



# BUSINESS ISSUES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BUSINESS ENGLISH SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP



## Autumn 2018 Issue 100

- 03 Editorial – Chris Stanzer
- 04 Letter from the Joint Coordinators – Evan Frendo and Dana Poklepovic
- 06 BESIG online: a round-up of the SIG's online activities – Kirsten Waechter, Oksana Hera and Rob Howard
- 09 3rd JALT BizComSIG Conference, Tokyo, 8-9 September 2018 – Evan Frendo
- 10 Weekend Workshop reviews – Sue Annan
- 14 The first Braz-Tesol BESIG PCE, 19 July 2018 – Rob Howard
- 15 10 BE facts to stun your students – Jennie Wright
- 16 Workshop report – Perspectives in business English training held on 28 July 2018 at Ethiraj College, Chennai – Laliitha Murthy and Jayashree Chetan
- 18 Business Issues over the years – Chris Stanzer
- 20 The business communication Twitter Live Chat – Alan Simpson
- 23 The Disney strategy in meetings in the business world – Marjorie Rosenberg
- 24 Think again before you send: reviewing workplace emails – Oksana Hera
- 26 High context and low context communication styles – Kirsten Waechter
- 28 Glocal business English course design – Nassira Houat
- 29 Zeitgeist Unleashed: Business English any time – Claire Hart
- 30 The Practice: The 100-minute classroom – Roy Bicknell
- 32 Research Review: Mobile and multidimensional business English – Gabrielle Jones

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# Contributing to *Business Issues*

*Business Issues*, the publication of BESIG – the Business English Special Interest Group of IATEFL (the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign language) – is published three times a year, in spring, summer and autumn. The Spring issue is digital only, whereas the Summer and Autumn issues are issued in print and digital form. If members wish to receive the print issues, they can select this option in the members' area of the IATEFL website.

Submission dates for articles and advertisements are: 15 December (Spring issue), 15 March (Summer issue) and 15 July (Autumn issue).

BESIG reserves the right to accept or reject articles depending on their quality and suitability for our readership. If an article is accepted for publication, the editor reserves the right to alter titles and headings where appropriate and make minor editorial changes deemed necessary for reasons such as space, style, clarity or accessibility. If more than minor changes are needed, the author will be consulted and an edited version of the article will be sent to the author for approval.

Although every effort will be made to include articles accepted for publication in

the next issue, BESIG reserves the right to postpone publication if necessary. Advertising is also very welcome. Details can be found on the webpage <https://goo.gl/exaCjE> or from the Newsletter Editor.

## Notes for contributors

When you write for *Business Issues*, please use Arial 12pt and do not exceed the maximum 1200 words. One page articles (approx. 600 words) are also welcome. Please include a short biographical note of no more than 40 words at the top of the article. Please also include your address (this will not be published) and a (separate) recent full-face photograph of yourself.

Send photographs and graphics separately as .jpg files (not embedded in Word documents), label them clearly and indicate where they should be placed in the text. Please also ensure that you have obtained permission to reproduce any illustrations submitted.

We assume that your article has neither been previously published, nor is being considered for publication elsewhere. If we do wish to reprint, we need to know where the article was first published and what permission you have obtained.

# Advertising

You can buy space in *Business Issues* (circulation: worldwide, circa 750). The advertising rates are as follows for advertisements requiring no setting or adjustments:

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Portrait (297mm x 210mm)

Half page  
Landscape (186mm x 120mm)  
£180 + VAT

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Any other size or proportion is negotiable.

Discounts: Three consecutive ads per year: 10%; Visible link to BESIG website on your website: 10%; Both: 20%). Booking 3 or more consecutive ads also entitles the advertiser to place an advert on the BESIG website free of charge for the duration of the contract with the newsletter.

All changes to advertisements ordered as a series (for a run of two, three or more) are the advertiser's sole responsibility. If any change is required, the new artwork must be emailed to the Newsletter Editor before the copy date for articles and advertisements for the next issue of the newsletter.

All bookings for space, inserts, flyers, quotes for colour, setting, etc should be made to the Newsletter Editor at the address on the left.

Submissions should be sent as an email attachment to the Newsletter Editor: [chris.stanzer@besig.org](mailto:chris.stanzer@besig.org).

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# Editorial

Welcome to this 100th issue of the BESIG newsletter! It has certainly changed over the years, starting as an 8-page stapled-together black and white leaflet and morphing into the full-colour 40-page magazine we have now. You can see a selection of some of these covers on page 18.

The newsletter has had many editors and many more contributors along the way, and it is thanks to the dedication of these volunteers that we have reached the 100th issue that you are reading now.

To mark the occasion, Jennie Wright, our tireless proofreader, has contributed a set of 10 facts, with 10 ways to use them, to stun or otherwise interest/intrigue one's learners which should give rise to some lively discussions. Also on the 100 theme, Roy Bicknell has been imagining what a class of 100 minutes long would look like.

In keeping with the name of the newsletter, we have news of several BE events around the world: a PCE in Brazil, a workshop in Chennai, India, an international Twitter Chat, and a business English conference in Japan. Reports on all of these can be found within these pages.

There must have been some sixth sense



*Lalitha Murthy of ELTAI BESIG and Evan Frendo in Chennai. See page 16 for an account of the workshop there.*

at work when Gabrielle Jones chose to write about an article by Catherine Nickerson for her *Research Review*. Shortly afterwards, it was announced that Catherine would be a plenary speaker at the upcoming conference in Iasi, talking about this very subject. So, if you would like a preview, go to page 32.

For her regular column in this issue, Claire

Hart argues that we should be helping learners find a way of interacting with business English which reflects the way they interact with other subjects they're interested in, to build autonomy.

