

## LinkedIn for ESL Instructors -- Summary

LinkedIn.com is an invaluable resource for anyone looking internationally for work – whether that's your advanced-level or professional students seeking positions in Canada or you yourself looking to teach in a new position. The presenter will show some activities based on vocabulary, LI groups and cultural aspects of LI profiles and discuss how to benefit from them. She will also point out some privacy setting options.

### Outline

1. What is LinkedIn and why should you look at it in class?
2. Professional vocabulary – Are you credible?
3. Cultural aspects of LI profiles – Awareness-raising regarding cultural expectations of hirers
4. Tips for LI job seekers

### 1. What is LinkedIn (LI) and why should you look at it in class?

Within North America, social media are used by 94% of recruiters<sup>1</sup> and 39% of employers<sup>2</sup> at some point in the hiring process, and LI is the most commonly researched social medium for this purpose. In many fields, such as engineering, IT, marketing, HR, recruitment, etc., professionals without an internet presence are virtually invisible.

There are numerous ways you can use LI with high intermediate or advanced students, especially in employment-oriented classes. This handout outlines just the first of two kinds of activities:

- Using professional vocabulary for credibility – notes are in this handout
- Awareness-raising regarding cultural expectations of hirers – not in this handout

For Canadians who want to work abroad, e.g., maybe you as an ESL instructor, LI is an easy place to find out who is working at what schools around the world. Connecting with them can bring insights that are otherwise impossible. At the same time, school hirers around the world can also see you, the North American candidate, and your qualifications, etc.

-----  
1. Jobvite, *2013 Social Recruiting Survey Results*. July 2013. p. 2. [U.S. survey]  
at [http://web.jobvite.com/rs/jobvite/images/Jobvite\\_2013\\_SocialRecruitingSurveyResults.pdf](http://web.jobvite.com/rs/jobvite/images/Jobvite_2013_SocialRecruitingSurveyResults.pdf)

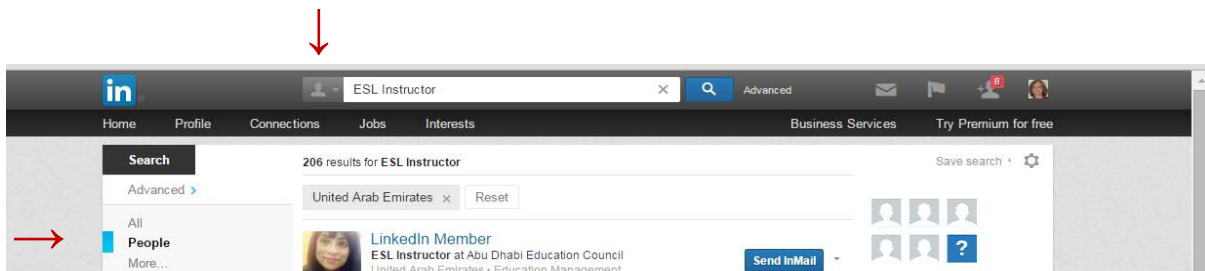
2. Mary Lorenz, "Two in five employers use social media to screen candidates" July 1, 2013. In Talent Factor blog on Careerbuilder.com. At: <http://thehiringsite.careerbuilder.com/2013/07/01/two-in-five-employers-use-social-media-to-screen-candidates/>

## 2. In-class Professional vocabulary activities: Using professional vocabulary for credibility

If you have an occupation-specific class, teach and use English terms that will help the participants/ students to be credible and easily understood when they talk about their work in English.

### 2.1. Reading-for-Vocabulary Activity:

- Use the “Search for people...” and “Advanced” buttons to identify a position,



e.g. ESL instructor or Database Administrator, which you type into the Keyword field. (In 2015 I found, for example, that there are 144,939 results for database administrator; only 27,773 for “ESL instructor.”) People in your network will come up first, and LI seems to concentrate first on your country of residence; for these reasons, it is helpful to have a large network. You can restrict the Search parameters in several ways – see the left-hand column on the LI screen (Search – Advanced – People ...).

