This document, developed by Mercer County Community College (New Jersey) and its partners, offers lists of topics covered in each day of a 24-day course designed to teach General Motors employees the following skills: document information; write clear directions and instructions; outline and organize thoughts and ideas; write memos and business letters; and construct sentences, paragraphs, and short essays. In addition, the document contains an exercise on writing clear directions, a checklist for writers, and course evaluation questionnaires. References are made to handouts that are not part of the document. (CML)
WRITING FOR MANUFACTURING PERSONNEL

Prepared Under a United States Department of Education National Workplace Literacy Program Grant to MERCER COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE Center for Training and Development 1200 Old Trenton Road Trenton, NJ 08690

Elaine S. Weinberg
The Workplace Literacy Project resulted from a Department of Education grant, plus in-kind contributions from a partnership with General Motors Inland Fisher Guide Plant, Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory, and St. Francis Medical Center. The project is an attempt to find solutions to the growing "skills gap" in industry today. More than 25 million Americans cannot read the front page of a newspaper. In addition, workers whose average ages are rising, must produce in a technological environment that may not have existed when they began working. This lack of knowledge makes it difficult to compete in a technologically changing workplace. Moreover, an increasing number of immigrants have entered the workforce with limited English communication skills. In response to this growing need, the Federal government provided a grant to Mercer County Community College and its partners to develop ways to enrich and expand employees' basic workplace knowledge. The aim of the project was also to improve the self-esteem of the participants.

Support for the project was solicited from all levels of company management and the unions. In addition, an advisory council, comprising key management and employees from each company determined the design, goals, and time-frame of the project. Each company provided a liaison person from their site, and MCCC hired a director to manage the program. Employee release time for classes was site-specific.

Participation in the program was voluntary. Information about classes was disseminated through company letters, flyers, union notices, notices included with paychecks, and open forums with supervisors and employees.

The ABLE test was used for normative pre and post testing. Other types of evaluations varied from course to course. MCCC counselors met with each student to discuss present and future educational objectives.

Courses were offered in reading, business writing, math, science, and English as a Second Language. In addition, there were workshops in problem solving, stress management, and other work survival skills. The curricula for the courses were customized for each worksite to be as job focused as possible.

It is our hope that this program will serve as a model for other organizations to empower their employees with the skills needed to succeed in the changing technological workplace, today and in the future.
Writing G.M.

FN 908
Section 9391

This course is designed to prepare G.M. employees to use written and oral communication skills in presenting and sharing ideas and information in workplace interactions. It entails the competencies of documenting information, writing clear directions/instructions, outlining and organizing thoughts and ideas, writing memos and business letters, and constructing sentences, paragraphs, and short essays. The course also identifies and addresses common writing problems; run-on sentences and sentence fragments, ambiguity and illogical organization, stiff, stilted, dull, or wordy writing, misuse or disuse of transitional words, and common spelling errors.
WRITTEN/ORAL COMMUNICATION

UNIT I: LISTENING SKILLS (4 DAY UNIT)

L1 - Listening Comprehension (Interview)
L2 - Listening Comprehension (Listening to Article)
L3 - Oral Presentation (Problem with Presentation & Interpretation)
L4 - Oral Presentation (Role Playing & Active Listening)

UNIT II: NOTES, LISTS, FORMS, LOGS, PROCEDURES, DOCUMENTATION (4 DAY UNIT)

N1 - Filling Out Forms
N2 - Documentation
N3 - Procedure Writing
N4 - Note Taking

UNIT III: OUTLINING AND SUMMARIZING (2 DAY UNIT)

O1 - Outlining
O2 - Summarizing

UNIT IV: DESCRIPTIVE WRITING (6 DAY UNIT)

D1 - Adjectives and Sensory Words
D2 - Prepositions
D3 - Writing Clearly (2 days)
D4 - Writing a Memo
D5 - Writing a Letter or Complaint

UNIT V: PARAGRAPH WRITING (8 DAY UNIT)

P1 - Compare & Contrast Paragraph
P2 - Explanatory Paragraph
P3 - Procedure Process Paragraph
P4 - Persuasive Paragraph
L1 Listening Comprehension (Interview)

1. Icebreaker Activity:
   - Partners (Interview - 10 minutes)
   - Oral Introduction of Partner
   - Importance of Oral Communication

2. Characteristics of good/bad listeners:
WRITING

DAYS 2

L2 Listening Comprehension (Article)

- Teacher reads "Big Plans for a Small Car."
- Students write responses to listening comprehension questions
L3 Oral Presentation of Job Task

- Slowly
- Clearly
- Technical words
- Sequence
- Pitch
- Rate

1. Job Task Description

- Other student duplicates instructions.
- Match/evaluation
  (Need small items: cups, pens, boxes, props)

2. Brainstorming

- Problems in presentation/interpretation
L4 Oral Presentation - Role Playing, Active Listening

1. Oral Presentation
   - Role Playing (Supervisor/Employee situation)
   - Write script, in pairs

2. Quality Circle
   - Expressing feelings on job related topics

3. Active Listening
   - Clear: Needs known
   - Non-threatening
Filling out Forms

1. Skills:
   - Providing information (personal data, job history, etc.)
   - Interpreting a form already filled out
   - Application of skill - filling out a blank form

2. Use of GM forms:
   - Vacation Request
   - Unemployment
   - Job Application
Day 6

N2 Documentation (Intro to concept, Recording of facts & logs)

