TIPS FOR ADDRESSING LANGUAGE ISSUES

The following table provides you with some ideas on how to address language issues. The information is presented by major skill area. The last category deals with general workplace communication issues.

Speaking	• Ask politely for something to be repeated if you don't understand it the first time. • Ask for permission to make corrections. • Agree up front to take a "time out" for pronunciation if pronunciation is the issue. Say the word or phrase clearly and ask for the mentee to repeat it once. • If a word or phrase is used in the wrong context, take a "time out" for word usage and explain how it could be interpreted in the workplace, what the implications might be and what an alternative way to express the idea is. • Practise a few minutes of small talk each time you meet, either in person or over the phone. Discuss appropriate and inappropriate topics.
Listening	• If you feel your mentee has misunderstood what you have said, stop and clarify. • Encourage your mentee to show signs of active listening such as asking questions and making relevant comments. • Employ techniques such as asking your mentee to rephrase what you have said if you sense there has been some misunderstanding. • Ask your mentee if there is anything else on his or her mind if there seems to be a general problem understanding.
Writing	• Explain why writing is an important skill for finding and keeping a job. • Ask the mentee to write out the answers to one or two common interview questions. Review and provide feedback.

	• If you receive emails from your mentee that have errors in them, ask if it's OK to provide feedback. Point out where improvement is required, provide suggestions and explain why accuracy is important. • Provide suggestions for errors in spelling, grammar or word usage that you may find when you review your mentee's job search documents. Explain why accuracy is important. • Consider providing samples of what you consider to be good business writing.
Reading	• If relevant, provide examples of the kinds of reading you are expected to do on the job. • Provide examples of some professional journals or websites that a professional like the mentee may be expected to read. • Provide any helpful advice you may have on techniques for reading and understanding relevant workplace documents.
General workplace communication	• Share stories and/or examples of workplace communication issues that illustrate a point you are trying to make. • Discuss more appropriate ways to restate information that may have been presented in a way which is too academic or too formal for the workplace here. • Talk about how to ask for and respond to feedback on performance.