



Title of Report: English for a Hispanic Sales and Marketing Executive

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Training Organization: [Language Training Center, Inc.](#)¹ – Indianapolis, USA

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1. Identify and describe the training program.

Headquartered in Indianapolis, USA, Language Training Center, Inc. (LTC) has been creating tailored language solutions since 1992. LTC offers training in English and other languages, cross- cultural training, international business consulting, and translation and interpreting services. LTC offers these services to clients throughout the United States as well as in China.

The workforce training program spotlighted in this case report is the private language instruction program of Language Training Center, Inc. Individual classes within this program are as diverse as LTC's clientele, since they are tailored to the specific language needs, goals, interests, and schedules of the students. These one-on-one classes are designed to facilitate maximum progress toward each individual's unique goals. This training allows students to progress at their own pace and develop language specific to their distinct field, company, role in the company, and communication needs within that role. Classes may be held at the client's company or venue, at LTC headquarters, online, or over the phone.

Course length generally ranges from twenty-four to 240 hours of private language instruction. Classes may be taken intensively or over an extended period of time. Immersion classes most commonly involve four to six hours of training per day, three to five days per week, for two to twelve weeks. Other classes are generally one and a half to two hours long, one to three times per week for the duration of the hours in which the student is enrolled. Some classes take a "wrap-around" approach, offering one to one and a half hours of instruction, followed by one to three hours of guided self-study, followed by an additional one to one and a half hours of instruction. Training length and intensity are determined by the student's goals and the time frame that the client has available to reach those goals.

The teachers for these classes include full-time as well as subcontract teachers at Language Training Center. LTC places a priority on keeping students with their instructors. For immersion classes and classes held multiple times per week, often more than one teacher is utilized for the course, increasing variety in the classroom. The full-time language instructors utilized for private courses all have Bachelors and Masters degrees (or are working on Masters

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degrees) in English, Linguistics, TESOL, and other related degrees, as well as extensive experience with language learning and language teaching. Subcontract teachers are selected based on both their education and their experience in language instruction. Instructors are also selected for courses based on their expertise and experience with field-specific information required for LTC's varying clientele. These teachers are chosen from all across the United States.

2. Describe the target audience for the training program.

The target audience is professionals working in the United States from various countries around the world, including Argentina, India, Germany, Japan, Chile, China, Ethiopia, Vietnam, Belgium, Turkey, Poland, Mexico, Mongolia, France, Hungary, Russia, Brazil, Slovakia, Iran, Papua New Guinea, South Korea, Ukraine, Nigeria, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, and Lebanon. These students are working in various professional fields, such as pharmaceutical, biochemical, professional sports, agricultural engineering, finance, governmental agencies, utilities, automotive manufacturing, plumbing, technology, automotive testing, petroleum, distribution centers, water services, and water treatment.

Students may be temporarily or permanently relocated to the United States for employment. Others may simply be attending an immersion course during a short visit to the country in order to improve their communication skills for when they return home to their global companies.

While a portion of the students pay privately, most are provided training by their workplace organization. Companies, teams, and agencies from the aforementioned fields choose to invest in their employees by providing English and cross-cultural training for them, and in some cases for their families as well. These companies, teams, and agencies range from small-scale American companies seeking to help their international employees increase their impact to large-scale multinational agencies facing the challenges of plurilingualism in a global economy.

This particular case report focuses on one Hispanic sales and marketing executive. He had worked for over fifteen years in sales throughout Central and South America, and had recently begun working in an American produce company managing all aspects of Hispanic sales and marketing, including interacting with vendors and suppliers and ensuring the right product is in the right place at the right time. The majority of the classes were paid for by the student's produce company, which placed a value on helping him have the language he needed to excel at his role within the company, in both his internal and external communications.

3. Describe the needs assessment procedures utilized to develop the program.

Each student completes a needs analysis, which can be done online for convenience. The student also meets with a Language Training Center representative for a complementary private consultation before starting classes. Information vital for course design is gathered,

including student goals, prior language learning experience, workplace context, language needs, language learning styles and strategies, and schedule preferences. All potential stakeholders are considered in the process of needs analysis, and this information is used for curriculum development.

