

TRANSITION TO 21ST CENTURY BUSINESS ENGLISH

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***Abstract:** Proficiency in English is considered a basic employability skill by employers all over the world. Students who understand the benefits of good levels of spoken and written English at an early age have the advantage of finding a better paid job or the ability of relocating more easily. In an age of global relocation, in a world that that seems smaller as boundaries tend to disappear, being fluent in English and mastering business English skills means to develop the ability to integrate and to adapt more rapidly. This paper aims at analyzing what skills are required of an effective 21st-century workforce.*

***Keywords:** business English, proficiency, skills, workforce, educational environment*

Introduction

Proficiency in English is considered a basic employability skill by employers all over the world. Students who understand the benefits of good levels of spoken and written English at an early age have the advantage of finding a better paid job or the ability of relocating more easily. In an age of global relocation, in a world that that seems smaller as boundaries tend to disappear, being fluent in English and mastering business English skills means to develop the ability to integrate and to adapt more rapidly. This paper aims at analyzing what skills are required of an effective 21st-century workforce.

Developing language skills

In order to deliver work-related English courses to students it is important to provide courses for smaller groups instead of individual course, so that students can interact with each other and can simulate a work-related environment. Intensive training in business English is usually done over a short period of time, so that students can apply what they have learned shortly after the course has finished. In case they need the business English vocabulary later in their career, it is advisable either to retake the course or to revise it before they are using it.

The courses should focus on the job-specific English skills of learners. An independent evaluation of these courses found a range of

benefits for learners including the opening up of new career possibilities, together with increased confidence and self-belief.

It is a well-known fact that teacher's or trainer's self-esteem highly influences the students and favours the same attitude on them. For example, if the teacher has high self-esteem, then his or her favourable attitude towards the self correlates with: low ego defensiveness, effective teaching, positive attitudes to others and field independence (Burns 1982).

Teachers with high self-esteem tend to provide more opportunities for students to talk, they talk less themselves, they spend less time on routine mechanical activities and drills, and they encourage alternative answers and debates. And last but not least, they encourage students to make judgments.

On the other hand, teachers with low self-esteem tend to stick to known and safer techniques, they minimize personal involvement with students, and they prefer more traditional methods, with course book answers and clearly defined teacher role and status. Finally, they show rigid and task-oriented behaviors. "In order establish a positive ethos in the classroom and home (c.f. a favourable generalised other), the self-esteem of the teacher and parents are also of importance (Burns (1975).

Indeed, the qualities underlying good counselling skills are more likely to be iden related with high self-esteem. One implication here is that the education community as a whole has a responsibility in providing teachers with a favourable working environment, and opportunities for personal growth, if indeed this is to be favourably reflected in student achievement" (Alpay 2000).

Thus, developing language skills implies that the teacher has foreign language mastery, has knowledge about class management, and has cultural and linguistic knowledge. The teacher may use particular teaching techniques in order to build a relationship with the students in order to understand their problems and focus on their needs.

Building capacity

In order to have teachers and trainers prepared for the new generations of students, constant improvement of teachers', trainers' and school leaders' skills is compulsory. This is very much the case in the field of vocational and business English. Native-English speaking teachers should be in contact with teachers and trainers so that they can keep up with the new vocabulary or grammar structures or any other transformations that a language undergoes. The native English teachers can model good practice in English language teaching helping other teachers in the colleges to develop their students' language skills.

The design of business English training starts with an understanding of the needs of learners and clients. Each delivery model and programme design should be tailored to the specific context through in-depth analysis of the needs of the employer and assessment of the skills of the individuals to be trained.

In terms of what skills are looked for by an employer, we can list three major skills: the critical thinking and problem solving skills which Hanushek et al. term “cognitive skills,” differentiate the economic leaders from the laggards among 50 countries from 1960 to 2000: “A highly skilled work force can raise economic growth by about two-thirds of a percentage point every year. Higher levels of cognitive skill appear to play a major role in explaining international differences in economic growth.”

Cognitive skills are significantly more important in determining economic outcomes than a traditional measure of educational success: school attainment. “Increasing the average number of years of schooling attained by the labor force boosts the economy only when increased levels of school attainment also boost cognitive skills. In other words, it is not enough simply to spend more time in school; something has to be learned there.”

Cognitive skills are important for everyone. It’s not enough to educate a few highly skilled people. “In countries on the technological frontier, substantial numbers of scientists, engineers, and other innovators are obviously needed. But so is a labor force that has the technological skills to survive in a technologically driven economy.”

Essential skills

Finally, 21st century skills that will increase students’ marketability and employability are: thinking critically and making judgments about the barrage of information that comes their way every day—on the Web, in the media, in homes, workplaces and everywhere else. Critical thinking gives students the opportunity to assess the value of information, to analyze and evaluate information, decide reasonably.

To solve complex, multidisciplinary, open-ended problems is another skill. Businesses expect employees at all levels to identify problems, think through solutions and alternatives, and explore new options.

(http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/21st_century_skills_education_and_competitiveness_guide.pdf)

Creativity and entrepreneurial thinking is an essential skill associated with finding a better job. Businesses often depend on the

ability to think unconventionally, to be ahead of the herd. , and produce astonishing work.

Communication skills which imply collaboration with members of the team or other usually multicultural and multinational or multiethnic are also essential. Relationships are a center to 21st century business.

Conclusion

In conclusion, teachers and students need to find a balance in order to acquire the skills needed and required by the employers, so that courses should be structured according to real needs and the knowledge should be used at the right time. Also, self-esteem is a key factor induced by the teacher.

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