

Working in an Eldercare Facility: An ESOL Resource



Resource developed by Nicky Riddiford from authentic data collected by the Language in the Workplace Project, School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, Victoria University of Wellington.

Resource available at www.victoria.ac.nz/lwp

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About This Resource

Notes for teachers

Who this resource is for?

These materials have been designed for teachers of people with limited competence in English who come from other language backgrounds with the goal of becoming eldercare support workers.

The resources are designed for use in workplace-focused ESOL classes or communication training courses in English-speaking countries, especially, but not exclusively, Australia and New Zealand. The resources could also be used in one-to-one tutoring contexts.

What is the source material for the resource?

The resource has been developed from recordings of ordinary everyday interactions between care-givers and residents as they go about their daily routines in an eldercare facility. The recorded interactions were collected, transcribed and analysed by the Language in the Workplace researchers from the School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies at Victoria University of Wellington.

While tasks differ, there are key features of communication common to caregivers going about their work. (These are described in more detail in a report from the Language in the Workplace Project team for the Settlement Division of the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, 20 March 2013. The report can be found on the LWP website: www.victoria.ac.nz/lwp.)

Key features include:

- Greetings and use of first names and endearments
- Directives or instructions (both direct and less direct or softened)
- Fostering inclusivity (i.e. including residents in the carrying out of tasks, checking a procedure suits and that the resident understands)
- Giving reassurance and encouragement
- Use of humour and small talk

The purpose of this resource is to highlight these features by first hearing them in rerecorded authentic interactions and then helping the ESOL learners to notice differences in what is conveyed by a sometimes quite subtle change in language structure, the inclusion of a modifier or softening device, or change in emphasis or tone of voice.

How is each unit designed?

Each unit focuses on a particular activity such as the daily routine of bringing morning and afternoon tea to residents, carrying out personal care tasks such as showering, or engaging in and responding to small talk with residents.

The units follow a top-down approach. They provide pre-listening activities that set the scene and build on what learners already know about the topic, and introduce vocabulary; listening tasks that provide opportunities for listening to the interaction (with/without transcript); activities to encourage noticing of specific language features of the interaction and then activities to practise these features.

1. Pre-listening activities
 - a. Setting the scene: Moving from what learners will know from their own knowledge of domestic contexts to how these same facilities and activities will be different for the elderly.
 - b. These can include pre-teaching of content words: in most units there is a listening activity that requires learners to match the word they hear with the picture of the object.
2. Listening tasks: Learners listen to an interaction between caregiver and resident or between two caregivers. In this section learners are introduced to the following listening activities.
 - a. Listening for the main ideas/gist. What is happening? The recording could be played many times without the transcript.
 - b. Then, while reading the transcript and listening, learners are guided to notice how particular features are structured, how tone of voice affects the meaning conveyed etc
3. Practice activities that provide learners with the opportunity to create their own utterances using patterns focused on in the interaction.
4. At the end of each unit there is a comic strip exercise where learners are encouraged to create the language they might use without necessarily trying to replicate exactly what is said in the recorded interactions.

Introduction to Unit 3, Small Talk: Chatting to residents

Showing empathy is a key skill when working with elderly residents. It is a skill that has a profound effect on their well-being. Small talk or chat is a powerful way of showing empathy and helps encourage cooperation, boost confidence, reassure and create a caring atmosphere. Small talk can take place before, during or after a task that a care-giver is carrying out and is often interspersed with comments from the care-giver about what s/he is doing. The small talk or chat can be quite short but it has a significant impact.

Introduction to Eldercare Facilities

Retirement Villages



A retirement village is one kind of eldercare facility. Many elderly people in NZ live in retirement villages because they provide different levels of care. It depends on how much support the elderly person needs.



If an elderly person is independent he or she can live in a **villa**.