Nassira Houat has given us two examples of activities she devised to demonstrate how she combines local and global content to suit the local context of her students in Morocco. And Oksana Hera in Ukraine shows us how she raises her learners' awareness of how their workplace emails might be received and how to encourage them to write better ones.

Marjorie Rosenberg looks at how understanding the Disney strategy of assuming different personae can be applied to bring success to meetings in the business world. And finally, Kirsten Waechter has devised a game to help our learners understand the meanings so often hidden in high-context communication styles.

On a personal note, this issue brings to an end my term as Editor. I have enjoyed it very much and learnt a lot along the way. I'd like to thank Jennie Wright for her valuable input and wish the incoming team all the best.

Chris Stanzer is a freelance trainer living in Bulgaria. Email: [chris.stanzer@besig.org](mailto:chris.stanzer@besig.org)



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### Disclaimer

Views expressed in *Business Issues* are not necessarily those of the editor, BESIG, IATEFL or its staff or trustees.



# Letter from the Joint Coordinators

Welcome to the autumn edition of *Business Issues*. Let us begin by sharing what BESIG has been up to.

## Online events

Our monthly online workshops remain popular. In May, we welcomed Emma Sue Prince who talked us through the importance of soft skills in communication. Undoubtedly, soft skills have been in the spotlight for some years and it is important to keep up-to-date, particularly in how to help our learners apply their soft skills in English in the workplace. In July, Louise Goodman shared her ideas on customer service and how we can provide high quality service teaching. Finally, in August Sherri Williams gave us a marketing lesson on how to market ourselves. As freelancers and school owners we know how important it is to market our services correctly and serve our clients appropriately. Being in business also means we have to take care of our sales! The attendees left the workshops with clear ideas on how to apply these concepts in their day-to-day classes. Reviews of all these workshops can be found on page 10.

## Facebook discussions

We are delighted to see how our online community is participating in BESIG Facebook group discussions. These are monthly discussions of a topic proposed by Oksana Hera, BOT Joint Coordinator, who invites members and non-members to share their ideas and experiences. The range of topics discussed is very wide, going from technology in BE teaching, teacher well-being, how to benefit from conferences, classroom activities, and the like. We already have an established audience and every month we receive new-comers. Discussions are really inspiring and are an excellent professional development tool. Oksana really does an excellent job and has written an account of the recent discussions on page 6. If you still have not taken part, we strongly recommend



*Have you taken part in the Facebook discussions yet?*

our Facebook group discussions.

## Face-to-face events

BESIG has also been very active in different face-to-face events during the year. This collaboration forms part of our mission to link with different partner SIGs around the world and build a stronger professional network of BE teachers. This summer we have been active at three face-to-face events. The first was the 1st IATEFL Poland Business English Conference which was run in cooperation with IATEFL BESIG. The second was a business English event in Chennai, India, and the third was the JALT BizCom Conference in Tokyo, Japan. We were especially

pleased with the last two events, which were fantastic opportunities for BESIG to reach into Asia and spread the word about our organization. You can read more about these events in this newsletter.

## IATEFL BESIG Annual Conference in Iasi, Romania

We are on the countdown to our annual conference in one of the historical and cultural centers of Romania, Iasi, from 16-18 November. It is the sixth time that BESIG is running a face-to-face event in Eastern Europe and once again we are thrilled to be there! Under the theme





## 1st IATEFL Poland Business English Event in Cooperation with IATEFL BESIG

Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> May 2018 at Warsaw University of Technology

Exploring the frontiers of business English, we will enjoy three days of an unmissable programme of talks and networking events, with a new strand of coaching sessions. As always, it will be a celebration of business English, communication skills and professional development. We look forward to meeting you all in Iasi.

This year we are once more offering a travel grant to a BESIG member to attend the annual conference as a roving reporter and again received some strong applications. We'd like to congratulate the winner, Isabella Keilani pictured right, a general and business English teacher based in Austria. So if you see her in

Iasi, please say hello and make her feel welcome.

We would also like to congratulate the winners of the Photographer Grant for Iasi, the Maria Keller Scholarship and the BESIG Facilitator Scholarship, announced since writing this Letter.

Looking further ahead, BESIG will be running a joint Pre-Conference Event with the Teacher Training and Education SIG at the IATEFL Conference in Liverpool next year. The theme is *Training (Business) English teachers to prepare learners for modern workplaces: Integration of soft skills*. More details are



Isabella Keilani, winner of the Roving Reporter Travel Grant

available on the conference website at <https://goo.gl/d8BmhX>.

## Committee news

This November we will be replacing three committee members whose terms have come to an end. You will soon be receiving an email with the call for nominations. If you would like to volunteer and be part of this enthusiastic team, please do answer the call. Or perhaps you can recommend a colleague or friend? If you have any questions at all please feel free to contact us via [besig@iatefl.org](mailto:besig@iatefl.org).

**Dana & Evan**

The winner of the Maria Keller Scholarship for a first-time speaker at the BESIG conference is Maria Isabel Huaccho Soto from Peru, a highly experienced business and general English teacher and speaker currently working at BRITANICO.



The Photographer Grant winner for Iasi is Galina Khinchuk from Ukraine, a freelance Business and ESP trainer based in Berlin, Germany. As a member of the ELTABB events team, she creates events posters for which she often uses her own photos.



The winner of the BESIG Facilitator Scholarship for IATEFL 2019 is Andreea Nechifor, a business English trainer based in Iasi, Romania. She has been running a private language school since 2009 and also teaches German and Romanian as a foreign language.



