

## Effectively Implementing a Collaborative Task-based Syllabus (CTBA) in EFL Large-sized Business English Classes

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### BRIEF PROFESSIONAL BIODATA

Dr. Pi-Ching Chen, Associate Professor and Department Head of Foreign Languages and Literature at National Cheng Kung University in Taiwan, earned her doctoral degree from University of South Dakota in the States. Her major research interests focus on EFL instructional methodology as well as English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

### ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to design a *collaborative task-based syllabus* (CTBS) for achieving a more holistic college Business English instruction in an EFL large-sized classroom. The CTBS integrated teacher-directed content-based instruction and student-centered task-based instruction. The distinctive characteristic of the CTBS is the application of the “simulation companies” established by learners themselves, actively involving their specific creativity and cooperation. To create a more collaborative authentic learning setting, the CTBS applies various interactive teaching techniques in the four-stage learning activities: *company establishment*, *staff recruitment*, *business transaction*, and *feedback and evaluation*.

### INTRODUCTION

To cope with increasingly fierce international competition, EFL business-major students are asked to enhance their English skills and abilities in international business communication. However, there is a critical problem in the teaching of business English courses at colleges or universities in the EFL surroundings, resulting from inappropriate teaching materials and instructional techniques. Traditionally, the most common teaching approach applied in the business English classes is teacher-centered and lecture-oriented.

Effective instructional tasks allow more room for learners to have something of their own to

express in their specific ideas (Langer & Applebee, 1987). Fried-Booth (1986) proposed that the project-work approach to overcome the difficulties in language teaching programs, stating that, "What is taught in the classroom may in theory be useful, but the usefulness does not always extend to practice. Often, there is a gap between the language the students are taught and the language they in fact require. It is this gap that project work can help to bridge (p. 5)."

EFL instructors for the teaching of business English have to make their efforts to create a learning environment that encourages learners to actively transfer the language skills taught in the classroom to practical business situations. In order to accomplish the goal of learning-for-application, the author successfully designed a collaborative task-based syllabus (CTBS) for the teaching of EFL business-major learners in large-sized classrooms.

The CTBS is divided into four learning stages? *company establishment, staff recruitment, business transaction, and feedback and evaluation*. All the projects in each learning stage are implemented task by task, actively involving the creativity and cooperation of the learners. The distinctive characteristic of the CTBS is the application of the "simulation companies" established by learners themselves. All of the learning activities are proceeding by using various interactive techniques, such as role play, brainstorming, group decision-making, and case study.

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