



**Title of Report:** English for Diplomats

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**Training Organization:** [Custom Language Services](#)<sup>1</sup> – Monterey, CA

**Date of Publication:** May 2012

## **1. Identify and describe the training program.**

The program known as English for Diplomats (EFD) is offered by the Monterey Institute of International Studies in Monterey, California through the Custom Language Services (CLS) office. The program provides a flexible and integrative curriculum for junior -and senior-level diplomats. It incorporates a focus on language skills with exposure to career-related content and skills in both one-on-one and group environments.

The EFD curriculum was originally developed in 2008 by Lawrence Lawson, the author of this case report, who taught in the program that year. It typically features anywhere from one to eight instructors, depending on how many diplomats are enrolled at the time. The instructors have typically had substantial experience teaching abroad. They speak several languages and are often interested, personally or professionally, in international relations or diplomacy.

The EFD Program offers individualized language instruction focusing extensively on client needs, by providing a platform for discussion and analysis of concepts, processes, and tasks essential to a diplomatic career. The program is based on a framework for the diplomatic profession, detailing and exploring specific skills needed for typical tasks and projects.

The program is flexible, so the length of time that diplomats are enrolled may vary. Sixty hours is the minimum load for the program—but those hours can be spread across different time frames. At times, diplomats have participated in a customized program for only four weeks, and at other times, diplomats have enrolled in the program for four months during the regular semester, or even eight months for a full academic year. Six-week programs have also been organized during the summer session.

## **2. Describe the target audience.**

The target audience is junior- and senior-level diplomats from various countries. The EFD Program has mainly hosted diplomats from Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, but it is open to diplomats from all countries.

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

The director and the academic coordinator of CLS communicate with prospective clients to ascertain what language skills, time frame, class size, and schedule the individual clients require. A mini-needs assessment is given by instructors to clients when their individual EFD classes commence. For the overarching EFD Program, needs were ascertained by discovering what the diplomatic population desires in their customized language classes. In addition, CLS staff surveyed former and prospective clients, as well as former instructors, to ascertain what the EFD Program should feature.

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

The EFD Program is designed to help diplomats develop and maintain a complex set of language skills relevant to a diplomatic career. These skills include participating professionally, confidently, and successfully in diverse diplomatic events. Participants also develop comprehensive strategies that will enable their own long-term, autonomous language learning, skill building, and content analysis.

After successful completion of the EFD Program, clients will increase their ability to do the following:

- speak professionally, accurately, and confidently
- write professionally, accurately, and confidently
- compose and respond to formal and informal emails, letters, press releases, policy briefs, and policy memos
- issue, accept, or reject invitations
- participate in "small-talk" exchanges naturally and confidently
- prepare for and deliver a professional-grade press conference
- communicate appropriately and professionally using telephonic devices
- lead meetings, conferences, and toasts using appropriate and professional vocabulary and protocol
- research current news topics, and other areas of interest, using a range of resources
- incorporate research into effective oral presentations
- interview colleagues and other professionals
- skim, scan, and read efficiently
- utilize increased vocabulary for personal and professional purposes
- exhibit understanding of pragmatic "rules" which govern discourse in American culture
- distinguish the value of, and the nuances between, synonyms
- exhibit confidence in their own abilities
- execute a public presentation in an appropriate and professional manner
- negotiate a settlement of an issue with another party (or other parties)



- synthesize and reformulate a speaker's (or writer's) argument(s) for consumption by a third party
- summarize oral and written texts
- take minutes at meetings
- write a report based upon research
- shadow other professionals for professional development purposes
- exhibit cross-cultural understanding through words and actions
- plan, coordinate, and execute a professional-grade model summit
- self-assess performance via a co-created rubric in order to identify ways to improve
- develop language learning strategies for use inside and outside of the classroom
- critique public presentations (or other media produced for public consumption) with the aim of self-improvement
- correct self-produced oral and written language
- create user-maintained databases to share information with colleagues and peers
- speak extemporaneously and accurately
- use PowerPoint and other presentation technologies accurately
- perform well on the TOEFL iBT
- use technology for language learning purposes
- write professional-grade speeches
- think critically
- rewrite written texts to maximize effectiveness of language
- redeliver oral texts to maximize effectiveness of language
- produce grammatically accurate language

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

Activities in the EFD Program are designed to be communicative and to recycle vocabulary, content, and skills so that clients are constantly improving in the areas designated in the needs assessment. This EFD Program integrates oral fluency and writing practice into a framework of communicative, task-oriented second language pedagogy. It also makes use of a range of language teaching technology.