Dana Poklepovic is a communication skills, business English trainer and certified ontological and executive coach. She runs a consulting firm that provides training and coaching services to companies and freelance professionals in Argentina.

Evan Frendo has been active in business English and ESP since 1993, mostly in the corporate sector. His methodology book for teachers, *How to Teach Business English* (Longman, 2005), is used in teacher training all over the world. Email: [evan.frendo@e4b.de](mailto:evan.frendo@e4b.de).



# BESIG ONLINE: A round-up of the SIG's online activities



## Webinars so far

What a summer it's been – Europe was struck by a heatwave and maybe that was one of the reasons why so many people stayed indoors in hopefully air-conditioned rooms to follow our webinars. Just joking, the true reason was of course that we had some top-notch speakers and very interesting topics to talk about. Our webinars are a generic term for different types of formats, from classical presentations and workshops to panel discussions and swap shops. This year, we are focusing on two strands: English for Specific Purposes and the Future of Business English (teaching). The first strand was covered by Rob Howard who talked about customer service. This was voted as one of the top five ESP topics, and we were happy that our own Joint Coordinator shared with us his ideas about what really matters when teaching people in customer service: you need to understand the business if you teach people from it. In July, we had a magnificent session by Louise Goodman about total customer experience and its impact on business English training. From her long-standing training experience, she shared insights into what matters in BE training and what matters to our clients and this was particularly useful for freelance trainers and for people new in this role. This topic was echoed in our Facebook discussions as well (see below). In August, Sherri Williams did her talk about the impact of visual design if you want to be a successful BE trainer. As a former art student, she certainly has the eye for it and explained, in a very illustrative manner, why good design is important for your own branding. Find out

more in the Weekend Workshop reviews.

**Kirsten Waechter**

## Facebook discussions June – August 2018

BESIG members are always there for each other to help out with some apt advice on professional development or another tried-and-tested technique for a new group session. Our summer Facebook discussions testify to this, uniting the BESIG online community, so let me share some of the highlights with you.

Following a request from one of our BESIG members, we focused our June discussion on their questions: "What would you recommend to an aspiring professional with an MBA and 10 years of business experience switching to freelance business English training? What should they do first to ensure growth?" The responses flooded in.

Sue recommended doing a CertIBET course, whereas Ron started with

highlighting the importance of branding, networking, and having a 'realistic business plan'. At this point Heather stressed the value of finding your niche and provided in-depth advice on what steps to take after that. While Elizabeth concentrated on the online element of teaching and Evan encouraged learning about language teaching in a business context, Sherri said "consider taking 'English' out of your marketing materials". You can learn more about these and other recommendations from many more group participants at <https://goo.gl/NbEQhR..>

Preparing for future conferences and events organised by IATEFL special interest groups, we came up with the following question: "What makes a face-to-face CPD event good for you to attend?" Lalitha and Rob were among the first to suggest that networking and sharing ideas were some of the most popular reasons for attendees. At the same time, Liz and Kirsten expressed the idea that event organisers should plan the events in a way that enables the participants to network meaningfully and not in a rush.



**Kirsten Waechter teaches business communication, English for special purposes and intercultural courses. He is also a translator, author and copy-editor and divides her time between Germany, Scotland and Sweden. Email: [info@tailored-trainings.de](mailto:info@tailored-trainings.de).**



Therefore, Rob, Julie, and Sue, among others, expressed preferences for smaller and more targeted events. Philip raised the essential point of first-time attendees often feeling at a loss and not knowing what to expect. If you are interested in reading more about this topic, follow this link: <https://goo.gl/SPM664>.

The August questions “How do you use technology in your training? How do you choose the tools?” sparked a lot of discussion from the very beginning due to varying responses on what technology actually means. Jennifer said she uses videos and interactive coursebook materials. Philip shared his experience of teaching in-work learners from various industries and how these define the level of technology he uses for classes. Gordon and Rob were in agreement that any use of technology in class should add value and not be too confusing for the learners. Evan contributed with his practical insights as well as a number of corpus analysis tools to explore, e.g. Laurence Anthony's Software, Hong Kong Corpus of Spoken English, Compleat Lexical Tutor, Sketch Engine, and Word and Phrase from the Corpus of Contemporary American English. Andreea shared the tech tools she makes use of with her students, namely: Kahoot, Padlet, Playposit, and Edpuzzle. For more details on this discussion, go to <https://goo.gl/fmZUxJ>.

Our Facebook discussions have proven to be a source of inspiration and support for many of our colleagues. Make sure you join our future threads both to contribute and to learn from our vibrant online community.

#### Oksana Hera

This season, the BOT team turned its eyes to Japan and the JALT BizCom SIG 3rd Annual Conference in Tokyo, Japan, with two events to support the business English teachers of Asia.

In cooperation with the JALT BizCom SIG, IATEFL BESIG and EFLtalks, we held a special edition of EFLtalks – Business,



**EFLtalks Business**

LIVE ONLINE and FREE  
Hosted by Rob Howard

Sunday, August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
2pm UTC

Speakers: Rob Szabo, Alex Morgan, Ron Morrain, Pete Sharma, Shanthi Sreath, Stephen Hughes, Anna Losko, Adi Rajan

In cooperation with  
IATEFL BESIG & JALT BizCom SIG

featuring BE professionals from around the world, presenting 10-minute talks on diverse subjects revolving around the use of technology in the BE classroom. Hosted and organized by EFLtalks founder and IATEFL BESIG Joint Online Coordinator Rob Howard, the talks featured Pete Sharma, Ron Morrain, Shanthi Kumaraswamy Sreath, Rob Szabo, Adi Rajan, Anna Losko and Stephan Hughes. Recordings are available on the EFLtalks YouTube channel: <https://goo.gl/e1xYVU>.