During the needs analysis meeting, the student completed a self assessment of his language level, estimating that he was at an intermediate level in various skills. He prioritized his goals, discussed specific objectives (See 4. Goals and Objectives), and took the online pre-course assessment (See 9. Assessment Procedures). He also discussed methodology for language learning and strategies for making the most of the course with the language training center representative.

4. Explain the English language training program's over-arching goals and specific objectives.

The training program's overarching goals are to coach the learners to progress toward their own personal language learning goals and toward more effective and efficient communication in their increasingly plurilinguistic and multicultural personal workplace contexts. Goals and objectives are designed specifically for each learner's needs and specialized workplace context.

One example of particular objectives might be for an executive to increase his/her speaking skills in order to give stellar presentations, clearly present ideas in team meetings, manage workplace conflict well, and better navigate teleconferences and phone conversations. Another example might be for a professional athlete to increase his/her speaking, listening, and pronunciation proficiency in order to better understand directives from the coach, communicate with other players, handle interviews, build relationships with sponsors, and make small-talk with fans. Specific objectives are defined on a person-by-person basis.

In this particular student's case, the student prioritized his initial goals to be (1) speaking for business and daily communication, (2) listening for business and daily communication, and (3) vocabulary for business and daily communication. His specific listening objective was to be able to understand what 20-25 of his colleagues were saying in daily procurement meetings. His vocabulary objective was to be able to understand and use common business idioms frequently used in his workplace. His specific speaking objectives were to be able to speak more effectively about areas of credit, marketing, and sales with English-speaking Americans. As the course progressed, his goals were periodically adjusted to meet his emerging needs. For example, upon completion of 44 hours of instruction, the student reassessed his goals with is instructor to be (1) pronunciation, (2) speaking and writing diplomatically for business, and (3) listening and vocabulary development for business and daily life. After a total of 70 hours of instruction, he added an additional goal of grammar, which became his top goal for the rest of the program. Moreover, throughout his training, as the student made noticeable progress in various areas and other needs emerged, goals were adjusted accordingly.

5. Describe the teaching methods and training procedures used in the program.

LTC's training is characterized by its dynamic, energetic style and meaningful application to individual client workplace needs. At LTC, highly trained personal language coaches address topics that enable professionals to take strides toward their individual language goals and see tangible results in their workplace communications. Students engage in meaningful activities and tasks with authentic materials carefully selected to match the specific emerging needs they have in their unique job situations. Unlike "off-the-shelf" solutions, LTC personal language coaches have the flexibility and capability to address workplace communication needs and problems as they arise, giving the immediate feedback and the training needed for clients to make changes in real-time.

Each class provides an appropriate challenge that is relevant to student interests, needs, and context. Students engage in purposeful dialogue that is intentionally authentic and communicative. Classes progress at the student's pace as students advance toward competence with all aspects of communication, including the intricacies of language structure and pronunciation. They also develop an understanding of discourse strategies for communicating messages as a whole, socio-cultural issues affecting how messages will be best received, and strategic skills for managing interactions (Canale, 1983). Students are equipped with the strategies they need to take ownership of their learning and achieve the long-term results they are looking for.

6. Describe the teaching materials used in the program.

LTC draws from a wide range of materials and makes extensive use of authentic materials in language training. In addition to in-house materials, LTC uses a variety of business English, ESP, vocabulary, speaking/listening, reading/writing, technical writing, grammar, and pronunciation texts from multiple publishers.

As Nunan and Lamb (1996) recommend, textbooks are "seen as source books for creative teaching," and "are used to support rather than dominate the teaching learning process" (p. 183). For professional sports clients, LTC primarily uses in-house and authentic materials, which include but are not limited to the following: business presentations brought in by students for work, recorded media interviews of the students on the Internet, video clips, news, various styles of music, magazines, art, movies, advertisements, books, and various genres of literature, job-specific journals, TV programs, and radio. Students draw from a range of technological tools including video recorders, mp3 players, computers, and iPads. All materials are viewed as resources for the course, not drivers of the course, and are adapted to best match student goals and proficiency levels.

This particular student utilized extensive authentic materials, in-house materials about diplomatic language and pronunciation, and a number of primary and supplementary texts targeting his goals and offering audio for home listening and an online component.