By accessing and manipulating a variety of authentic materials in this course, participants improve their ability to construct emails using appropriate vocabulary, tone, and format; communicate via telephonic devices appropriately and effectively; issue, accept, and decline formal invitations; take minutes during meetings using appropriate vocabulary and format; and produce effective oral and written notes and summaries of various events. They will also be able to participate in "small talk" appropriately; construct letters using appropriate vocabulary, tone, and format; and follow protocols during business and social occasions.

Assignments and projects include writing letters and emails, note-taking and summarizing, keeping a language vocabulary log, and making recordings in an audio journal.

Other activities focus on telephone etiquette, since communicating over the telephone can be a nerve-wracking experience for anyone acquiring a second language. Participants talk to a number of different people over the phone or with Skype to garner much needed (and attainable) confidence in speaking on the telephone.

Participants speak extensively on a variety of topics pertinent to their future careers, as found in the headlines of various media outlets. In working on this assignment, they become familiar with a variety of turn-taking strategies speakers use to signal their desire to partake in a conversation. They also develop active listening skills through continued conversations with colleagues and/or the instructor.

Reading effectively for information and reading for enjoyment are two tasks that are encouraged throughout this course. With regard to the former, participants develop their skimming and scanning skills so that, when faced with a seemingly insurmountable amount of text, they will be able to scour the text efficiently and effectively to find the relevant information. They are also encouraged to seek out magazines, websites, books, journals, etc., that they enjoy reading. They are asked to read for thirty minutes each night and to bring some leisure reading materials into the classroom for various activities.

EFD clients come into the program with their own academic regimen. Typically having a high entry-level proficiency in English, EFD clients have already developed study strategies that work for them. Instructors explore existing clients' strategies and introduce several other strategies they have observed during their teaching experiences (e.g., making mind-maps, using recording equipment to capture and assess one's own language, keeping a language journal or blog to practice new vocabulary, working with websites to increase language familiarity and accuracy, or writing detailed glosses in the margins of readings).

Familiarizing clients with new learning strategies and supporting them as they explore those strategies can facilitate increased language retention. This work also tends to address a common goal of many EFD clients: learner autonomy. Clients often want to learn new techniques for language study so that when they finish the EFD Program, they're able to continue their studies and act, in a way, as their own teacher.

The instructors also give attention in the first days of the course to disparate learning styles. If clients are aware of their own learning styles, the instructors can take that style into account while designing language tasks. However, if clients are unaware of their learning styles (visual, auditory, tactile/kinesthetic, etc.), the instructors can lead a discussion that explores these styles and determine how a client might learn best.

## **6. Describe the teaching materials used in the program.**

Since diplomats are in need of current information, most of the materials used in the EFD classroom are no more than three months old. Thus clients and instructors alike can stay up-to-date on world politics, international negotiations, and world summits. However, everything that



occurs in our present has its antecedent in the past. Therefore, there are moments when material older than three months is used in the EFD classroom.

In that vein, what follows is the summation of the digital archive entitled "Materials for EFD Program." These are a plethora of online resources (especially iTunes University) that instructors find useful in their classrooms.

Materials collected for the EFD Program include both video and audio recordings. These materials include speech project examples, the WTO summit reenactment series, global conversations on climate change, homeland security in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, international programs and the law, and the status of US/NATO efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

There are also relevant textual materials on multilateral agreement making, negotiations in Syria and Turkey, presentation considerations, and protocol for the modern diplomat. In addition, there is a speech-writing guide as well as miscellaneous documents, pictures, and activity templates.

Throughout this course, participants develop entries for the "Diplopaedia"—an online, searchable database with user-created information relevant to diplomatic careers. In addition, the diplomats work with colleagues and instructors on a number of out-of-class activities, including computer-based tasks designed to improve a number of skills relevant to their future career.

