

Background



In 1960s and early 1970s *specialist vocabulary* was seen to be what distinguished Business English from General English.

Since the late 1980s Business English teaching has drawn on aspects of all the previous approaches, but also places much more emphasis on the need to develop skills for using the language learned.

Today there are many varieties of Business English. The main distinction is that there are two kinds of learners: 1) pre-experienced learners 2) job-experienced learners

Business People around the world use English as their business language but it may be missing the rich vocabulary, expression and clarity.

What does the majority of business learners need?

Confidence and fluency in speaking

Skills for organizing and structuring information.

Sufficient language accuracy to be able to communicate ideas without ambiguity and without stress to the listener

Strategies for following the main points fast.

Speed of reaction to the utterances of others.

Clear pronunciation and delivery.

An awareness of appropriate language.

Practical reading and writing skills.

Knowledge of internet and voicemail etiquette.

Knowledge of other cultures and how they operate.

The above involve microskills in:

- Presentation
- Business Practices
- Accent Adjustment
- Technology

In order to design a curriculum for a custom-made Business English class, the instructor should design a criteria checklist. The criteria checklist will help to pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses of the students. Below is an example of such a checklist.

Criteria Checklist		
Object Entry	Criteria	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Voicemail	Can the student record a comprehensible " <i>call forward no answer</i> " voicemail in their workplace?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Can the student record a comprehensible " <i>call forward busy</i> " voicemail in their workplace?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Can the student record a comprehensible " <i>absence greeting</i> " voicemail in their workplace?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Is the student able to leave a comprehensible voicemail message for various purposes?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Can the student respond effectively and clearly to a message left on their voicemail in their workplace?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Is the student able to restate, conclude, and summarize information on voicemail etiquette?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Is the student able to analyze and evaluate issues or problems caused by leaving inappropriate voicemail messages?	<input type="checkbox"/>
E-mail	Can the student write a grammatically and stylistically correct e-mail message in their workplace?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Can the student use and understand "smilies" and abbreviations?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Is the student able to restate, conclude, and summarize information about e-mail etiquette?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Is the student able to respond correctly to various kinds of e-mail in their workplace?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Can the student discuss pros and cons of today' wired world?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business Practices	Can the student identify appropriate conversation topics in social business situations?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Is the student familiar with the formal usage of people's names?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Can the student identify voiced and voiceless sounds?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Can the student reflect on practices in various work environments?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Is the student aspiring properly?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Can the student analyze and adjust to Canadian work habits?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Presentation Skills	Is the student fluent in initial planning, preparation and outlining of a successful presentation?	
	Can the student use native-like intonation pattern?	
	Can the student handle questions successfully during and after the presentation?	
	Can the student design effective visuals?	
	Is the student familiar with an effective poster design?	
	Is the student able to successfully deal with presentation disasters?	
Accent Adjustment	Can the student pronounce consonantal endings properly?	
	Can the student successfully distinguish and pronounce Canadian vowels?	
	Can the student distinguish and pronounce /θ/ and /ð/ properly?	
	Can the student identify and pronounce schwa in variety of environments?	
	Can the students successfully use reductions?	
	Can the students use linking successfully?	
	Can the student identify function and content words?	
	Does the student use proper North American intonation?	
	Does the student use proper North American rhythm?	
	Does the student use proper North American speed?	
	Does the student use proper North American pitch?	

Presentation

One of the most important elements of successful business communication are effective presentation skills. Without them there cannot be any deal or contract closed. Good presentation involves a set of skills a speaker must possess in order to capture the audience. An ESL instructor should teach his/her students how to develop:

Captivating Presentations Skills
Effective Visuals

Business Practices

Another element involves social skills awareness. A businessman should know how not to offend others. Many people are aware of the rules of social etiquette in their country but not many people know social rules of other cultures. While designing a lesson an ESL teaching should take in consideration the following topics:

Conversation rules with other English Speakers (native/non-native) -
general guidelines, using other people's first/last names
Work environment - time, work ethics
Social Practices - lunch meetings, dinners
Interacting Successfully - first impressions, fitting in

Accent Adjustment

There cannot be any success without clear communication and essentially clear speech. Speaker can speak with an accent and yet he/she can be easily understood. Although different language groups have different pronunciation problems there are common elements an ESL teacher should concentrate on:

Voicing and Final Sounds
Problematic Sounds
Variations
Sentence Pattern

Technology

Business communication cannot function without new technology. This involves:

Email
Voicemail
Textmessaging