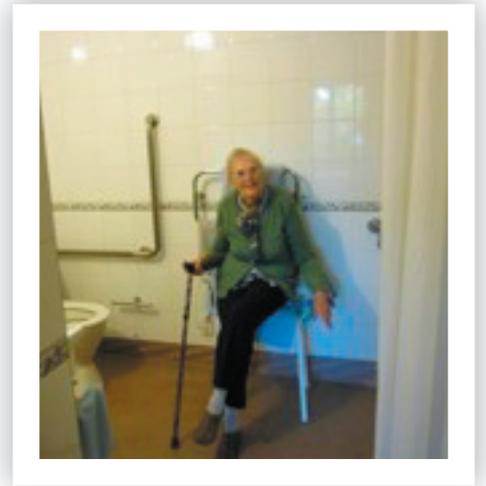
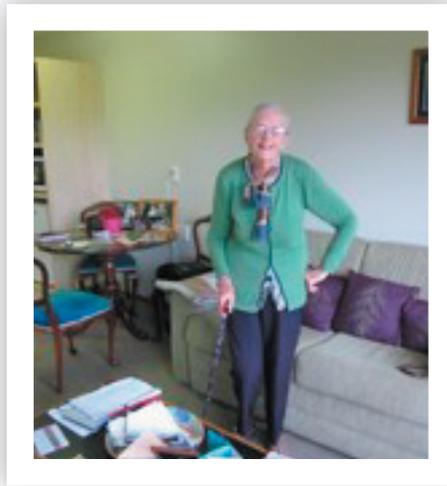
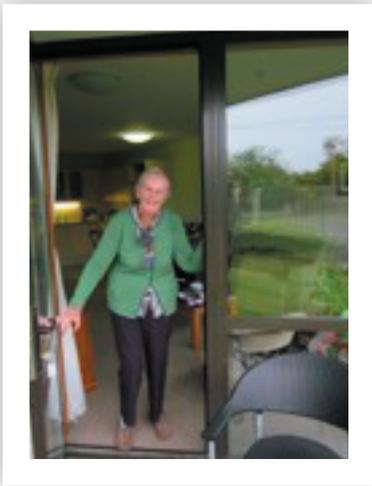


If an elderly person needs some support he or she can live in **an apartment or studio**.



If a person needs lots of support he or she lives in the **rest home**. An elderly person living in an elder-care facility is often called a **resident**.

This woman lives in an apartment. She can look after herself but she needs **the staff** to cook her meals, give her **medication** and help her shower.



What do you notice about her apartment? How many rooms do you think she has?
What are the rooms?

UNIT 3 Small Talk: Chatting to residents



Design and layout by Lauren Poutawera

Teacher's note:

Communication focus of this unit: starting small talk or chat with a resident often while carrying out a care-giving activity; responding when a resident starts chatting and keeping the conversation going; signalling the end of chat.

Task 1: Small talk at work

Think about what you say when you chat or have small talk with people at work:

- A) What do you talk about?
- B) Does each person take turns to speak?
- C) How long does the small talk last?
- D) How does the small talk finish?
- E) What time of day is small talk more common?
- F) What is the purpose of the small talk?
- G) In a retirement village what might care-givers chat to residents about?

Task 2: Listen to the two conversations below between a care-giver and a resident.

<p>A) What's the weather like?</p> <p> Audio clip 1</p>	
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Kate (care-giver) and Bridget (resident) chat about the weather.



Bridget



Kate

Well, we're not dull are we?



Bridget

No way!



Kate

A) What's on TV?



Audio clip 2

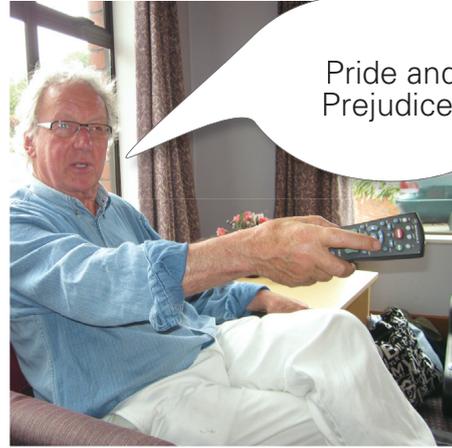


Kate (care-giver) chats to Ed (resident) about what he is watching on TV.

What are you watching?



Pride and Prejudice.



1. Kate: Hello Ed.
2. Ed: Hello Kate.
3. Kate: How are you?
4. Ed: Okay thank you. You?
5. Kate: I'm very well thank you. What are you watching?