Business Communication Twitter Live Chat

Live Chat Topics

- Online tools for business people
- Online training tools
- Improving business efficiency
- Trainer Development
- Technology and Training Future

#bizcom August 26th 9pm JST 12pm UTC

Later in the month, BOT team member Sue Annan helped JALT Bizcom's Alan Simpson, Rab Paterson and Dan Ferreira with a Business Communication Twitter Live Chat discussing the topics: online tools for business people, online training tools, improving business efficiency, trainer development and the future of technology and training using the hashtag #bizcom. You can read an account of this on page 20.



Exploring the Frontiers  
a sneak peek of the 31<sup>st</sup> IATEFL BESIG Annual Conference

Turning our focus back to Iasi, Romania and our upcoming annual conference, Rob Howard hosted a Weekend Webinar offering a preview of our 31<sup>st</sup> IATEFL BESIG Annual Conference joined by 10 of our conference speakers. Bob Dignen, Catherine Lejtenyi, Elena Bran, Ellen Keates, Helen Strong, Jasmina Sazdovska, Kasia Warszynska, Rachel Appleby, Roy Bicknell and Ute Franzen-Waschke told us how they will 'Explore the frontiers of business English' in this one-hour sneak peek. Check our new website, [www.besig.iatefl.org](http://www.besig.iatefl.org) for more information. Be sure to follow our social media for more weekly peeks from some of our other speakers.



English for Specific Purposes: Teaching English for Human Resources

Webinar with Peter Rutherford  
14<sup>th</sup> October, 2pm UTC (3pm BST)

**Oksana Hera is a freelance business English trainer based in Lviv, Ukraine. Working primarily with IT professionals, her interests lie in strategies to enhance in-company training and learners' motivation.**



Looking forward, in October Kirsten Waechter will be hosting a Weekend Webinar with the BOT team's own Pete Rutherford on *Teaching English for Human Resources*. In this online workshop, Pete will share teaching ideas and a few personal anecdotes from his time as an English for HR trainer.

In the second half of the webinar, Pete and the BESIG Online Team will moderate a swap shop where participants can share and discuss the changing HR landscape, teaching tips, best practices, classroom experiences, and materials.

There will be no Weekend Webinar in November as the team will be organising simulcasts from the annual conference in Iasi. Check the website and social media for more information on these nearer the time.

The last webinar of the year continues the English for Specific Purposes theme with



English for Specific Purposes: English for finance and banking

Webinar with Marjorie Rosenberg and Shanthi Cumaraswamy Streat

2nd December, 3pm UTC (3pm GMT)

English for finance and banking by two experienced trainers in the field, Marjorie Rosenberg and Shanthi Cumaraswamy Streat.

for our future BESIG webinars in 2019. If you would like to share your expertise with your colleagues, get in touch with the BOT at [bot@besig.org](mailto:bot@besig.org) and send us your ideas.

We are also on the lookout for presenters

**Rob Howard**



Rob Howard is the owner of Online Language Center and partner at Business Language Training Institute. He is a teacher, writer, consultant and speaker regarding Online, Business English and Image Technology and founder of EFLtalks, a worldwide PLN+ for teachers.

## Join IATEFL



### Networking

- Join a global community of ELT professionals: teachers, trainers, researchers, writers, managers, publishers, assessors, lecturers and trainees in over 120 countries
- Apply to be a speaker at IATEFL conferences, webinars and events, and contribute to one of our publications
- Join one, or more, of our 16 Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and network with others who have the same professional interests as you

### Publications and news

- Monthly eBulletins, keeping you up to date with all things IATEFL, as well as our bi-monthly magazine, *Voices*
- Our annual Conference Selections publication, a collection of papers presented at the IATEFL conference
- Newsletters and resources from the SIG(s) you have joined
- Discounts on a wide range of leading ELT publications

### Professional development

- Discounted rates for our annual international IATEFL Conference and ELT Exhibition
- Monthly webinars from leading ELT professionals and an annual web conference
- SIG events throughout the year and throughout the world
- Access to nearly 30 scholarships which offer assistance to attend and present at our annual conference

### Global awareness and social responsibility

- As a registered charity IATEFL is proud to support the ELT community worldwide through our Wider Membership Scheme and IATEFL Projects with sustainable outcomes in areas of the world with fewer opportunities and resources for EFL professionals

Find out more and join at: [members.iatefl.org](http://members.iatefl.org)



# 3rd JALT BizComSIG Conference, Tokyo, 8-9 September 2018

When Alan Simpson asked BESIG to collaborate in the organisation of the 3rd JALT BizComSIG Conference in Tokyo, neither Dana nor I thought that we would be going to Japan. It's a long way from Argentina (in Dana's case) and Germany (in my case). But after some discussion we decided it was too great an opportunity to miss, and so we booked our flights. And we are both happy we did.

The conference brought together BE teachers and trainers from all over Japan, as well as trainers from India, Korea, Singapore and Thailand. We were delighted to meet fellow BESIG members at the conference, as well as many JALT colleagues. The quality of the programme was very high, with some very experienced speakers sharing their ideas and research. Keynote speakers were Professor Hajime Terauchi, who spoke about self-access study systems for business persons, and Professor Hajime Imamura, who talked about the GINOS Open Innovation Ecosystem. A nice touch was that many of the speakers were not specifically business English practitioners, but worked in some other related capacity, which gave us some new perspectives to think about. Despite this it was obvious that as educators we all share many of the same issues and concerns wherever we are in the world.

