Pathways to work: what language to learn along the way

Helen de Silva Joyce
AMEP National Forum

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• Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

(The life of reason 1905 George Santayana)

• The time has come to end the inconsistencies …

(Kevin Rudd on National Curriculum 2008)
Employment has always been one of the three syllabus strands in the AMEP.

Providers have undertaken research and developed many resources over a long period of time eg NSW AMES early publications include

1992 - *Workplace texts in the language classroom*
1994 - *English in the workplace competency framework*
1994 - *Writing for the workplace series*
Measuring achievement

- ISLPR was once the only measure of achievement in the AMEP and students usually showed minimal or no movement, despite hundreds of hours of tuition.
- The ARMS database provides an immense resource of learner achievement but not AVETMISS compliant.
- What benchmarks? NRS?
  - 2 movements for LLNP
  - At least 6 for AMEP students
Social inclusion

• Need to make sure that what we decide is the focus of the AMEP does not create groups who are socially excluded in the future eg: post-war migrants.

• Different types of participation in a literate society demand different levels of literacy.
Myths about language and work

- Having a job means you’ll learn English.
- Low-level jobs only require speaking.
Reality of language and work

• Those with lower levels of language and literacy are easily subject to risk and blame (Belfiore 2004: 232).

• Those who are not literate are the most vulnerable in terms of exploitation and changes in the workplace eg: industrial restructuring of the 1980s and 1990s.
The AMEP and the COAG agenda

• The AMEP has been isolated in many ways from vocational training developments.

• How will the basis of the new AMEP relate to the broader VET sector?
  - AQTF requirements
  - RTO requirements
In many ways the AMEP has remained isolated from developments in other sectors of education and training eg:
- undertaking its own internal research
- not connecting with approaches in other sectors
- not participating in broader national research projects eg: NCVER research
Reading and writing at work

• Standards are rising even in unskilled jobs eg: taxi driving, cleaning, hospitality.

• Lack of literacy makes people vulnerable.

• Reading is more important than writing and writing is moving towards formatted texts.
The visual and work

• In the contemporary world technological advances are creating the broad move from the centuries-long dominance of writing to the new dominance of the image and … the move from the dominance of the book to the dominance of the medium of the screen (Kress 2003: 1).

• Visual representations are becoming more dominant and people need to learn how to read them.
Spoken language and work

- Most day-to-day work is structured and evaluated through spoken language.
- The interpersonal blends seamlessly with the transactional and makes the wheels of industry and commerce turn.
- Tenor aspects of language become more crucial moving
  - from unskilled to professional
  - into more customer-oriented jobs
Spoken and written language are not separate in the workplace.

Learning to participate is not just learning language but how it is part of the practices of the workplace.

A social practices view of language rejects the view of isolated skills and is concerned with how people use their language skills to be participating members of social contexts.
AMEP classrooms and work

• Educators do not generally know much about the world of industry and commerce.
• Need to bring the world of work into the classroom through the videos, online courses, recordings, the Internet and people.
• Need to provide models of workplace interactions that students can return to again and again.
• Take the students out into the world of work.
Designing programs

• Genres present across contexts, so it is not settlement versus work.
• Online learning is becoming more important in adult learning:
  - in order to teach independence
  - to provide for students who have work
  - to prepare for jobseeking, workplace skills and training modes
What not to lose sight of

• Employers are saying more and more that they want broadly competent people.

• What we teach is aligned to employability skills.
CSWE II

Teamwork
• Participate in and contribute to learning activities eg: pair work, group work
• Participate in and contribute to the formal learning environment

Self-management
• Develop independent learning skills
• Learning plan may include: learning goals, life goals, strategies for achieving goals
• Identify preferred methods of learning eg: listening, reading
• Take responsibility for own effective management of study time
• Reflect on and self-assess performance in class
• Locate and use learning resources outside the formal learning environment eg: book shop and library language learning resources
• Respond to self-assessment checklists
Employability skills and CSWE

Learning
• Locate resources and facilities in the learning environment
• Participate in assessment tasks
• Seek feedback on performance

Technology
• Use of computer-assisted learning, email and spell-check
• May interpret online maps