4 Point Overview

The **4 Point** series is designed for English language learners whose primary goal is to succeed in an academic setting. While grammar points and learning strategies are certainly important, academic English learners need skills-based books that focus on reading, listening, and speaking, as well as the two primary language bases of vocabulary and grammar.

The Introduction to EAP level is designed for students in academic programs who need a more general introduction to authentic academic content. The discrete skills **4 Point** volumes are designed for programs and courses that want a more intensive focus on authentic academic content in one skill area. We have created these volumes on individual skills because customers wanted authentic academic content for this level, but they wanted to be able to focus on one skill at a time. The ultimate goal is to help your students improve these skills and earn a **4.0** (G.P.A.).

4 Point covers academic skills while providing reinforcement and systematic recycling of key vocabulary issues and further exposure to grammar issues. The goal of this series is to help students improve their ability in each of these critical skills and thereby enable the students to have sufficient English to succeed in their final academic setting, whether it be community college, college, or university.

Many ESL students report great difficulties upon entering their academic courses after they leave the safe haven of their English class with other non-native speakers and their sympathetic and caring ESL teachers. Their academic instructors speak quickly, give long reading assignments due the next day, and deliver classroom lectures and interactions at rapid, native speed. In sum, ESL students who have gone through a sheltered classroom setting are in for a rather rude awakening in a new learning situation where English is taken for granted and no one seems to understand or care much about the new reality of the dilemmas facing ESL students. Through these materials, we hope to lessen the shock of such an awakening. The activities in **4 Point** achieve the goal of helping students experience what life beyond the ESL classroom is like while they are still in a sheltered classroom.

These volumes focus very heavily on vocabulary because language learners know that they are way behind their native-speaker counterparts when it comes to vocabulary. Each book highlights key vocabulary items, including individual words, compound words, phrasal verbs, short phrases, idioms, metaphors, collo-

cations, and longer set lexical phrases. In learning vocabulary, the two most important features are frequency of retrievals (i.e., in exercises) and the spacing between these retrievals. Interactive web-based exercises provide additional opportunities for students to practice their academic vocabulary learning at their convenience (**www.press.umich.edu/elt/compsite/4Point/**).

Using the Exercises in This Book (Speaking)

The exercises accompanying the passages are meant to strengthen a range of speaking skills, notably:

- understanding classroom discourse
- using academic language functions
- recognizing signal words and phrases
- developing vocabulary
- synthesizing information

In addition to more general speaking tasks, most units include a specific speaking focus, such as making presentations and participating in group discussions. Six video clips can be found online at **www.press.umich.edu/elt/compsite/4Point/**.

Pre-Speaking Activities

A range of pre-speaking questions is included; each has the purpose of activating prior knowledge about and generating interest in the topics in the unit. Often these questions provide opportunities for students to anticipate content and, therefore, may be revisited throughout the unit. All of the pre-speaking tasks lead to pair or small group discussions.

In-Class and Out-of-Class Interactions/Classroom Discourse

Each unit includes activities based on the in-class interactions students are likely to encounter in post-secondary classrooms. Throughout the units, students participate in group activities that allow them to use the speaking phrases taught in the unit. Other activities include information gaps, rankings, and in-depth discussions. Each unit contains a Making Contact activity designed to put students into interactive situations with native speakers and to research phrases used in their discipline.

In addition, the video includes several features of everyday language that are designed to help make the video more realistic for students. For example, the interactions include some false starts, error corrections, and reductions. Also, in

the attempt to help students understand more than professional native speakers, the online videos features fluent non-native speakers to replicate university settings.

Six video clips are provided on the companion website (www.press.umich.edu/elt/compsite/4Point/) to analyze for language, tone, and nonverbal cues as well as to generate discussion on academic tasks. Throughout the interaction, the students use many of the phrases and employ the strategies taught in the unit—and, in some cases, not using the best communication strategies. ELLs will have the opportunity to hear the phrases used in a natural conversation, practice their listening skills, analyze verbal and nonverbal communication skills of the students, and think critically about and discuss the interaction with their classmates. Questions in the book require students to listen for certain phrases and identify what they mean; to notice the tone of voice and think about how it changes the dynamics of a discussion; to recognize the influence of nonverbal communication by increasing their awareness of facial expressions, gestures, and other cues; and compile all of these ideas into an analytical discussion about the interaction in the video.

Synthesizing: Projects and Presentations

The summative task for each unit includes four projects that relate to the topic and encourage practice of the concepts. Students prepare projects and presentations based on what they have learned via the readings, discussions, or online or library research. For group projects, students should be given adequate time to clarify group roles and to work on their projects.

Rapid Vocabulary Review and Vocabulary Log

A vocabulary review task appears at the end of each unit and gives students another opportunity to check their understanding of key words. The correct answer is a synonym or brief definition. Crucial to the vocabulary acquisition process is the initial noticing of unknown vocabulary. ELLs must notice the vocabulary in some way, and this noticing then triggers awareness of the item and draws the learner's attention to the word in all subsequent encounters, whether the word is read in an activity or heard in a conversation. To facilitate noticing and multiple retrievals of new vocabulary, we have included a chart listing 15 key vocabulary items at the end of each unit. This Vocabulary Log has three columns and requires students to provide a definition or translation in the second column and then an original example or note about usage in the third column. As demonstrated in *Vocabulary Myths* (Folse 2004, University of Michigan Press), there is no research showing that a definition is better than a translation or vice-versa, so we suggest

that you let ELLs decide which one they prefer. After all, this log is each student's individual vocabulary notebook, so students should use whatever information is helpful to them and that will help them remember and use the vocabulary item. If the log information is not deemed useful, the learner will not review this material—which defeats the whole purpose of keeping the notebook. In the third column, students can use the word in a phrase or sentence, or they can also add usage information about the word such as *usually negative, very formal sounding,* or *used only with the word* launch. To encourage use of the Vocabulary Log, 10 extra lines are provided so that students can choose their own vocabulary items.