

Course
ENG-3101-1
English and Interviews

English Language Arts



Introduction

In an age where no one individual can possibly keep up with the inundation of new data, the value of collectively exchanging and acquiring information is immense. To fully participate in this exchange, we need to know how to ask clear, pertinent questions and how to respond to the answers given so as to keep the information flow going. In this sense, interviews provide us with an excellent vehicle for developing our ability to seek and relay information. At times they are also a more accessible tool than many print and media sources.

In this 25-hour course, the first of three courses in Secondary III, adult learners participate in a variety of learning situations and activities to develop their ability to discuss and analyze structured and semi-structured interviews. Marketing surveys and public opinion polls exemplify structured interviews, while various types of investigative and talk show interviews exemplify semi-structured interviews. Although these interview types belong primarily to the Informative genre, whose main social function is to provide a reliable and neutral account of events, situations or natural/social/cultural phenomena, they may contain narrative, explanatory and persuasive elements as well. (See the explanation on social functions and their corresponding genres in Chapter 1, Section 1.2.)

The course helps adult learners broaden their knowledge of the communication conventions used in structured and semi-structured interviews. By the end of the course, adult learners will be able to apply this knowledge when they conduct short surveys or opinion polls and present their results orally. They will also be able to apply this knowledge when they adopt the roles of interviewer and interviewee in semi-structured interviews.

Subject-Specific Competencies

Competencies are developed and demonstrated through the mobilization and effective use of various resources. Among these resources are language processes, strategies and textual and linguistic knowledge. The subject-specific competencies targeted in the course *English and Interviews* are shaded in the table below.

Competencies	Key Features		
Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn (C1)	Develops resources for communicating orally and for learning	Interacts with others in different contexts	Interprets how speakers shape an oral message to create a relationship with the audience
Reads and listens to written, spoken and media texts (C2)	Develops resources to make sense of various written, spoken and media texts	Extends understanding of various written, spoken and media texts	Interprets his/her relationship to the text and the context
Produces texts for personal and social purposes (C3)	Develops resources to produce written and media texts	Follows a process to produce written and media texts	Creates a relationship with his/her audience suitable to the text and context

Although only C1 and C2 are targeted in this course, C3 is implicit as writing activities complement the learning situations.

For more information on the subject-specific competencies, refer to the following sections:

- *Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn (C1)*, Chapter 3, Section 3.2
- *Reads and listens to written, spoken and media texts (C2)*, Chapter 3, Section 3.3
- *Produces texts for personal and social purposes (C3)*, Chapter 3, Section 3.4

Processes and Strategies

Language processes are series of actions or operations that support competency development. In other words, they are important resources that adult learners may use to become more effective speakers, listeners, readers, viewers, writers or producers of texts. In all, there are four language processes (Research, Reading, Writing and Production); the processes suggested for this course are illustrated in the table below.

Processes	Phases
Research	Planning task at hand
Reading	Mobilizing resources Reflecting on the resources employed to achieve the task

Communication and learning strategies are actions, behaviours, steps and techniques that enable adult learners to overcome obstacles, attain goals and achieve success. They are additional resources that adult learners may use to become more effective speakers, listeners, readers, viewers, writers or producers of texts. The communication and learning strategies suggested for this course are illustrated in the table below.

Strategies		
Communication		Verbal and nonverbal Rhetorical
Learning	Cognitive	Activating prior knowledge Meaning-making Listening Reading/viewing Information-gathering Interpretation Note-taking
	Socioaffective	Feedback Collaborative
	Metacognitive	Feedback Self-evaluation

Additional information on processes and strategies is provided in the following sections:

- Chapter 3, Section 3.5
- Appendix (Inventory of Strategies)

Cross-Curricular Competencies

The cross-curricular competencies are generic skills that can be developed and applied outside the school setting. They are developed in tandem with subject-specific competencies. Given the nature of the course *English and Interviews*, the shaded cross-curricular competencies listed horizontally could easily be developed simultaneously with the shaded subject-specific competencies listed vertically. Since teachers have the option of choosing learning situations other than the ones suggested in this program, they may decide to develop cross-curricular competencies other than those shaded in the table below.

Cross-Curricular Competencies → Subject-Specific Competencies ↓	Uses information	Solves problems	Exercises critical judgment	Uses creativity	Adopts effective work methods	Uses ICT	Cooperates with others	Achieves his/her potential	Communicates appropriately
Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn	■				■				■
Reads and listens to written, spoken and media texts	■				■				

For more information on the key features and manifestations of the cross-curricular competencies, refer to the Diversified Basic Education Program.

Subject-Specific Content

The subject-specific content includes knowledge and cultural references.

Knowledge

The prescribed textual and linguistic elements, necessary for the development of the competencies targeted in this course, are listed below in alphabetical order.