You can catch some of the talks on the JALT YouTube channel. A big congratulations to conference Co-Chairs Alan Simpson and Rab Paterson, who with a very friendly and enthusiastic team of volunteers did a really excellent job. And it goes without saying that we look forward to future collaboration between BESIG and BizComSIG.

**Evan Frendo**  
BESIG Joint Coordinator



*Rab Paterson and Alan Simpson, the Co-Chairs of the conference*



*Above: Evan and Dana with Lalitha Murthy, a long time BESIG member based in India*

*Right: Dana talking to Pepper the Robot Store Guide*

*Below: Evan and Dana at the JALT BizComSIG Conference*



Evan Frendo has been active in business English and ESP since 1993, mostly in the corporate sector. His methodology book for teachers, *How to Teach Business English* (Longman, 2005), is used in teacher training all over the world. Email: [evan.frendo@e4b.de](mailto:evan.frendo@e4b.de).



# Weekend Workshop reviews

## Weekend Workshop 79: Rob Howard – Teaching customer service with a smile

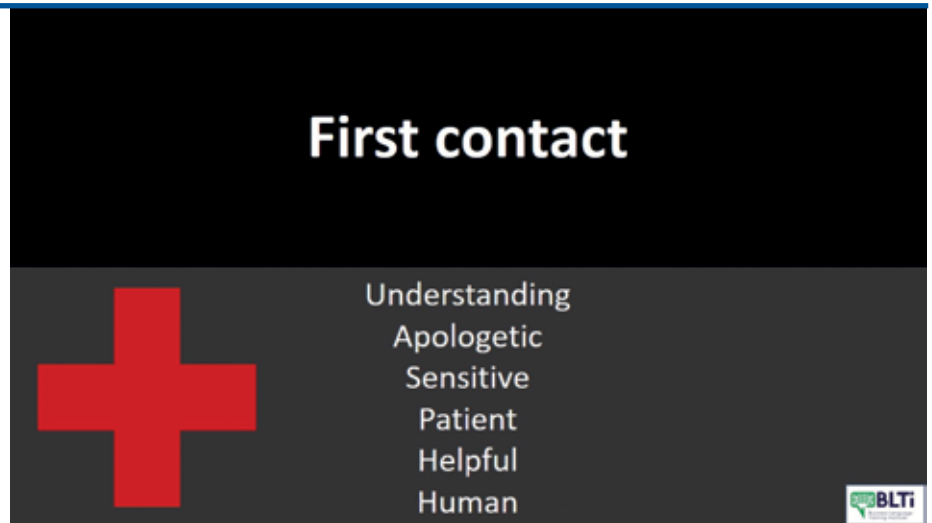
To help us understand the topic, Rob started off by talking about his own experiences of both good and bad customer service. These clearly illustrated how the quality of customer service could lead to an overall loss or gain for companies and how important it is that our learners who work in customer service understand this.

We were surprised to hear that \$62b is lost yearly in the US to bad customer service – that is 10% of the overall advertising budget. A recent article in Forbes reported that 49% of customers will switch companies if they don't feel their needs are being met. It was clear that the ultimate goal of customer service is to keep your customers as, according to the churn rate, finding new customers costs five times the price of keeping them in the first place.

Rob told us about the old rule of 86. That is, if you tell 3 or 4 people you were unhappy with the service, and they tell 3 or 4, and on and on, etc. In today's connected world, this number can easily be vastly overtaken leading to reduced sales. Conversely, Rob noted, good news often only spreads to six people. However, if they continue to buy from you, or even just make repeat purchases, they are worth their weight in gold. This is known as the Customer Lifetime Value.

So, what does the customer need? Someone who is understanding, sensitive, patient, helpful and not a machine! To illustrate this, we looked at the difficulties people with certain accents might have with voice recognition software and also call centres in other countries, and how difficult these can be to use for foreign speakers.

To put ourselves in the shoes of a



potential customer, Rob advised us generally when choosing a new company to look at their documentation, check the support on offer, and read their FAQs. Do they have a search bar for information, or is there a chat box provided? If all else fails – can you talk to a human, and how long does it take to reach one? How frustrating is it to report a problem?

He went on to say that 70% of the buying experience is how the customer is treated, and so recommended teaching the following communication strategies alongside language strategies to learners both in call centres and those calling call centres or any learners working in customer service:

- 1 Clear basic pronunciation
- 2 Simplified non-technical language
- 3 Patience

To help with this, useful materials can be found online like authentic training manuals and training videos with technically clear and simple language on YouTube. Rob gave the examples of Ikea and Google.

Customer experience programs suggest that happy customers are likely to spend 140% more, to have more loyalty and to stay with a company for up to 6 times longer. Essentially, the customer should

come first in a company interested in customer centricity. The company needs to understand the wants and needs of their customers, and might even add a user-friendly 'Plus 1', such as a loyalty card offering discounts or something adding value or quality to their experience.

Companies need to keep their customers happy to stay in business. And as customer service is the first contact the customer with a complaint has with a company, it's important that their language trainers concentrate on the above points, but above all, empathetic language.

## Weekend Workshop 80: Louise Goodman – What is the future of business English training?

In July we welcomed Louise Goodman, one of our past scholarship winners, to present the Weekend Workshop. Based in Italy, she is a freelance business English coach who works both face-to-face and via Skype.

Her key principle in life is the maxim that the client always comes first. This means that she is always thinking about her role and the role her clients need her



to play. To introduce this, she provided some statistics about training needs from a LinkedIn research on customer relations management. It stated that 68% of people who responded stated that they liked to learn at work, 49% at point of need, and that time was a problem in meeting training needs. The managers stated that their priority was soft skills in leadership, communication, collaboration and role-specific areas. Our challenge as business trainers and coaches is to be able to provide the best experience for our clients by putting ourselves in their shoes to build a positive total customer experience (TCE) journey.

