


In Conversation

*A conversation club for health professionals of the
CISSS Chaudière-Appalaches (Thetford Mines sector)*



Centre intégré
de santé et de services
sociaux de Chaudière-
Appalaches

Québec 



How it all started...

A few facts:

- ❖ Most doctors can speak English well enough to explain health problems and treatments to their patients.
- ❖ Most receptionists speak very little English and feel completely lost when having to deal with an English-speaking patient.
- ❖ Yet, access to health services in English starts at the reception desk.

What can be done???



« I understand English, I just can't speak it! »

Other facts:

1. More people than you think understand English fairly well.
2. Most Francophones living outside Montreal have very few opportunities to speak English.
3. What they need is the opportunity to practice and improve their conversation skills.

Oh oh, we're getting somewhere!



The answer: A CONVERSATION CLUB!

How can you help health professionals improve their English language speaking skills?

Start a Conversation Club at your local hospital, CLSC or CHLSD.

What is a Conversation Club?

A Conversation Club is one of the best ways to improve spoken English. English clubs allow English language learners to practice speaking in an informal, relaxed environment. English speaking clubs primarily help participants improve 2 skills - speaking and listening.



How to start a Conversation Club?

Step 1

- ▶ Make sure to include this activity in the workplan you present to McGill.
- ▶ Contact McGill to ensure that what you plan to do is admissible under the McGill funding envelope.
- ▶ Contact your « Répondant » at the CISSS ou CIUSSS of your region and arrange a meeting to discuss the possibility of setting up a Conversation at your local hospital. Be prepared!

Step 2

- ▶ With your « Répondant », agree on a format (number of sessions, schedule, location, etc...).
- ▶ Ask your « Répondant » to assign a local contact that you will work with in setting up the club (logistical arrangements, distribution of promotional material, etc...).
- ▶ Recruit a good and experienced facilitator (for example a retired teacher).
- ▶ Make provision in your budget for a small stipend for your facilitator and travelling expenses if needed.



How to start a Conversation Club? (...)

Step 3

- ▶ Develop your promotional material and make sure that the material is distributed throughout the establishment where the Conversation Club will take place.
 - ▶ Posters in the Cafeteria and other common spaces for the staff.
 - ▶ Information on the local intranet.
 - ▶ The establishment Facebook page, if there is one.

Step 4

- ▶ Select the participants
 - ▶ Keep in mind that a conversation club is not an English class. Participants need to be able to understand English reasonably well. What they need is to improve their speaking skills.
 - ▶ If needed, ask your facilitator to evaluate the participants.
 - ▶ If you have more registrations than the maximum capacity, give priority to front desk, emergency and nursing staff.



Example of promotional material

Club de conversation en anglais

À l'intention du personnel du CISSS-CA (Secteur Thetford)



QUAND: à confirmer

LOCAL: à confirmer

COÛT: gratuit

DÉBUT: XX octobre 2017

*Désirez-vous améliorer
vos habiletés de
conversation en anglais?
Ceci est pour vous!*

Inscrivez-vous dès aujourd'hui!

Contactez Maureen Small au

418-332-3851

CRITÈRES D'ADMISSIBILITÉ / INSCRIPTION

Cette activité ne s'adresse pas aux débutants. C'est un club de conversation pour vous aider à vous exprimer avec plus d'aisance en anglais.

Critères d'admissibilité:

- Vous êtes membre du personnel du CISSS-CA / Secteur Thetford
- Vous comprenez l'anglais assez bien de façon générale
- Vous estimez être de niveau intermédiaire ou avancé en anglais

Inscrivez-vous
maintenant

CAPACITÉ MAXIMALE: 10 PARTICIPANTS — Premier arrivé, premier servi!

Cette activité est organisée par la MCDC (www.mcdc.info) grâce au financement de Santé Canada et de l'Université McGill.

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Tips for a successful Conversation Club

- ▶ **Limit the English Speaking club to 10 people or less**

Don't make the English Speaking Club too big. The goal is to give everyone opportunities to speak regularly and you can't do that if the group is too big.

- ▶ **Have a facilitator or conversation leader for the English Speaking Club**

The conversation leader's main responsibility is to make sure everyone gets a chance to speak. Also, the conversation leader could be the first to start talking. Have the conversation leader suggest a topic for discussion or have a list of topics already selected.

SUCCESS



Tips for a successful Conversation Club (...)

▶ Pick topics based on the skill level of the group

Start with simple topics but be prepared to explore into more advanced topics. Set aside a portion of the time for general topics such as movies and weather to facilitate the discussion and break the ice, but make sure to include a good portion of the time to subjects related to health.

▶ Use English at the English Speaking club

This is not negotiable. It is easy and only natural to go back to your native language. In almost every conversation club, this happens. Be prepared to interject and bring the discussion back to English. Remember, the whole point of forming an English Speaking club is to [practice English speaking](#), and you should make sure the group does not lose sight of this.



Evaluation Process

Evaluation is an important step in any initiatives, especially new ones. If you want your Conversation Club to be a success, you need to really pay attention to the evaluation process.

- ❖ Develop simple but effective evaluation tools.
- ❖ Ask all participants to fill an evaluation form.
- ❖ At the last session, make sure to discuss what they liked, disliked, what they would improve, suggestions, etc...
- ❖ Collect all anecdotal feed-back.
- ❖ Review all formal and informal evaluations to be able to make the necessary adjustments for the following session and to report to your funder.
- ❖ Follow up with your « Répondant ».

