Breaking The Language Barrier

G&F Industries [1], partnering with the Literacy Volunteers of South Central Massachusetts, has created a program to help employees who are non-native English speakers improve their workplace English language skills.

Improved workplace English skills assist in comprehending safety and operating procedures by understanding the English words for objects and actions. By improving their command of workplace English, employees are more likely to be successful at work-and it may even simplify trying to communicate in their personal lives as well.

The program is being offered during work hours with employees conducting the training sessions. Thus far, three volunteer employees have been trained and certified to tutor groups of three to five students. There are 12 students participating in the first program.

G&F and Literacy Volunteers found it was more efficient and effective to teach employees how to tutor (in fact, they were already doing so on a casual basis) than to teach outside tutors about the company and manufacturing. The employee trainers prioritize the topics to be introduced, such as work safety and how to use the company's automated telephone system.

"The focus of the program is to "serve the needs of the employees, making sure they have skills and understanding they can apply immediately," according to Vanessa Fors, Literacy Volunteers coordinator.

"The program with G&F is a brand-new approach for Literacy Volunteers, the first off-site program affiliated with a company. It is a model for bringing what an employee wants or needs to know to their company environment. G&F is setting a standard for this type of program.

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[1] http://www.gandf.us/