

VANIER

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NEWS RELEASE

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Practice makes perfect in Vanier College Language School classes custom-made for Videotron

November 30, 2009. By the looks of it, you think you've walked into a call centre with people talking on telephones answering customer service questions. The difference – the callers talking over the phone are facing each other across a table, because it's an exercise to practice speaking English. It's part of classes taught by the Vanier College Language School that designed custom-made English courses for employees of Videotron Business Solutions. Ten percent of customer calls are in English, and many employees need to improve their language skills.

Videotron employees responding to customer inquiries must provide information that describes products, services, rates, and explain some of the technical aspects of Videotron services using technical terms such as "fibre optic direct links between Toronto and Montreal". Such technical language does not come easily to a mostly French speaking call team.

To boost both their technical knowledge and general business proficiency, the Vanier Language School has designed three classes at 2 levels that employees attend after work hours for two hours a week. Vanier teachers provide teaching at Videotron offices making it convenient for employees to attend the classes regularly. Vanier language trainers cover grammar and oral communication with an emphasis on the terms and vocabulary needed for answering and receiving telephone calls from business customers calling about service, sales and technical support. They also learn how to ask and answer open-ended questions.

"Classes are lively and highly interactive," says Chris Hall, Coordinator of the Vanier College Language School. "Students use actual telephones to talk and practice their communication skills. Role playing is used to simulate telephone calls. Students have been surprised by the Vanier approach to teaching English but find it interesting and useful."

Hall goes on to indicate that "The Vanier Language School is ideal for providing the training Videotron wants for its employees. The interactive, student-centered approach we use focuses on the specific needs of students, and Maria Weekes, the teacher that we chose to develop the program, has enthusiastically implemented these methods."

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