1. Read Procedure:
   - What to do when defective parts is found

2. Write:
   - Documentation of defect in part (Worker)
   - Supervisors written response on how to handle defect

3. Other:
   - Visual Inspection for Packers
     A. Alignment of Tape
     B. Bubbles in Tape
        - ex: the last two inches of tape have noticeable bubbles
     C. Finish on Part
        - ex: the finish is smooth & dull in others
     D. Complete Paint Coverage
     E. Excessive Paint
     F. Length, Mitze & Chisel
     G. Width
     H. Height
Procedure Writing (Lists!! Not in paragraph form)

1. Lists of step-by-step job related task methods
2. Specific Vocabulary: (Sequence words)
3. Verbs of Activity: (related to job)
   - join, connect, adhere....
4. Eliminating excess words (Editing)
   - Lockout Procedure A-D
   - Radial Drill Operators, p. 5, 6
   - Analysis of Written Procedures before writing their own
N4 Note Taking

1. From: Gasoline vs. Electric: The Trade Offs are Tricky
   - Content in comparison/contrast article
   - Teacher orally reads article
   - Students take notes
   - Form list pros and cons

2. Oral Debate in class
   - Students present points of view, Gas vs. Electric
01 Outlining

1. General Outlining Skills
   A. ___________________________ (general ideas)
      1.  
      2.  } Details
      3.  
   B. ___________________________
      1. 
      2. 
      3. 

2. Worker writes job descriptions and then categorize them and organize them into an outline (sorting, lifting, placing, connecting)

3. Organization of Thoughts in outline form for Paragraph writing
WRITING DAY 10

02 Summarizing

1. What is summarizing?

2. Handout - 02
   - Listen to article, read aloud as they follow along with own copies
   - Summarize in 3 sentences
   - Summary words (therefore, in conclusion, in ending)
   - Summarizing for paragraph/letter writing
D1 Descriptive Writing

1. Adjectives: Use of sensory words

2. Write a description:
   - of machine or equipment used
   - of working conditions
   - of relation with co-workers, supervisor
   - of GM cafeteria food
   - of what the "perfect" car would look and perform like
1. Prepositional phrases:
   - Write jobs tasks using varying prepositional phrases
   - Nuances of meanings (near, next to, beside, by)
   - How are they different?

2. Role playing of worker doing a task while others write down what they are seeing.

3. Write a task that incorporates a prepositional phrase and workers perform tasks.
D3 Writing Clearly (2 day activity)

1. Effective tips include:
   - Avoid jargons
   - Descriptive language
   - Brevity
   - Sequence of ideas
   - Verbosity
D4 Writing a Memo

1. Format, Purpose:
   - Time saving
   - Convenience
   - Written Record

2. Workers write memos
D5 Writing a Letter of Complaint

1. Comparison of two letters of complaint
   - cause of problem
   - method of solving it

2. Workers do their own
1. Write a Compare & Contrast Paragraph

   I. Topic Statement

      - Point by Point
      - One side at a time
P2 Writing an Explanatory Paragraph (2 day activity)

I. Topic Sentence -
- Key words of explanation (adverbs - because, when ...)
- Workers choose topic (related to job task)
- Write explanation of job place or problem
- Read aloud to another
- Switch papers
I. Topic Sentence

II. Transitional words
   - First, second,..., next,..., furthermore...

1. Workers write a simple procedure of job task
2. Read aloud, see if others can follow and repeat
P4 Persuasive Paragraph

I. Topic Sentence with Point of View

II. Three-Five specific details to support topic sentence (why)

III. Conclusion of Paragraph

1. Skills:
   - Persuasive words (efficient, beneficial, encouragement...)

2. Write a persuasive paragraph explaining some plan for improvement at GM
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Writing Clear Directions

The purpose of this exercise is to develop good direction writing skills.

Students are presented with a diagram. They are instructed to work together in small groups to come up with very clear directions as to how to produce the identical diagram. Then the instructions are given to another group and they try to reproduce the diagram.

The next group of papers exemplifies this exercise.
First... the instructions/ directions (produced by the group)
Second... the original diagram
Third... the diagram produced by the second group reading/using the directions produced by the first group
A CHECKLIST FOR WRITERS

TITLE
☐ 1. Does it grab the reader's attention?
☐ 2. Is it an accurate reflection of the subject to be covered?

SENTENCES
☐ 1. Is each sentence a complete sentence, a fragment, or a run on?
☐ 2. Is there variety in sentence structure?
☐ 3. Is there variety in sentence length?

PARAGRAPHS
☐ 1. Do all the sentences belong in this paragraph?
☐ 2. Is there one central idea?
☐ 3. Is there transitions between sentences? between paragraphs?

INTRODUCTION
☐ 1. Does it give the reader an idea of what will follow?
☐ 2. Is it interesting? does it catch the reader's attention?

CONCLUSION
☐ 1. Does it "récap" what was said?
☐ 2. Does it take a position or point of view?
☐ 3. Does it leave the reader with a memorable thought?

* STYLE
☐ 1. direct
☐ 2. variety
☐ 3. descriptive language
☐ 4. "flow"

* SPELLING + PUNCTUATION
☐ 1. When in doubt, look it up!
☐ 2. check for capital letters, periods, commas, semicolons, colons, question mark
### Writing Style

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Assignment: 5-paragraph essay...introduction, 3 main ideas with supporting details, conclusion

Topic: G.M. related or human interest story of your choice.

Skills: use of an outline

main idea backed up by supporting details

focus on writing style

focus on writing form

"flow" and transitional words

editing and revision
Final Evaluation
Writing

Please answer the following questions.

1) How do you rate the course?

2) How do you rate the instruction? the teacher?, The materials?

3) What areas of study did you find the most useful?

4) Which areas were the least useful?

5) Are there additional areas of study that you feel should be included in the course?

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7) Any additional Comments?
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Anagbo

Final Evaluation
Writing

July 12, 1991

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