- Read the profiles first for general understanding.
- Then read to collect occupation-specific vocabulary. For example, an IT Customer Support Leader Specializing in Enterprise Support writes in her Experience section: “A high performing Support organization serves not only the customers, but also the company by **collating valuable customer feedback and CRM metrics** which can be used to **drive product and process improvements**, resulting in customer retention and growth.” Can your students/participants use verbs like “collate” and “drive” in that sense? Such vocabulary helps them to sound credible, i.e. that they know and can discuss their field on a professional level.  
Note abbreviations as well. The above-mentioned experience talks about “CRM,” “SaaS and “SLAs” – do your participants know what they mean? If not, they should become familiar with them.
- Option: Sort the collected words into parts of speech, focussing on nouns, verbs and adjectives (if any). Some logical learners like to see/make charts, for example: **collate** [verb] – collation [noun] and **drive** [verb] – drive [noun] – driven [adjective].

### 2.2. Speaking/Writing Activity:

Ask students to use the target key words in sentences to talk/write about their own work or study. For example, if they have been talking about their “*computer skills*,” that might not sound

professional; they might need to say “*implementing Life Cycle upgrades*” (as a Database Administrator), or “*using CAD and Revit*” (as an architect), or whatever specialized terms are commonly used by credible people in their occupation. Further tips:

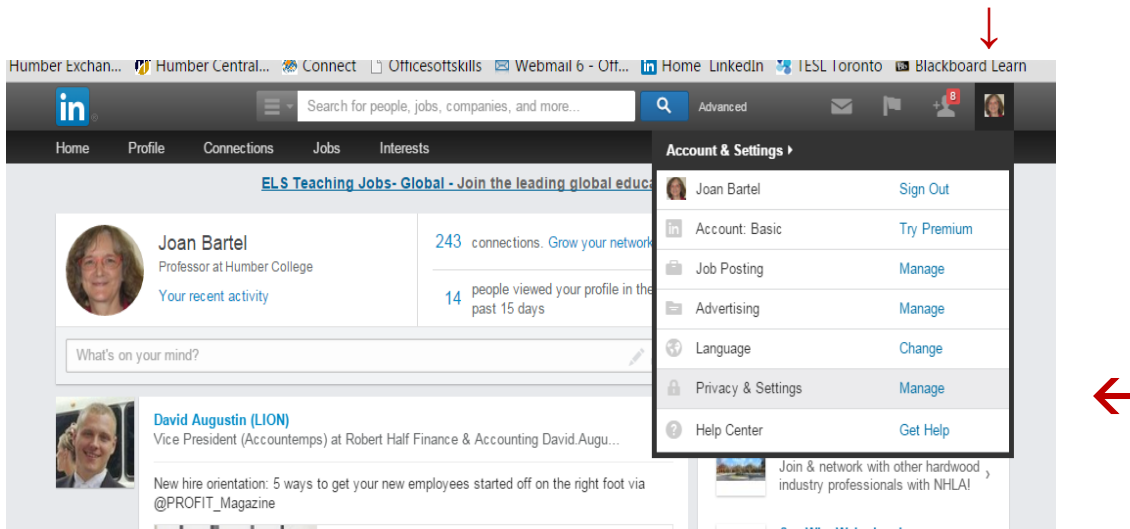
- If you, as instructor, are not very proficient in those occupational terms yourself, tell your students that in this activity your role is that of a client who is not in that field. As a listener/reader, you/the client need(s) to be able to understand them.
- In writing, students should underline the target vocabulary used, thus reinforcing the learning process (and helping your marking efficiency).

