

“A course that brings back the joy of learning a language”

TORONTO LABORATORY THEATRE'S
EMBODIED ENGLISH.¹
PART I and PART II
A DRAMA/ESL COURSE FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS



¹ Note that the syllabus may change depending on the students' exact needs and level.

Embodied English (EE) is a speaking and pronunciation course like no other: it involves no desks, no writing and no boring memorization. Developed by a Canadian team of ESL instructors, actor trainers and applied linguists, EE uses a unique methodology which transforms language learners into efficient, effective, and expressive users of their second language while helping them move closer to the native speaker ideal in oral communication.

Course Description

The course consists of three components that focus on elements of communication commonly ignored by most ESL courses. The first component focuses on pronunciation macro-elements: *intonation, rhythm, sentence stress and clarity of sound articulation*. The second component addresses the issue of linking intonation to *voice and body expressivity*. The third component helps participants to learn *how to make appropriate grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and body language choices in various sociocultural situations*. Through *close observation and thorough analysis of numerous samples of native speakers' verbal and non-verbal behaviour*, participants are encouraged to note the differences between language choices and strategies native speakers of English tend to make and their own way of using English. The course utilizes a number of *acting and improvisation exercises aiming at the realistic imitation and appropriation of the verbal and non-verbal behaviour* of native speakers of English.

EE is offered in two successive parts. Part I focuses on monological genres of speech such as introductions, presentations, narratives jokes and accounts of events. Part II introduces scripted dialogues and group improvisations leading to a dramatic presentation devised by students. In both parts, as part of their training, participants will also work on a number of contrasting English-speaking characters (both self-devised and from contemporary Canadian plays) and present the results of their work at the end-of-the-course performance to a group of native and non-native speakers of English. The course materials are Canadian/North American content oriented and purposefully designed to increase students' awareness of sociocultural and sociolinguistic conventions common in Canada. All course instructors are TESL-Ontario certified ESL teachers working in collaboration with experienced drama tutors. The course is exclusively offered in Toronto, Ontario.²

² An intensive two or three week version of Embodied English is also available in summer. See p. 8.

PART I (30 hours)

Focal points:

Pronunciation and non-verbal communication: English intonation patterns (tones), word linking, phrasing, general body expressivity, culturally determined gestures, connections with spoken language

Spoken communication: small talk practice, self- and mutual introductions, narrative jokes, accounts of events, reports, scripted monologues

Elements of acting: energy, concentration, action, tempo-rhythm, given circumstances

Forms of instruction:

- group sessions, including the final performance – 24 hours
- class outings (professional theatre production) – 3 hours
- one-on-one or small group tutorials – up to 3 hours (more available at additional cost)
- online guidance

Homework (2 hours a week) comprises pronunciation drills, observation exercises and monologue work.

Teacher-student ratio: min 1:5. Average group size: 10-16

Period of instruction: Fall Session: September-December. Spring Session: February-May



“I have taken many courses and this one is really different, as it allows you to ‘break the ceiling’ and go much higher in your language learning”

Embodied English: Part I. COURSE STRUCTURE

Week	Class Type and Duration
Week 1 1. Body and voice warm-up: Introduction to English tones. 2. Small talk conventions. 3. Focus and concentration.	Group session: 3 hours
Week 2 1. Body and voice warm-up. 2. Embodied introductions and reactions 1. 3. Energy.	Group session: 3 hours
Week 3 Tutorial 1. <i>Pronunciation and Meaning</i>	One-on-one: 40-45 minutes
Week 4 1. Body and voice warm-up. 2. Embodied introductions and reactions 2. 3. Psychological gesture.	Group session: 3 hours
Week 5 1. Body and voice warm-up. 2. Being funny: joke types and reactions to humour/irony. 3. Actions/objectives.	Group session: 3 hours
Week 6 Tutorial 2. <i>Clarity and Delivery</i>	In groups of 2-3: 60 min
Week 7 1. Body and voice warm-up. 2. Being funny: Narrative jokes. 3. Tempo-rhythm.	Group session: 3 hours
Week 8 1. Body and voice warm-up. 2. Register 1: Types and use. 3. Given circumstances.	Group session: 3 hours
Week 9 Tutorial 3 (with Drama Instructor): <i>Character and Action</i> .	In groups of 2-3: 50-70 min
Week 10 1. Body and voice warm-up. 2. Register 2: Play with register. 3. General review.	Group session: 3 hours
Week 11 1. Additional Rehearsal Time 2. Final Performance (open to public)	Rehearsal: 1 hour. Open Performance and Party: 2 hours
Week 12 (optional) Theatre Outing and Performance Discussion	Group Outing: 3 hours

PART II (30 hours)

Focal points:

Pronunciation and non-verbal communication: prominence (word and sentence stress), rhythm, complex intonation patterns, “beat” gestures, emotional gestures

Spoken communication: levels of sincerity, openness and positivity, spoken performance through scripted scenes/structured improvisations/self-devised scenes

Elements of acting: interaction, spontaneity, subtext, emotional states, archetypes

Forms of instruction:

- group sessions, including the final performance – 20 hours
- class outings (professional theatre production) – 3 hours
- tutorials and workshops – up to 7 hours (more available at additional cost)
- online guidance

Homework (2 hours a week) comprises observation exercises, scene development and practice.