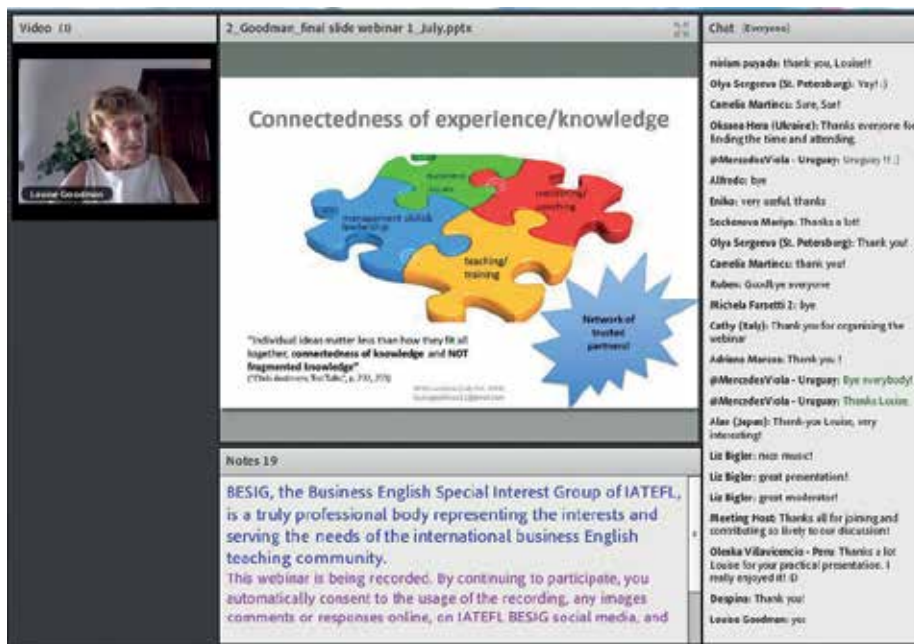
To enable her to do this, Louise designed a model called GWYC, which stands for Grow With Your Client.

Our business students' needs are often about how to satisfy *their* customers. As business trainers, we need to build a relationship of trust with our clients. We need to support them as they grow professionally and then help them evolve, or navigate multidisciplinary knowledge. The total experience, or journey, is the priority – not the individual parts.

We need to have knowledge of business issues – even new teachers. We can read about issues and understand the underlying principles. We need management and leadership skills and to understand coaching and mentoring roles, as well as those of teaching and training. Louise believes that we need to be flexible and very competent in what we do, as our role is to become value creators and our job is to make the lives of our clients simpler.

Louise left us with six tips to help us grow with our clients:

- 1 We need a needs analysis in order to better understand what the outcome should be.
- 2 We need the needs analysis to be ongoing in order to understand the feelings of the client.
- 3 Clients like us to be able to anticipate their needs, wishes and expectations during the journey.
- 4 We should be able to understand what is / is not working.
- 5 It is important to set priorities.
- 6 Be ready to redesign the programme



at any point for a better experience and able to fix any issues which may arise.

To round up, and give us examples of her GWYC model, Louise then played a video clip from one of her clients who had a clear idea of what she needed help with. She then described a second client, whose circumstances kept changing and so Louise had to be flexible to build an ongoing relationship with her to accommodate her changing needs.

After a lively question and answer session involving the difference between trainer and coach, we were all left feeling confident that there is still a role for us in the future of business English training, but that it is important to continually upskill our own knowledge.

## Weekend Workshop 81: Sherri Williams – DIY design: crafting your professional image as a freelancer

We were delighted to welcome Sherri Williams to advise us on crafting our professional images. Sherri studied art and design with languages and her professional-looking presentation reflected this.

Images we use to represent ourselves

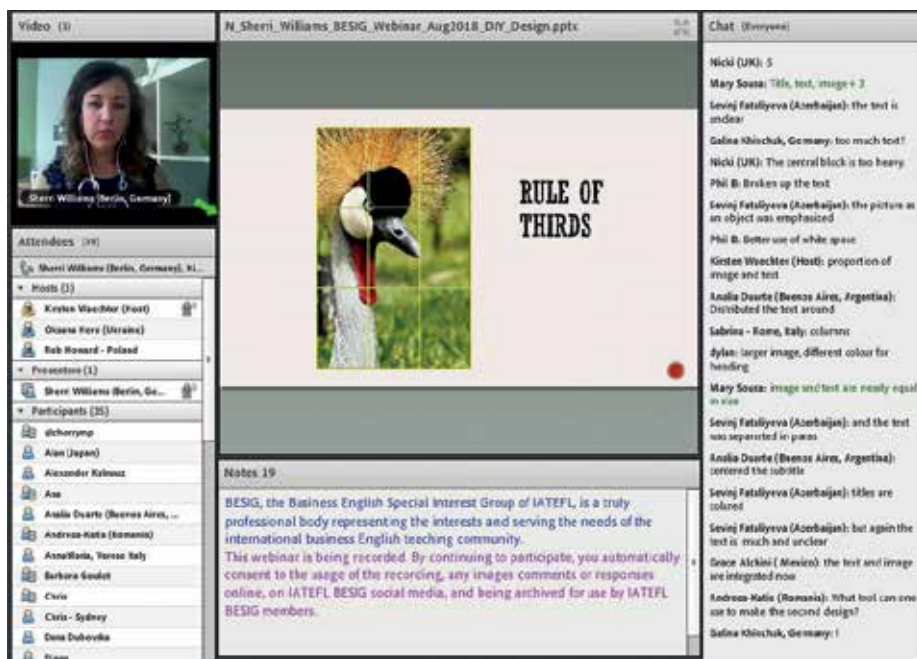
are very important so, to start the session, Sherri invited us to think about the power of images to convey the quality of what they represent.