### 3. Job search activities for your class or yourself

#### 3.1. Vocabulary in your headline

- Find key words in job postings that you could apply to. Use some of those key words in your LI headline and others in your Experience section so that the hirer can see that you satisfy the requirements of the position. It’s up to you to show that fit. Recruiters and companies that use résumé screening software will be looking for a 75% match (or better) of their key words with your résumé. For example, if the ad says “*educational software*,” then the hirer (person or computer) won’t see “*computer*” in your résumé as a good match. If a job posting says “*discourse*,” then “*conversation*” is not a good match.
- Take out any adjectives in your headline. In many hirers’ minds, they don’t convey facts about your skills and abilities.<sup>3</sup> One exception: if the hirer uses adjectives, as, for instance, private ESL schools often do (e.g., *motivating/enthusiastic/ dynamic*), then you can too.
- While it’s impractical to rewrite your entire LI Summary for every job application, you can revise the top lines of your profile. However, here’s a security tip for job seekers: If you are employed and seeking a new position, turn off your “activity broadcasts” (i.e., when you start to follow a company) and your updates (i.e., you update your Summary, work experience or languages) so that your current employer, if connected with you, can’t see that you’re looking around and polishing your profile – both indicators of possible preparation to leave. To turn these off, go to the drop-down menu under your photo in the top right corner of the screen. (See screen shot, next page.)

-----  
 3. Carmen Jeffery, “Why LinkedIn Headlines and Summaries Make OR Break You - 5 Do's and Don'ts” 1 August 2013. In socialhire.com. At [http://www.social-hire.com/social-recruiting-advice/3564/why-linkedin-headlines-and-summaries-make-or-break-you---5-dos-and-donts?utm\\_content=buffer1c6d&utm\\_source=buffer&utm\\_medium=twitter&utm\\_campaign=Buffer](http://www.social-hire.com/social-recruiting-advice/3564/why-linkedin-headlines-and-summaries-make-or-break-you---5-dos-and-donts?utm_content=buffer1c6d&utm_source=buffer&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign=Buffer)



Select “Privacy & Settings – Manage.” Under “Privacy Controls” choose items such as the following to review:

- [Turn on/off your news mention broadcasts](#)
  - [Choose whether or not to share your profile edits](#)
  - [Choose who can follow your updates.](#)
- Under “Profile – Edit Profile” (top left, next to “Home”), see further suggestions by LI as to how to enhance your profile. Links to publications or slideshares and photos of projects, etc., are becoming more and more common, so don’t get left behind.

### 3.2. Verbs in the Experience section of your profile (and résumé)

Hirers in Canada expect to find a section on work/professional experience near the top of your LI profile or résumé.

- Under Experience, each bullet should begin with a strong verb, indicating what you do (now) or did (in previous jobs). Don’t start a bullet with “*Responsible for...*” as that does not clearly show your skills and abilities, what you can do.
- It is your responsibility to show the hirer that you can prioritize: include tasks that are related to the job you are applying for and leave off less-important, routine tasks you have done. Limit the number of bullets under each job to the number of years you worked there, but no more than eight or nine. Exception: a short-term contract of significant relevance to the job can have several bullets.

### 3.3. Real-life writing activity: LI group discussions

**Join groups in your professional field** and interact there to network! At the bottom of most profiles, you can see what Groups the person has joined. Explore them, read and comment on postings and let others see your name and get to know you. Tip: Don’t ask to connect with

anybody in the group, though, until you have interacted with them. It's annoying to many LI members to get invitations to connect from people they have never heard of. And you might find yourself blocked by LI itself if you try that too often and your targets identify you as "I don't know that person" or even "Scam/Spam." Wait until you have found something you have in common with another person, or you can offer an idea or something else to them before asking to connect.

**Presenter Bio:**

Joan Bartel teaches OSLT (Occupation-specific Language Training) and is a guest lecturer in TESL programs at Humber College. She is a frequent presenter on résumés, soft skills and immigrants' critical communication needs for employment and the author of Office Soft Skills, a self-study textbook that responds to those needs.