

Welcome

Coming to an engineering role in New Zealand from another country means not only learning how the new company operates, but also managing language and cultural issues when communicating with colleagues and clients.

Energy Library provides a coaching service for international engineers who want to advance their oral and written English communication skills in order to build their confidence and improve their performance at work.

ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) coaching can focus on:

- listening and speaking face-to-face and on the phone
- writing emails, reports and minutes
- participating in meetings
- giving presentations
- liaising with clients
- interacting with colleagues

The coaching programme is tailored to address the specific, work-related learning needs and goals of each client. Cost-effective delivery is through the appropriate combination of one-to-one coaching utilising face-to-face, phone and email modes.

This newsletter outlines the coaching service, considers the case study of a recent coaching client, looks at top tips for proofreading emails and profiles the ESOL coach.

Please contact Christina at english@energylibrary.org.nz for further information.

IN THIS ISSUE

Welcome	1	Top tips	3
ESOL coaching service	2	Meet the coach	4
Case study	3	Coming up in the next issue	4

ESOL coaching service

Some problem areas encountered by international engineers in the local workplace are:

- pronouncing well and speaking clearly, especially on the phone
- understanding the New Zealand accent
- making appropriate vocabulary choices in different business contexts
- using the correct tenses in writing and speaking
- reducing errors in sentence structure
- writing clear emails in a friendly-neutral tone
- using conventional features in report-writing
- knowing colloquial language, idioms and phrasal verbs
- communicating with colleagues in the role of supervisor
- lacking confidence in social contexts

One-to-one coaching is an effective way of resolving such issues.

This is how the programme works:

Needs analysis	To establish needs and goals involving both the participant and their manager.
Programme design	Customised to address the participant's specific, work-related learning needs and goals.
Programme delivery	The appropriate combination of one-to-one coaching via: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• face-to-face (1, 1.5 or 2 hour sessions)• phone (20–30 minute sessions)• email
Wellington coaching location	Coaching can take place on-site in the central city or at Energy Library (CMC Building, 89 Courtenay Place).
Report	After the initial set of sessions, a report with recommendations for follow-up is provided.

Please contact Christina at english@energylibrary.org.nz to discuss your situation, to find out about fees and to obtain further information.

Case study

A new project manager from Asia was working out very well in an engineering consultancy, but there were a few problems with his report-writing and speaking.

The reports were too wordy, they were written in an overly formal tone and the information was not very clear. The engineer also spoke very quickly and used some non-standard pronunciation of words and stress patterns — at times this made it difficult to understand him.

The initial four sessions looked at sentence construction, tone, editing and proofreading as well as the use of linking devices to enhance coherence. To improve speaking clarity, problematic sounds (such as certain vowels and consonant clusters) and stress patterns were revised. Strategies for slowing down speaking speed were also suggested.

Two further sessions were then scheduled to tackle another challenging task: chairing meetings while taking the minutes. To work on this, strategies for note-taking were introduced and practised.

Following these sessions, the project manager's work performance has been boosted because he:

- writes his reports faster and they read much better
- speaks more clearly and is easier to understand
- finds meetings are less stressful.

Top tips – Proofreading emails

Here are some tips to help you when proofreading emails:

1. Don't rely on the spellchecker.
2. Think about what your typical mistakes are, for example:

subject/verb agreement	✓
noun/pronoun agreement	
articles	
prepositions	
commas	

3. Now proofread for one type of error at a time. So if prepositions are your most frequent problem, go through the text checking just the prepositions. Then proofread again for the next most frequent problem and so on.
4. Have you consistently used the appropriate tone to match the subject and the relationship with your client or colleague?
5. Is your email clear and concise?

Meet the coach

Energy Library's team includes Christina Wielgolawski who is a qualified, experienced Business English coach.

For over 10 years, Christina has specialised in coaching professionals, in particular engineers, from all around the world to confidently and effectively communicate with their clients and colleagues. She has developed and delivered an English for Professionals course that consistently received excellent feedback.

Christina has spent a number of years in Europe working with engineering consultancies and energy utilities. She now edits and proofreads reports for consultants in the energy sector in New Zealand, France and Germany.

In 2009, Christina gave a presentation on language coaching in Hong Kong at an international conference of leading language practitioners. The ensuing paper has been accepted for publication by Hong Kong University Press.

Christina has an MA in Applied Linguistics, a Diploma in TESOL and a CTEFLA (Cambridge Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Adults). She belongs to the Applied Linguistics Association of New Zealand and the Independent Learning Association.

Contact details

To contact Christina, ask an English language question or go on the mailing list for the next issue, please send an email to english@energylibrary.org.nz

Coming up in the next issue

A new writing programme via email to improve everyday language.