7. Explain the content of the English language training program.

A. What written and spoken genres are covered in the training program?

Written genres that could be included in the program based on individual student goals and objectives are emails, workplace reports, executive summaries, proposals, manuscripts, resumes, cover letters, thank-you letters, sympathy notes, daily workplace documentation, claim letters, information requests, and procedures.

Spoken genres that may be covered in the course according to each student's needs include such things as interviews, presentations, telephone interactions, teleconferences, videoconferences, announcements, leading or participating in group meetings, managing one-on-one meetings, and conversations.

This particular student focused primarily on emails, financial reports, end-of-the-year reports, sales reports, proposals, PowerPoint presentations, marketing materials, telephone interactions, teleconferences, and daily workplace meeting conversations.

B. What communicative functions are covered in the training program?

Communicative functions that are addressed according to the students' needs in their own contexts include speaking diplomatically, agreeing or disagreeing, asking and answering questions, deciding on and explaining a course of action, asking for and giving opinions, persuading, asking for and offering clarification, complaining, giving and responding to suggestions, making and declining requests, sustaining and managing conversations, and initiating and ending conversations. Other important communicative functions include giving positive and negative feedback, issuing warnings, giving directions, resolving conflict, motivating colleagues, thanking, complimenting, addressing mistakes, refusing, stating intentions, expressing feelings, warning, correcting errors, apologizing, giving advice, checking understanding, giving instructions, and socializing with coworkers, teammates, and clients.

This particular student focused extensively on diplomatic communications, complaining about produce quality and shipment timing, resolving conflict, persuading, asking and answering questions of vendors and suppliers, and other pertinent functions.

C. What speech events are covered in the training program?

Speech events covered in the program could include a wide variety of contexts as needed by the student, including staff meetings, yearly personal work reviews, and conversations with the student's boss or coach. There are also interviews with the media, daily

conversations at work or on the playing field or golf course, meetings with clients, daily update meetings at work, conferences, conventions, and training events.

This particular student also focused on conversations with business owners, networking events, sales meetings, and procurement meetings.

8. Explain the delivery mechanisms employed by the program.

Private classes are held with the instructor face-to-face, via telephone, or through video conferences. The majority of our individualized classes are held face-to-face either at the client's company, the LTC headquarters, or at the student's home. These classes can be blended with video conference classes if the student is traveling or if other circumstances, such as weather, prevent the student from attending a face-to-face class.

Students taking a wrap-around course spend the hour(s) between their scheduled times with their instructors at a self-access center, delving deeper into the language and pursuing topics of personal interest through guided extended engagement with the language. Students taking private classes may also be interested in pursuing further practice to extend their training through small group classes.

9. Explain the assessment procedures used in the program.

Pre-course assessments at LTC are utilized as a means of appropriately placing a student with an instructor and designing the best curriculum to match student goals and proficiency. Before starting classes, students take online, company-developed assessments of their reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary. They also take a speaking and a listening assessment. Students wishing to focus on pronunciation take an additional pronunciation assessment.

On a class-by-class basis, students receive feedback sheets noting linguistic aspects which they have just learned or reviewed, as well as those with which the students make frequent errors and therefore need to review. These feedback sheets serve as assessment tools and tracking devices for language elements learned as well as those that need to be recycled for continued communicative practice. Students use these for review; instructors use them for lesson planning. Key re-occurring themes noted on the feedback sheets can be used by instructors to create feedback throughout the program, which tells the students about progress they have made on skills and sub-skills, as well as about areas for continued effort.

Needs for mid-course and post-course assessment reports are made on a case-by-case basis according to client preference. These assessment reports communicate progress made toward goals and methods used to make this progress. Authentic assessments based on student goals and what was done in class can be created by instructors to measure progress made on skills and sub-skills. Overall, assessments are used to guide the curriculum director and instructor in making choices about how to best help students make progress toward their goals as well as to know what progress has been made.

The student analyzed specifically in this report took the online assessment and in-office speaking and listening assessments during the pre-course assessment phase. He also received daily feedback sheets and participated in two authentic mid-course assessments and a post-course assessment, designed by his instructor to measure growth in the language targeted in the class at each stage of progress.