## Why is design important for English trainers?

Teachers like to produce material for their classes. However, worksheets should be clear, attractive and engaging, forms should be user-friendly and simple to complete, activity cards can be fun to use, transcripts make videos more memorable and pictures can be great memory aids too. But all these require an understanding of design elements if they are to work and look professional.

Tangible brand identity; how do you take something which is an intangible concept – teaching English, dealing with language and words – and make a tangible image from it? As a freelancer this is really important as your clients may be making decisions based solely on your business card or website, rather than meeting face-to-face or having had experience of your teaching.

To illustrate the emotional power of images, Sherri prepared a quick challenge, showing us 11 logos in 11 seconds and asked whether they were recognisable. She suggested that the visual branding offered so much information about each company – just



Time: will you get much use out of a tool? Will you need to spend a long time learning how to use new tools?

Money: if you need to modify your design, will it cost extra?

Quality: what is the skill level or experience of the professional worth? Also what quality do your various clients expect?

We finished with a lively Q+A session.

## Weekend Webinar 82: Exploring the frontiers – a sneak peek at the 31st BESIG annual conference in Iasi

BESIG's September offering was a change from the usual Weekend Workshops. In this webinar we were treated to short previews of a selection of the presentations taking place at our annual conference in November.

- 1 We started with Bob Dignen who will be looking at communication training. His presentation will be materials-driven, as he feels that coursebooks don't always meet the needs of the students, so there should be some excellent take aways from this session.
- 2 Next was Catherine Lejtenyi, who will be exploring incorporating coaching into BE training to improve self-expression. She asks: Is it our job as

from the logo alone – and that we recognised them through our emotional attachment to the products. Consequently your images need to represent what you want your clients to feel about you and your services.

### The elements of good design

**Balance:** the visual weight given to the different elements – do they balance visually on the page? Following the rule of thirds can make an image look more natural. Using a grid can set out the optimum position for best view.

**Focus:** keep the user experience in mind – where do you want to draw their attention? Don't overcrowd, use the white space in and around the picture to allow the eyes to read without stress.

**Mood:** using cold or warm colours, keeping in mind that colour is subjective and can have different meanings in different cultures. Just like choosing an outfit, fit the font to the occasion and only mix one or two, choosing from the same 'family'. Think about the juxtaposition of font, graphic and colour, where no one element is key, but all work in harmony.

We then looked at a variety of examples with our new knowledge and tried to determine whether each design was successful and if so, why.

### Low or no-cost tools

Sherri had several ideas for layout programs, photo editors, image capture and picture sources, and provided these and more as a downloadable handout. To access this or watch the recording of the webinar, please send a request to [bot@besig.org](mailto:bot@besig.org). Participants also contributed ideas in the chatbox.

### Professional or DIY?

This comes down to which combination of time, money or quality, (or quick, cheap and good) you can afford. Sherri says it's only possible to choose two!





- teachers to create good listeners as well as good speakers?
- 3 The third speaker was Elena Bran who wants to explore teachers' and students' attitudes to learning. She will be talking about course designing for ESP and how to get there from general English teaching.
  - 4 Ellen Keates has seven ideas to motivate our students. She is planning an interactive workshop on motivation and the effect teachers have on their students' ability to learn. She will look at authentic material and how to make learning fun.
  - 5 Our own Helen Strong followed. Her presentation will be based on her course: Teaching 1-2-1. She plans to discuss the difference in style, materials, and feedback in our 1-2-1 classes.
  - 6 Jasmina Sazdovska, and her two companion presenters, will be using a survey to prepare for a discussion about the similarities and different points of view of BE teachers versus teachers who teach business in English.
  - 7 Kasia Warszynska engaged our curiosity with her idea of using games and competition to set goals. She will be demonstrating a game she created which is student-centred, beneficial to all students and requires minimal preparation of the part of the teacher.
  - 8 We then heard Rachel Appleby who



will be considering personalised input, starting with the correct pronunciation of our students' names. Her idea is for minimum input yet maximum output, and in the limited time available was able to show us an example task she uses.

- 9 Roy Bicknell will present his idea of duets and how they can be used to develop students in mixed ability classes through pair work. He spoke about the idea of asking students to practice collaboration and explore patterns in language.
- 10 We finished with Ute Franzen-Waschke who will be engaging us in

thinking about our personal road maps for the future. Her idea is to look at change through conversations, with a focus on neuroscience. This will be a journey of discovery; where are you at the moment – where are you going in the future? What are your frontiers to explore?

This was a super experience for those who wanted to make their selections and also for those who might not have yet committed to going to the conference. After listening to the selection of speakers on offer today, I think it will be a super conference, not to be missed.

As well as being an Eltchat moderator, Sue Annan works in a private language school in the Channel Islands, where she teaches both general and business English and trains teachers for Trinity College London. She has been a member of BESIG since 2008.



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# The 1st Braz-Tesol BESIG PCE 19 July 2018

This summer might have been hot in Europe, but in the southern hemisphere it was cool in Brazil. For the first time, as part of the 4th largest teacher conference in the world with over 1200 participants from South America – the 16th Braz-Tesol International Conference held in Caxias do Sul, RS, Brazil – the Braz-Tesol BESIG joined in a fruitful collaboration with the Intercultural Language Education SIG (ILESIG) to present a full-day Pre-Conference Event (PCE) graciously sponsored by Macmillan Brazil. The PCE featured seven sessions delivered to a full house with a stimulating set of presentations and workshops on business, culture, communication and entrepreneurship from the board members of the two SIGs and Dorothy Zemach, the plenary speaker for the conference (pictured right).