Teacher-student ratio: min 1:5. Average group size: 10-16

Period of instruction: Spring Session only: February-May



“It’s really three things in one: pronunciation, cultural knowledge and a space for socialization and networking”

Embodied English: Part II. COURSE STRUCTURE

Week	Class Type and Duration
Week 1 1. Rhythm warm-up. 2. Turn taking conventions: From making conversation to genuine interest. 3. Acting: Action and Interaction.	Group session: 3 hours
Week 2 1. Rhythm warm-up. 2. Levels of sincerity and subtext. Sarcasm. 3. Acting: Subtext.	Group session: 3 hours
Week 3 Drama Workshop 1: "Neutral scene"	Workshop with drama instructor: 3 hours
Week 4 1. Rhythm and intonation warm-up. 2. Emotions: Positive and negative. 3. Acting: Emotional states.	Group session: 3 hours
Week 5 1. Rhythm and intonation warm-up. 2. Emotions: Intensity and overtiness. 3. Acting: Emotional States. Subtext.	Group session: 3 hours
Week 6 Drama Workshop 2: Devising a scene.	In groups of 6: 90 min
Week 7 1. Rhythm and intonation warm-up. 2. Improvisations: Speaking under pressure. 3. Acting: Archetypes.	Group session: 3 hours
Week 8 1. Rhythm and intonation warm-up. 2. Improvisations: Applying archetypes. 3. Acting: Spontaneity.	Group session: 3 hours
Week 9 Rehearsals (with drama instructor): Putting it all together / Pronunciation QuickFix Tutorial.	In groups of 2-3: 60 min/30 min
Week 10 Rehearsals (with drama instructor): Putting it all together / Pronunciation QuickFix Tutorial.	In groups of 2-3: 60 min/30 min
Week 11 1. Additional Rehearsal Time. 2. Final Performance (open to public).	Rehearsal: 1 hour. Open Performance and Party: 2 hours
Week 12 (optional) Theatre Outing and Performance Discussion.	Group Outing: 3 hours

How did Embodied English come about?

Embodied English is a result of 20 years of experimentation with drama activities and theatre productions involving second language speakers in Canada, the USA, the UK, Malta, Latvia and Russia. It was developed in 2012 in Toronto, Ontario, by a group of ESL teachers, methodology experts, acting and speech instructors and led by a University of Toronto researcher. It is a labour of love for everyone who is involved in the course planning and implementation and it continues to evolve through ongoing research and pedagogical practice.

Is there any research corroborating your method?

Research on Second Language Acquisition and Gesture/Embodiment (e.g., Gale Stam and McCafferty Steve (Eds). *Gesture. Second Language Acquisition and Classroom Research*. New York: Taylor & Francis.) confirms that gesture is an essential part of the overall language proficiency and it is a useful tool not only for pronunciation training and vocabulary acquisition but also for forming a new language identity required for the mastery of a second language. In addition, research in cognitive linguistics and neuroscience continues to confirm the inherent link between mind, body and language (e.g., Lackoff, G. and Johnson, M. (1999) *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought*. New York: Basic Books).

Am I too young/old to take your course?

While the majority of EE students are between 25 and 45 years old, we accept students 16 years or older and there is certainly no age limit.

Do you teach other languages?

Our goal is to teach both of Canada's official languages but at the moment we only offer English instruction for intermediate and advanced learners.

Are your teachers native speakers?

Most are; however, research shows that this may well be an irrelevant question. What is much more important for successful language learning is to ensure that your instructor is qualified and experienced. All our instructors are TESL Ontario or TESL Canada certified ESL professionals who consider English their dominant language and speak with a clear North American accent. Most of our instructors are fluent bi- and multilinguals, which helps them better identify potential problems that their students might have. In addition to regular TESL training, each of our instructors has undergone a special training as a teaching assistant at one of EE courses.

Can my language school/college/university get Embodied English?

Yes, but EE requires more resources than a regular ESL course, such as a minimum of two available classrooms with comfortable chairs (no desks) and a performance space. For more information, please contact tltenquiries@gmail.com

How many students do you have in one group?

Each group varies from 10 to 16 students guided by 2-4 ESL instructors and 1 drama tutor. About 40% of the class time is dedicated to small group work, pair and one-on-one tutorials. This breakdown allows us to address each student's individual problems and provide a sufficient amount of individualized feedback and assessment.

Why do you teach intermediate and advanced learners only?

EE addresses the aspects of language that are typically ignored by other ESL courses, such as language pragmatics and complex pronunciation elements. By the time language learners reach advanced levels of language mastery, the absence of those aspects of communication in their speech becomes more evident and the mistakes become more glaring. That said, we also acknowledge that beginners and low level learners can potentially benefit from learning a second language through embodied practices. With time we're hoping to develop an embodied language course for different levels.

How much does it cost?

The course fee fluctuates depending on many factors, plus various discounts are available. Please, contact tltenquiries@gmail.com for details.

Do you offer summer intensives for overseas students or corporate clients?

A 3 week intensive version of Embodied English can be organized for groups of international students (14 +), foreign trained ESL teachers and business professionals. The required entry level for the intensive course is intermediate. Accommodation in local English-speaking families and unique cultural activities are provided. Onsite corporate training is also available – extra fees apply. For more information, please contact tltenquiries@gmail.com

Do you have more testimonials?

Yes, we certainly do. Please, visit our website to see written and video testimonials of students from dozens of language backgrounds: www.torontolab.org