<p>Textual Elements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ audience and communication context ✓ coherence ✓ consistency or logical presentation of ideas ✓ facts and opinions ✓ main and supporting ideas ✓ methods of organization (e.g. analogy, cause/effect, chronological order, comparison/ contrast, example, explanation, listing of ideas) ✓ question-and-answer structure of interview texts ✓ social function(s) of text ✓ sufficient vs. insufficient development of ideas ✓ textual features of surveys and polls: tables/charts illustrating statistical results, captions, headings, etc.

Linguistic Elements

- ✓ agreement (of person, subject and verb, verb tenses, pronoun and antecedent)
- ✓ body language (gestures/movements/facial expressions/eye contact)
- ✓ coordinators and subordinators
- ✓ language (neutral, connotative)
- ✓ language functions (contextualizing, summarizing, rephrasing, asking questions, e.g. open-ended, closed-ended, leading , follow-up, rhetorical)
- ✓ language tone and register (style/level of language suitable to context)
- ✓ oral communication features (voice tone, speed, volume, emphasis, enunciation, pronunciation)
- ✓ syntax

Cultural References

In this course, teachers may choose to have adult learners explore the sociological aspect of culture by focusing on how interpersonal relationships come into play in semi-structured interviews. When adult learners examine these interviews, they discover that an effective interviewer inspires trust or confidence in the interviewee and is consequently able to gather more information. They learn that an interviewer enhances the conversational flow by creating a comfortable atmosphere and demonstrating a keen interest in the conversational exchange; the interviewer and the interviewee appear relaxed and animated, they make eye contact and/or speak in an expressive manner.

Essentially, an effective interviewer establishes a rapport with the interviewee. As a result, the interviewee needs less prompting and tends to volunteer information spontaneously. In contrast, an interviewer who establishes only a weak rapport is generally less able to get his/her interview subject to elaborate. Instead of opening up as the interview progresses, the interviewee may give increasingly brief or vague answers.

By considering different sorts of interviews, adult learners discover that the communication in person-to-person contact is influenced by the way questions are asked and answers are received. They discover that the type or quality of information gathered in such texts is facilitated or impeded by the interpersonal relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee.

Alternatively, teachers may decide to focus on the aesthetic or the sociolinguistic aspect of culture. (See Chapter 4 for additional information on the three cultural aspects.)

Families of Learning Situations

The term “families of learning situations” refers to groupings of learning situations that vary in style and complexity but share some common characteristics. The family of learning situations targeted in this course is shaded in the table below.

Family of Learning Situations	
	Exploring and creating literary diversity
▶	Seeking and imparting information
	Developing and supporting a stance

Seeking is associated with the communication purposes of gathering and understanding or interpreting information from a variety of interview texts such as surveys or opinion polls and live, radio, TV, print or online interviews. It is also associated with the communication purposes of asking for information in formal and informal communication settings. **Imparting** is associated with the communication purposes of relaying and explaining the information gathered from the interviews examined/conducted, and of providing clear, informative answers to the questions posed by the interviewer or live audience.

Broad Areas of Learning

The table below illustrates the broad areas of learning. These five areas are selected on the basis of their importance to society. Each comprises an educational aim and focuses of development that help teachers delineate the knowledge that can be explored in specific learning situations.

Broad Areas of Learning →	Health and Well-Being	Career Planning and Entrepreneurship	Environmental Awareness and Consumer Rights and Responsibilities	Media Literacy	Citizenship and Community Life
Subject-Specific Competencies ↓					
Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn	■				
Reads and listens to written, spoken and media texts	■				

As demonstrated in the chart above and the example of a learning situation below, Health and Well-Being is a broad area of learning well suited to this course.

When adult learners focus on Health and Well-Being, they may develop:

- an awareness of the influence of behaviour and attitudes on psychological well-being

Other broad areas of learning could also be selected to create different learning situations.

For more information on the broad areas of learning, their educational aims and focuses of development, refer to the Diversified Basic Education Program.

Example of a Learning Situation

International Conference on Human Trafficking

In this learning situation, adult learners are presented with the following scenario:

You notice an online announcement about an upcoming international conference in Montréal on human trafficking. This is a subject that greatly interests you as you have just seen a Canadian investigative report on TV concerning the sex-trade industry and its impact on the lives of young women caught in its web. Also, you are concerned about the well-being of several teenage girls you think could be at risk. You decide to attend the conference, which is free for students and, after discussing this with your teacher and peers, you e-mail some of the conference speakers to find out whether any of them would be willing to answer some of your questions. One of them replies, informing you that anyone can come to the mike and ask the speakers questions. In addition, she offers to meet you for 15 minutes following the conference in order to respond personally to any remaining questions that you may have. You decide to prepare several interview questions to ask at this conference.

End-of-Course Outcomes

By the end of the course, adult learners will be able to:

Discuss and analyze

- **structured interviews** (surveys and polls)
- **semi-structured interviews** (e.g. talk show/investigative/sports/news interviews)
- **interview techniques in both types of interviews**

When adult learners discuss different types of surveys or polls (print, online, telephone or face-to-face), they focus on the social function(s), target audience(s) and communication conventions of these texts. They understand that formal language is characteristic of polls and surveys whose results are intended for general distribution.

