse job fair, student presentations, opportunities for promotion, students highlighted in company newsletter/bulletin board, connection with pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship opportunities.
- Launch** the class!
- Anticipate** natural times for reflection, updates to employer, and program improvement planning based on data.

Student enrollment notes

- Consider using Alternate Placement in lieu of NRS pre-testing (described in the Assessment Manual)
- What role will the company play in student enrollment? Will their HR team help with student selection, communicating with supervisors, advising and career counseling?
- On LEIS & ADVANSYS demographics, remember to mark “Workplace Literacy.”
- In ADVANSYS add IET secondary registration type.

Memo: Milestones for High School Equivalency (HSE) Students

In the recent past, Baxter Healthcare facility at North Cove (Marion, NC) removed the high school diploma (or equivalent) criteria for employment. With this change, several new employees have been hired who do not possess this credential. In order for an employee to progress to higher level/paying positions within the facility, he/she must have obtain their HS diploma or equivalent.

Opportunity for pay raise or promotion

Baxter has partnered with McDowell Technical Community College to offer classes to employees on site. The following achievements are considered measurable milestones for employees as they work toward their High School Equivalency:

Classes being held on site at employer – not at college site

- **HiSet[®] Practice Test (from vendor website):**

For each individual content area (Math, Reading, Writing, Science or Social Studies), the student scores a 10 or higher and is considered “Somewhat Prepared”, “Prepared” or “Well Prepared”.

- **HiSet[®] or GED High School Equivalency Test:**

Student passes a single content area test (Math, Reading, Writing, Science or Social Studies). Test must meet the minimum passing score provided by the manufacturer.

- **NorthStar Digital Literacy**

Earn a minimum of 85% on each of the following Northstar Assessments:

- Basic Computing Skills
- Internet Basics
- Using Email

Progress milestones set in collaboration with employer and specified in company letter, checklist or MOU

Documenting MSG 4 Results



Ensure student has Workplace Literacy in demographics and an IET secondary registration type in ADVANSYS.



Verify and document student achievement of previously agreed upon milestones with the employer.



Put evidence from employer in student's file.



Upload copy of evidence to student's portfolio in ADVANSYS.



Report outcome in ADVANSYS (IET/WP MSG Type 4: Progress towards milestones).



Remove Workplace Literacy and IET secondary enrollment, if appropriate.

Panel Discussion

1

Best success

What are you most proud of?

2

A hiccough

What was something that didn't go as you expected?

3

To improve

What would you change if/when you re-run this class or launch a new one?

Resources

- COABE [Beyond the First Meeting](#) A Guide for Beginning and Cultivating a Thriving Workplace Education Program – PDF resource from Sept. 2023
- [COABE Workforce Learning Special Collection](#) – PDF resource from Oct. 2025, free but requires registration & log-in
- COABE [Behind Every Employer](#) campaign (podcast, articles, web resources)
- [Utilizing MSGs 3, 4, & 5 to Capture Performance](#) – CCR PD Archives Webinar from April 19, 2023
- [State of NC Policy on MSGs 1-5 2024-2025](#) – PDF resource

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Questions