10. Explain the program evaluation mechanisms used.

Course evaluation happens on a regular basis. Teachers are encouraged to ask for feedback after every class about what features of class worked well and what features didn't work so well. During the initial consultation, students are encouraged to be very open with their teachers in order to make sure the teachers can best tailor their classes to meet the students' needs and preferences. For situations in which students may not feel comfortable giving feedback directly to their teachers, all students are encouraged to give comments, criticisms, requests, and questions to the Language Training Director. In addition, a comment box is available for students to give feedback on their classes at any time throughout the course.

Full-time language specialists communicate regularly with subcontracted teachers to evaluate how courses are going, discuss concerns that arise, address teachers questions, and consider potential adjustments that need to be made in schedules, materials, class set-up, goal focus, teachers, etc., in order to best meet the need of each individual client. In some cases, students and their companies are contacted or given questionnaires to attain direct feedback on their satisfaction. Additionally, students are often given open-ended feedback forms to fill out upon the completion of their courses.

11. Discuss the challenges involved in offering this English training program.

The greatest challenge in offering this kind of service lies in the difficult choices some companies and agencies must make as a result of economic obstacles. While companies are facing increased communication challenges due to the plurilingualism and multiculturalism of our increasingly global economy, they are not always prepared to evaluate the long-term return on investment for language solutions in order to make the most informed choice as to the best solution for them. Most would agree with the findings of the 2009 study by TIRF, *"The Impact of English and Plurilingualism on Global Corporations."* This study suggests that there are measurable economic returns on English and plurilingual skills for individuals, corporations, and economies," and that "there is a considerable price to be paid if corporate global and local communications fail, or are ineffective due to poor language proficiency of employees" (p. 15).

However, these companies, agencies, and teams may not be equipped with the linguistic awareness of the time and type of instruction that would most effectively get their employees to the communicative place they need to be in order to function most productively. Companies may be more likely to look at the bottom line and focus on short-term costs rather

than the long-term results of their investment. As a result, employers may decide to opt for either fewer hours of instruction than is necessary for making the desired progress, or for depersonalized and “off-the-shelf” solutions which may give them less overall return on their investment than would private tailored instruction.

The challenge involved in this program was related to economic factors. Since this particular student’s company purchased classes in 48-hour packages and the student took one and a half hours per week, classes ended in approximately 32 weeks per package. Though it is recommended that subsequent packages be purchased following the end of a package to prevent interruption in the program, budgetary concerns prevented the trainee from continuing his program. The lack of funding created a two-month gap in the program while the student awaited approval of the following year’s budget. In order for the student to continue making linguistic progress as seamlessly as possible, the student purchased some hours on his own and was equipped with strategies for maximizing time away from class. After two training courses had been completed, the company was unable to continue funding classes largely due to economic and social challenges in the market in which he worked. Since the student still had linguistic gaps and strategic goals to target them, he paid out-of-pocket to continue the training as long as financially possible.

12. Describe the successes of the program and explain how they are documented.

In spoken and written feedback, clients have indicated multiple successes of LTC’s private language instruction program. This information may be gathered from spontaneously offered feedback from students and/or clients, or from solicited feedback through regular follow-up with clients throughout the course, as well as post-class feedback forms.

Clients have indicated such successes as increased confidence in workplace communications; increased engagement in meetings and workplace collaboration; improved retention; decreased misunderstandings related to linguistic and paralinguistic issues; increased ability to perform in high intensity media interviews; reduced time needed to write workplace emails, reports, and other documents; increased sales performance and client satisfaction; decreased turn-around time for negotiations with clients and contractors; and increased ability to gather accurate and complete information.

Other positive outcomes include decreased inter-company conflicts due to intercultural and sociolinguistic misunderstandings; increased satisfaction in employee presentations and reports; decreased errors in written documents; increased ability to overcome culture shock; decreased misunderstandings between bosses or coaches and their employees; and increased ability to summarize and deliver information appropriately to various audiences. Some employees have attributed important promotions and career advancements to their engagement in private language training with LTC.

The trainee of this program saw progress in all of the linguistic areas targeted during the program. He advanced from an intermediate to a high-intermediate level in speaking, listening,

and pronunciation. He demonstrated a high degree of competency in the acquisition and application of new vocabulary and language structures in his daily life and workplace communications. As his professional and linguistic proficiency increased and as his own confidence in his language abilities grew, he received feedback from colleagues that his communications were improving. He was personally pleased with the way work meetings and dialogue became easier to participate in and understand.

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