They also understand that, in surveys and polls, questions are predetermined and the sharing of information is generally one-way. They analyze the statistical results presented, the way these results are organized in charts or tables, and the type of questions or scaled responses used.

When adult learners discuss various semi-structured interviews, they focus on the texts' social function(s), target audience(s) and communication conventions. They understand that the language used may be formal or informal, depending on the target audience. They understand that although

these interviews typically employ a question-and-answer structure that features a combination of preset and spontaneous interview questions, the sharing of information may be two-way. Adult learners identify the level of language formality in selected interviews and analyze the type and amount of information gathered. They discuss the role of any introductory or contextualizing remarks by the interviewer and identify some narrative, persuasive or explanatory elements in the interview. (For example, talk show hosts may ask a guest to narrate the story of a recent career move; they may ask an actor about his/her latest film, in effect inviting him/her to persuade the audience to see it; or they may ask experts such as psychologists to explain a particular kind of behavior, and so on. Adult learners identify shifts like these when viewing/listening to an interview.)

When adult learners discuss the interview techniques used in both types of interview texts, they focus on the relevance and appropriateness of the specific statements, questions and answers that the texts contain. They differentiate between closed- and open-ended questions and identify the use of leading, follow-up or rhetorical questions. They analyze how the statements, questions and answers in the interviews either facilitate or impede the flow of information. They analyze the impact of body language, such as the presence or absence of eye contact and friendly or expressive gestures. They discuss any communication breakdowns and the possible reasons for them in the interviews. They appraise the overall effectiveness of the interview techniques used.

Interact orally

- **in semi-structured interviews, alternately adopting the role of interviewer and interviewee**

Adult learners plan for an interview by selecting the topic or topics they will explore, preparing some questions for their interview subject and doing any preliminary research required for their role as interviewer. At the beginning of the interview, they provide the audience with some contextualizing information on the interviewee or the topic explored. They attempt to establish some sort of rapport with the interviewee, both before and while asking the questions they have prepared. In addition, they interject spontaneous questions to encourage the interviewee to elaborate further. They indicate to the interviewee when the interview is over and thank him/her for participating.

When adult learners adopt the role of interviewee, they do any preliminary research required for the role. During the interview, they answer the interviewer's questions fully or, if they cannot or do not wish to answer a particular question, they indicate this in an appropriate way. In addition, they ask for clarification when the questions are unclear or rephrase their answers when the interviewer asks them for clarification.

Text length: 2-3 minutes

Communication context: familiar or unfamiliar audience, formal or fairly formal tone and register suitable to text type and target audience

Present orally

- **the results of a survey or an opinion poll they have conducted**

When adult learners present the results of a survey or an opinion poll they have conducted, they contextualize by explaining the objective of their survey or poll and the method used to obtain their results (e.g. face-to-face, telephone or online interviews). They provide general information on the respondents, such as their total number, age group and location. In addition, they may include information about the respondents' gender, education/income level, and so on, where this is relevant. When presenting the results of a survey, they provide the audience with the eight to ten survey questions they have used. These may be yes/no, multiple choice or binary choice questions. Alternatively, when presenting the results of an opinion poll, adult learners present the audience with the opinion statements and scaled responses used in the poll. For example, they may use a Likert-scale, which includes responses such as *strongly agree*, *agree*, *undecided*, *disagree*, *strongly disagree*; or responses such as *not very important* at one end of the scale and *extremely important* at the other. In both cases, adult learners report the results for each question or statement, and summarize their overall results.

These results may be illustrated in percentage tables, histograms, diagrams, pie charts, and so on. In both cases, adult learners conclude their presentation by responding to any questions from the audience.

Text length: 3-4 minutes

Communication context: familiar or unfamiliar audience, formal or fairly formal tone and register suitable to the text type and target audience

Teachers need to ensure that adult learners use planning tools such as brainstorming, lists and discussions as they begin creating their texts. Teachers also need to ensure that adult learners actively reflect on what they learned and how successfully they communicated in the texts they created. For example, adult learners may use self-evaluation checklists or participate in feedback discussions to identify the learning and communication strategies they used and to appraise how well they presented the results of their survey/opinion polls and interacted in interviews. They may use the same type of evaluation tools to reflect on what they learned from discussing and creating these texts.

Evaluation Criteria for the Competencies Targeted by the Course

Competencies	Evaluation Criteria
<p>Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn (C1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective communication of ideas • Effective communication for learning • Appropriate use of language conventions
<p>Reads and listens to written, spoken and media texts (C2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coherent construction of meaning from texts • Demonstration of understanding of contextual connections • Thorough comprehension of structures and features of texts • Critical interpretation of texts