6. Ed: Pride and Prejudice.

7. Kate: Oh, um yeah.

Task 3: Listen and look at the conversations again and discuss with a partner:

- A) What is the topic of the small talk?
- B) How long does the small talk last?
- C) Who starts the small talk – the resident or the care-giver?
- D) How many times does each person speak?
- E) Do they take turns?
- F) How long is each turn?
- G) How does the small talk finish?
- H) What short responses (for example, yeah, ok) are used by the care-giver or the resident?
- I) Do the speakers know each other well? How can you tell?
- J) What time of day is it?
- K) What is the care-giver doing during the small talk?
- L) What is the purpose of the small talk?
- M) How does the resident feel during the small talk?
- N) Does the care-giver use the resident's name or another name?
- O) Would small talk happen in the same way in your first language?
- P) Which words or phrases in the conversation are unfamiliar to you?

Task 4: Listen again. Listen to the way the small talk is carried out in the conversations. Listen in particular to:

- A) The volume of the voices (loud or soft)
- B) The intonation pattern of the conversation. Where does the care-giver's voice rise and where does it fall? Which words or syllables are stressed?
- C) The use of pauses. Does the care-giver or resident pause while they are speaking? Why or why not?

Task 5: More conversations for discussion.

Here are 14 more conversations between care-givers and residents and care-givers and other staff members. Read each conversation and answer the questions in tasks 3 and 4 above. For each conversation, fill in the table below.

Conversation	Topic	Purpose of small talk	How does the small talk finish?
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			

1. Hot day	
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Natalie (caregiver) chats to Dave (resident) while turning on his sensor mat (*a mat that signals when the resident steps on it*).

1. Natalie: It's hot today eh?

2. Dave: Yeah, it is a bit.

3. Natalie: Very ... too warm*

* *What is the difference between very warm and too warm?*

2. Cold day



Stephen (Maintenance Worker), Elaine (Lifestyle Coordinator), Sharon (Resident) chat about the weather.

1. Stephen: Chilly for Wellington.

2. Elaine: I know it's cold.

3. Stephen: It was sunny just about an hour ago.

4. Elaine: I know ... it's gonna chuck it down with rain soon.

5. Sharon: [drawls]: Yes, yes.

6. Stephen: No it's not, not till I get home [laughs].

7. Sharon: I think I'd better let you get back to work [laughs].

3. The end of the world



Kim (care-giver) chats to Peter (resident) about what's on TV.

1. Kim: What's that?

2. Peter: I don't know. I've just been flicking from channel to channel.

3. Kim: Apparently on 21st December the sun and the earth

4. are gonna be completely in line with one another.
5. Peter: Oh, how nice.
6. Kim: Yeah they reckon that it's gonna be the end of the world.
7. Peter: Oh yes?
8. Kim: Could be the end of the world any day.
9. Peter: People will always be trying to know the end of the world.

4. Amy's dad



Kate (care-giver) chats to Ed (resident) while she refills his water glass.

1. Kate: Just want to give you some more water.
2. Ed: Okay. Thank you.
3. Kate: How's Amy's dad?
4. Ed: I don't know, I haven't had news. Oh, I talked to Amy last
5. night. She said nothing so I assume he's just the same.
6. Kate: Well, no news is good news.
7. Ed: Yes indeed [laughs].

5. How's Ted



Susan (care-giver) chats to Joan (resident) while she helps her get dressed.

1. Susan: How's Ted?

2. Joan:	Which Ted dear? I've got ... [laughs]
3. Susan:	The new one.
4. Joan:	The new one? He, um well, as far as I know he's alright. He doesn't
5.	tell me everything dear.
6. Susan:	No?
7. Joan:	[laughs] Yeah, he's right, thank you darling.
8. Susan:	Has he moved?
9. Joan:	Eh?
10. Susan:	Has he moved his workplace to the new one?
11. Joan:	Has he what?
12. Susan:	Has he moved?
13. Joan:	Moved?
14. Susan:	Yeah.
15. Joan:	Oh ..., well in about ..., about Christmas time.

6. The boat accident



Alfred (resident) and Leticia (caregiver) are discussing some recent news.

