

# COMMUNICATION NEEDS FOR BUSINESS ENGLISH STUDENTS IN OUTCOME BASED EDUCATION

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## **Abstract:**

*The concept of Outcome Based Education(OBE) is based on developing the skills needed in students' future life and these learning outcomes are relevant in ESP. Reading office documents, communicating through e-mails, writing minutes of the meetings, writing daily/periodic reports, writing business letters, writing resumes and job applications, making oral presentations, attending meetings/training abroad, facing interviews, talking about daily life situations, telephonic conversations with bosses/clients, making public speeches, listening to English speaking boss or clients, making field trips abroad, training abroad, negotiating with team members, teleconferencing, working in a team, talking about everyday tasks and duties and internet surfing are some of the most common communicative situations in which business professionals may use English.*

## **1. Introduction: The Concept of Outcome Based Education**

While General English classes center on the four language skills(listening, reading, speaking and writing), English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classes focus only on those skills that are necessary for the learner's future profession[1].

According to the learner-centered educational model known in specialized literature as Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) the learning outcomes of students are relevant in ESP and what should be done after graduation, the so called “departure skills”, is highly important[2]

This concept is not a new one, it has been obvious in United Kingdom and the United States since 1980 and the model of transformational OBE focuses on developing skills needed in students'future life roles that of being a communicator, team player and leader in their workplace[3].

For example, Tenedero and Vizconde (2015) consider that the specific language requirements for university graduates in accounting ,important for their students future workplace are convince(interview skills), compose(writing e-mails and minutes of meetings),comprehend(reading information about clients),concentrate(listening during meeting and oral instructions) and click(technology, especially e-mail and telephone skills).

The shift from the teacher-centered approach to the student-centered approach has resulted in focusing on what the students will be able to do at the end of their educational programme and helps them to become intentional learners because as Spady puts it:”An outcome is nothing but

the culmination of the learning. Outcomes are not content, they're performances and they occur at the end. From an OBE perspective it's not a matter of what students had, or what courses they have taken. It's a matter of what they can do when they exit the system"[4].

## **2. Communication Needs for Business English Students in Outcome-Based Education**

Since the publication of Hutchinson and Waters' *English for Specific Purposes: A Learner-Centred Approach*, 1989, the researchers have begun to be increasingly interested in English for Specific Purposes which focused on the learners' needs and skills for their future profession.

When the ESP practitioner designs a Business English course which is primarily based on the Outcomes Based Education model ,he/she should begin by analyzing the English Communication skills that his students will need in their future workplace in order to communicate effectively at work.

In order to identify their English language needs , Business English students and any other ESP students in fact , teachers and researchers must conduct a needs analysis which implies both the present learning needs of the students and their future working place needs.

Dudley-Evans and St. John(1998) considered that needs analysis can be defined as “Professional information about the learners:The tasks and activities learners are/will be using English for target situation analysis and objective needs” [5]

Needs analysis allows the ESP practitioner to strengthen his students'English language skills according to their communication needs. The importance of needs analysis has been constantly emphasized by such scholars and authors as Mumby(1978),Hutchinson and Waters(1987), Berwick(1989), Brindley(1989), Robinson(1991), Johns(1991), West(1994), Allison et al(1994), Dudley-Evans and St. John(1998), Hamp-Lyons(2001), Finney(2002) and many others.

Reading office documents, communicating through e-mails, writing minutes of the meetings, writing daily/periodic reports, writing business letters, writing resumes and job applications, making oral presentations, attending meetings/training abroad, facing interviews, talking about daily life situations, telephonic conversations with bosses/clients, making public speeches, listening to English speaking boss or clients, making field trips abroad, training abroad, negotiating with team members, teleconferencing, working in a team, talking about everyday tasks and duties and internet surfing are some of the most common communicative situations in which business professionals may use English.

As we can easily see, all the four skills:reading, writing, listening and speaking skills are required so that our students should be able to communicate effectively and functionally in both formal and/or informal situations.

The materials used for business communication classes can range from textbooks, research articles, videos, websites and such authentic materials(used in the workplace) as minutes of meetings, e-mails, business reports etc. and the ESP practitioners can choose from such a variety of sources as seems suitable for a group of students.

An ESP practitioner teaching Business English has to include among his teaching methods and aids group work and pair work, roleplay, written materials, videos and the courses should provide the vocabulary required in order to increase the students'confidence when communicating effectively in workplace situations.

G.Verkatamen considers that the teacher’s role in transacting these types of courses in outcome-based learning becomes critical and she says that they should try to integrate the following strategies :

1. The teacher should provide his students opportunities of learning independently and from one another, focusing on the skills that they need.

2.The teacher should use techniques in which lectures are replaced by active learning experiences.

3.the students should be assigned open-ended problems involving critical or creative thinking and not only problems that can be solves by merely following the text examples.

4.the teacher should involve his students in simulations and role-plays using cooperative learning.

5.The approach should be conducted in such a way that, as G. Verkatamen says, ”it can lead to increased motivation to learn, greater retention of knowledge, deeper understanding and more positive attitudes towards the subjects being taught.

6.As this learning model places the learner in the center of the learning process,students should have their influence upon the activities, material and pace of learning[6].

### 3. Conclusion

The present –day concerns that the education system cannot adequately prepare students for life and work in the 21st century have determined worldwide researchers to explore new ways of designing education and one of these researches have led to outcome-based education or learning.

This model proposes a student-centered approach and it focuses on what the students will be able to do after graduation.

The teacher’s role in these types of courses in outcome-based learning becomes critical and he/she should carefully analyse the English Communication skills that his students will need in their future workplace in order to communicate effectively at work.

### Bibliography:

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