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

The following is a breakdown of the year-long EFD curriculum, organized by module.

**Semester 1, Module 1:** Diplomatic correspondence: Written and oral communications. Email: Appropriate tone and format

- Invitations (issuing, accepting, and declining): Appropriate tone, vocabulary, and format
- Telephone etiquette
- Letters (inquiry, invitation, and refusal): Appropriate tone, vocabulary, and format
- Taking minutes of meetings: Appropriate vocabulary and format
- Summarizing and note taking: Oral and written
- Small talk: Turn-taking strategies, active listening skills, and appropriate topic selection
- Protocol for office and social calls

**Semester 1, Module 2:** News analysis: Evaluation of written and oral media releases. Reading skills: Skimming and scanning for key information

- Preparing briefs and policy memos developing vocabulary: International politics and economics

- Honing critical thinking skills through research, analysis, and synthesis of current news topics (written and oral)
- Auditing graduate course in international policy

**Semester 2, Module 1:** Leadership and protocol: The language of meetings.

- Negotiation skills (bilateral and multilateral) vocabulary development
- Cross-cultural understanding
- Conflict resolution: Focus on critical thinking and language nuance
- Presentation skills (informative, commemorative, panel)
- Chairing meetings
- Giving toasts
- Protocol for meetings Workshop: Negotiations for international students

**Semester 2, Module 2:** Model summit project.

- Interviews with professionals at MIIS and in the Monterey community
- Email correspondence with off-site professionals
- Job shadowing
- Researching and presenting on client-generated topics
- Prepare culminating project: Model summit conference

**8. Explain the delivery mechanisms employed by the program.**

As previously mentioned, EFD is run either in group settings or one-on-one. The program can be conducted face-to-face, online, or as a hybrid of online and face-to-face sessions.

**9. Explain the assessment procedures used in the program.**

Generally, assessments in the EFD Program are narratives written by the teacher unless special circumstances dictate otherwise. The format and wording of the narrative assessment is in the dominion of the instructor; however, the assessment should address the points listed in the syllabus.

Assessment in this program takes the form of a narrative description of each participant's progress at the end of the course. Various components of each person's work are considered in the narrative, including the ability to produce well-crafted emails and letters across genres; performance speaking on the telephone or over Skype; ability to engage in and sustain "small talk;" note-taking, minute-taking and summarizing skills; fluency and accuracy of language; and the integration of new vocabulary into active vocabulary.

Past narratives have included a general statement about the working relationship between the client and the instructor, as well as a discussion of how the client addressed course objectives. There is usually a discussion of the positive aspects of the client's progress, coursework, and skill set, as well as comments about the areas (language, content, skills, etc.) the client could improve. A sketch of an action plan for the client to implement after the course



is complete is provided. Depending on the length of the course, instructors may write in-progress assessments while the course is in session. In the past, clients have appreciated these sorts of progress reports and have responded positively to them.

The final narrative assessment is required by CLS for all of its programs. This final assessment is a serious and personal closing of the instructor's time with the client.

**10. Explain the program evaluation mechanisms used.**

Each client fills out an evaluation of the faculty and of the program as a whole. Clients are asked to evaluate the course organization (organization of topics, usefulness of texts, amount of homework, course requirements) as well as the instructor's performance (interest in subject matter, knowledge of subject matter, helpful discussion and explanations, preparation, interest in student work). In addition, they are asked to comment on the instructor's relationship with students (respect for student ideas and opinions, openness to criticism and suggestions, and availability outside of class).

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

Challenges faced in offering this program included securing visas for the clients. In addition, explaining the benefits of the program in relation to its costs is a challenge. Furthermore, because the program is hosted at a graduate school, it can be hard to retain instructors because they move on to longer-term positions when they complete their degrees.

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

A true measure of the success of a program is whether the clients recommend the program to their colleagues, which has happened often when clients finish the EFD Program. In addition, members of the diplomatic corps who were not historically involved in the EFD Program inquire about it with increasing frequency, so it appears that word of mouth about the program is positive. The parent organization also recently increased the resources dedicated to the program, which underscores its success at bringing an increased level of visibility to the institution.