1. Alfred:	Did you hear anything about the people involved in the boat accident?
2. Leticia:	Oh, where?
3. Alfred:	In the harbour.

4. Leticia: In the harbour? Oh, how many?
5. Alfred: Several, I gather.
6. Leticia: When did it happen?
7. Alfred: Just this afternoon.
8. Leticia: Alright ... I'm sorry, I didn't hear.... but thanks for telling me.

7. Bon giorno



Kate (care-giver) goes to see Rosa (resident) to fill a foot spa (*foot bath*) for her. Rosa is Italian and Kate tries speaking in Italian to her.

1. Kate: Hello.
2. Rosa: Hello.
3. Kate: Buon giorno.
4. Rosa: Buona sera.
5. Kate: Is that what you say in the evening?
6. Rosa: Yes.
7. Kate: What is it?
8. Rosa: Buona sera.
9. Kate: Buona sera.
10. Rosa: Bene grazie.
11. Kate: Oh very good [laughs] ... I'm getting better [laughs].
12. Rosa: Yes.

8. Getting old



Kate (care-giver) chats to Paul (resident) about getting old.

1. Paul: Well, dear Kate, I have to note that I'm 87. It's not easy.
2. Kate: It's not. But it's a good age.
3. Paul: It's a good age, yes.
4. Kate: And you're happy with the life you've led so ...
5. Paul: Oh, oh I've had a good pretty good time there are some things
6. I would have done differently.
7. Kate: Oh look, you can't dwell on that now because ...
8. Paul: And then some things I wish I hadn't done at all.
9. Kate: But look Paul you can't dwell on that now because it's the past.
10. Paul: No you can't, no.
11. Kate: You can't go back and change it so ...
12. Paul: Not at all, no.
13. Kate: But you've got ... how many kids have you?
14. Paul: Six.
15. Kate: You have six kids!
16. Paul: Oh yes, I'm one of the lucky chaps.

9. Afternoon tea



Kate (care-giver) chats to Bridget while giving her a cup of tea.

1. Kate: Hello Bridget.
2. Bridget: Hello dear.
3. Kate: Are you ready to rock'n'roll?
4. Bridget: Rock'n'roll? Oh I thought it was tea time.
5. Both: [laugh]
6. Bridget: Er, tea is it?
7. Kate: Yeah.
8. Bridget: Oh, now I'm ready to rock'n'roll!
9. Kate: [laughs]
10. Bridget: I'll do anything.

10. Goodnight



Helen (care-giver) chats to John (resident) while she helps him get ready for bed in the evening.

1. Helen: Here's your dressing gown.
2. John: Not a very thick dressing gown.
3. Helen: No I like it. It's a nice dressing gown.

4. John: It's pretty isn't it?
5. Helen: Yeah. Japanese are clever people... now my love ...
6. John: Thank you my dear.
7. Helen: There you go. I'll walk you over here ... you okay?
8. John: Yeah, I'll be okay.
7. Helen: Right.
8. John: I'm a bit weary.
9. Helen: That's understandable. You okay?
10. John: Thank you dear.
11. Helen: Goodnight lovey. [kisses him on the cheek]
12. John: You're a nice armful.
13. Helen: Um, I'll see you tomorrow, okay? Take care lovey.
14. John: You too.
15. Helen: Goodnight John.
16. John: Have a good evening.
17. Helen: I'm going home to bed. Goodnight.

[Helen shuts the door and walks away]

11. The green dress



Kate (care-giver) chats to Bridget while helping her undress before bed.

1. Kate:	Now, there you go lovey, over the head.
2. Bridget:	Be a nice change to see another dress [laughs].
3. Kate:	This is a pretty one, it's a nice colour.
4. Bridget:	Seems to be the only one I've got [laughs].
5. Kate:	Well I've never seen you in this dress.
6. Bridget:	Oh well, you don't see me all the time [laughs].
7. Kate:	I've see you in the green one.
8. Bridget:	Have I got a green one?
9. Kate:	Yeah a mint green.
10. Bridget:	Oh.
11. Kate:	I've seen you in that a lot.
12. Bridget:	You have? Well I wonder where that is now.

12. Finding the glasses



Mary (care-giver) chats to Tom (resident) while she helps him find his glasses before he goes to bed.

1. Tom:	Now, where are my glasses?
2. Mary:	Here they are.
3. Tom:	Ah, thought I'd lost them.
4. Both:	[laugh]

5. Tom:	Well, I feel sort of blind without them.
6. Mary:	Well, that's understandable.
7. Tom:	Well, not blind but I'm not too sure what it is that I see.
8. Mary:	Have you always worn glasses?
9. Tom:	Um, since I was at high school. But that was just for reading.
11. Mary:	Yeah.
12. Tom:	And, probably when I was about thirty I had to get glasses for reading
13.	and, oh, as well as for distance. And I've been that way ever since.
14. Mary:	Yeah.
15. Tom:	I didn't try bifocals.
16. Mary:	What are bifocals?
17. Tom:	Er, they have a little half moon shape.
18. Mary:	Ah yeah.
19. Tom:	I was told by the optician that I was probably a bit old to adjust.
20. Mary:	Yeah.
21. Tom:	So if you start off that way you're okay but if you're used to something else ... [sigh]



Kate (caregiver) is helping Bridget (resident) get ready for bed at night.

1. Bridget:	[singing to herself]: I don't have a wooden heart.
2. Kate:	[Knocks on the door]: Hello

3. Bridget:	I'm singing Elvis Presley [singing] I don't have a little wooden heart.
4. Kate:	[singing]: It'll break my heart in two.
5. Bridget:	Oh clever girl, you've put me on the right track.
6. Kate:	[laughs]
7. Bridget:	Oh, he was wonderful wasn't he? I loved him. [laughs]
8. Kate:	I love him.
9. Bridget:	Oh bless you darling, we've got the same taste. [laughs]
10. Kate:	[laughs] That's you, done and dusted.* I'll see you tomorrow.
11. Bridget:	Okay dear.
12. Kate:	No problem.
13. Bridget:	Jolly good.
14. Kate:	Goodnight.
15. Bridget:	Goodnight darling and be good and all that and sing your heart out
16. Kate:	I'll sing you a song later.
17. Bridget:	Go to sleep thinking of Elvis.
18. Both:	[laugh]
19. Kate:	Goodnight lovey.
20. Bridget:	Thank you dear.

* That's you, done and dusted = *That's you, all finished.*

14. Back at work



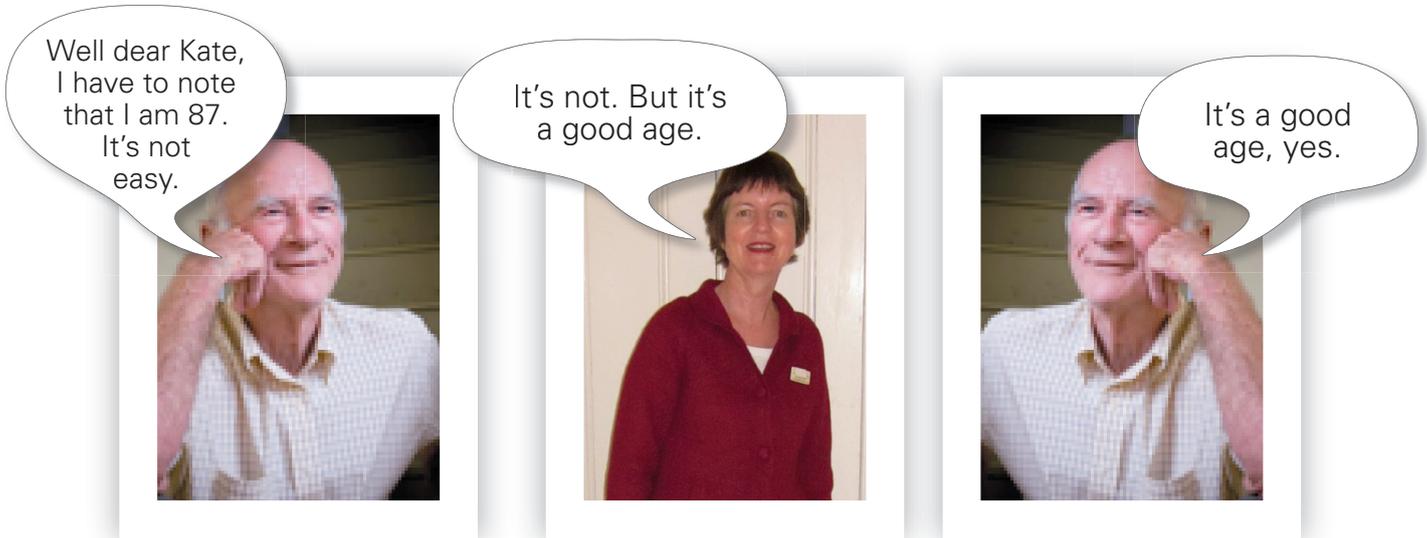
Anna (care-giver) welcomes Jennifer (care-giver) back after she has had some sick leave.

1. Anna: Hi, you're back. How are you?
2. Jennifer: A little bit better – nah!
3. Anna: Oh, come on.
4. Jennifer: I'm glad to be back that's for sure.
5. Anna: Are you sure?
6. Jennifer: I'm bored staying at home.
7. Anna: Oh I know, looking at the TV.
8. Jennifer: Ah, tell me about it. And I start cleaning and it makes my back worse.
9. Anna: Oh well. That's what happens when you stay at home, clean up, clean up!
10. Jennifer: All I had to do was clean.
11. Anna: Clean up, do the dishes!

Task 6: Keeping the conversation going.

A) Notice how Kate keeps the conversation going on the topic that the resident, Paul, has started (Conversation 8: Getting Old).

1. Paul: Well, dear Kate, I have to note that I'm 87. It's not easy.
2. Kate: It's not. But it's a good age.
3. Paul: It's a good age, yes.



Notice how Kate agrees with Paul and then adds an extra comment. This helps to keep the conversation going.

Response	Extra comment
It's not.	But it's a good age.

B) Listen again to the conversation between the resident (Ed) and the care-giver (Kate) in Task 2.  **Audio clip 2**

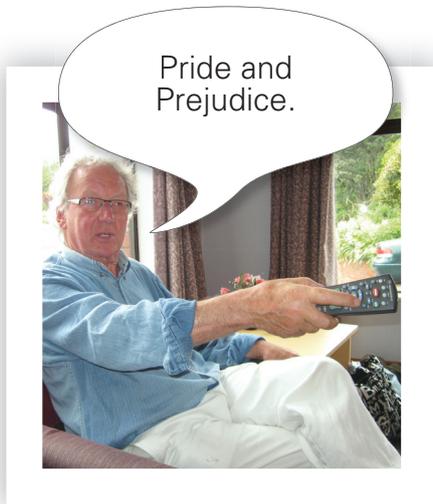
What more could Kate say to keep the conversation going about the TV programme?
Response + extra comment.

Practise with your partner.

1. Kate:	Hello Ed
2. Ed:	Hello Kate
3. Kate:	How are you?
4. Ed:	Okay thank you. And you?
5. Kate:	I'm very well thank you. What are you watching?
6. Ed:	Pride and Prejudice
7. Kate:	Oh, um yeah



Kate



Ed



Kate

C) Look at the pictures below. What could Kate say to respond to what Bridget says?
Response + extra comment.



Bridget



Kate

Task 7: Practise with your partner

Look at the 16 conversations above and practise responding to the small talk in a different way. For example, look at Conversation 4. What else could Kate say to Ed?

1. Kate: Just want to give you some more water.

2. Ed: Okay. Thank you.

3. Kate: How's Amy's dad ?

4. Ed: I don't know, I haven't had news.

5. Kate:

How's Amy's dad?



Kate

I don't know, I haven't had news.



Ed



Kate

Task 8: Summary. Tell your partner what you have noticed or learned about the use of small talk or chat in a New Zealand retirement village.

- A) What topics are common?
- B) How does the small talk often start and finish?
- C) What is the purpose of the small talk in a retirement village?
- D) How does the care-giver keep the conversation going?
- E) What names do the care-givers use when talking to a resident?
- F) Are there any similarities or differences between the way care-givers chat to residents in New Zealand compared to your first language?