Participants were treated to a talk by Hugo Dart (ILESIG secretary) who made a comparison utilizing an episode of Star Trek to demonstrate the importance of empathy, imagination, communication and trust in high-risk situations. Next, IATEFL BESIG member Karin Heuert Galvão (treasurer for both ILESIG and BESIG) addressed the design of business English courses in contexts where English is a Lingua Franca. Karin also discussed survival skills in BE such as the importance of rapport with your students. John Corbett (ILESIG president) mesmerized the delegates with his views on building trust in multicultural teams. IATEFL BESIG Joint Online Team Coordinator, Rob Howard (Braz-Tesol BESIG founder and president), discussed the *True Track to Entrepreneurism* dispelling many of the myths and misinformation from social media, as well as evaluating many of the suggestions that have been circulating around Brazil in the form of sound business advice.



Our host, Macmillan's own Academic Supervisor, Alex Tamulis (Braz-Tesol BESIG secretary) brought insights into the use of formulaic language in everyday discourse and in business domains. Later, by presenting a talk about customer service, Rob Howard demonstrated how it may be utilized during a BE class as a lesson, as well as to promote better customer service skills within the client's company. Finally, Dorothy Zemach (sponsored by the U.S. State Department Regional English Language Officer) showed us how to become more visible in the professional world of English language teaching with her presentation *Let's Get Visible*. The upbeat and energetic Dorothy touched on many ways for teachers to plan and position themselves to develop their marketability as an invited presenter by recounting her own journey to becoming an invited plenary speaker.

We were indeed pleased to have so many new and experienced educators transitioning towards the business English genre present and deeply honored to have such veterans as Henry Grant, James Taylor and the very special Sara Walker, responsible for helping to bring Braz-Tesol back to life and a past president from 1986. We were blessed with Sara's



participation in all of the talks and even more thrilled when she was later chosen for the Braz-Tesol Lifetime Achievement Award, which, will be named the Sara Walker Award for Lifetime Achievement.

This first PCE was a huge success and the feedback was empowering. Some of the quotes from participants included, "very clear, straightforward!"; "I absolutely loved the session!"; "It was great! Good to see some entrepreneurial view with teaching. We are professionals!"; "That was inspiring, challenging!"; "I'm really happy I chose this PCE."; "Great course! Great day! I'll join the SIG and follow you guys!";

As speaker John Corbett recounted: "The PCE demonstrated the rich potential that can be tapped when business and professionalism are viewed through the lens of intercultural language education."



**Rob Howard is the owner of Online Language Center and partner at Business Language Training Institute. He is a teacher, writer, consultant and speaker regarding Online, Business English and Image Technology and founder of EFLtalks, a worldwide PLN+ for teachers.**



# 10 BE facts to stun your BE students

For this special edition, here are a set of facts involving the numbers 10 and 100 and ten ways to use them with your students. The facts are all true as far as I know.

- 1 Use the facts as a warmer if your students are often slow to loosen up
  - 2 Send students on a web quest for more related facts on the same theme
  - 3 Use the following framework for discussion: It can't/must/is false/true because....
  - 4 Discuss one fact to finish your session if you have 5 minutes to spare
  - 5 Allow students discuss and decide if the fact or facts are true or false
  - 6 Open the link and get students to read the source article
  - 7 Carry out a debate on the fact's theme, e.g. should we have passenger drones?
  - 8 Ask students to find other business facts related to the numbers 10 and 100
  - 9 Get students to share facts involving 10 and 100 about their own business
  - 10 Examine the consequences of each fact
- 1 The world's largest package delivery company UPS was founded by two teenagers with a bicycle and \$100 borrowed from a friend. <https://bit.ly/2L5ym08>
  - 2 47% of business users say they waste more than 10% of their day waiting on technology. <https://bit.ly/2wfjrLu>
  - 3 McKinsey reported that in a study of 100 variables, purpose was found to have the greatest impact on motivation ... Yes, more than compensation. <https://bit.ly/29V38Gh>
  - 4 Companies where women make up at least 15% of senior managers have more than 50% higher profitability than those where female representation was less than 10%. <https://goo.gl/HZUS3n>
  - 5 User generated videos on YouTube get 10x more views than content created and uploaded by the actual brand. <https://bit.ly/2n81PfC>
  - 6 Dubai is aiming to become the world's first city to have passenger-carrying drones operating in its skies. ... at a top speed of around 100kph. <https://bit.ly/2IM7Mgb>
  - 7 If you divide their net worths by their age, Carlos Slim and Bill Gates have each accumulated more than \$100,000 in net worth for every hour they've been alive. <https://bit.ly/2MEXAqM>
  - 8 In the year 2012, the 100 richest people in the world earned enough money to end world poverty four times over. <https://bit.ly/2wgvWGV>
  - 9 The 100 most popular keywords on Google are weather, maps, translate, calculator, YouTube to mp3, speed test, news, thesaurus... <https://bit.ly/2LWEOqZ>
  - 10 Snapchat has grown faster than any other social-networking site since its inception four years ago. With 100 million users at last count. <https://bit.ly/2MlzfjU>



Jennie Wright is a teacher, presenter and author. She co-authored *Experimental Practice in ELT: Walk on the wild side* and her *teflhelperblog* features free professional development resources.



# Workshop report – *Perspectives in business English training* held on 28 July 2018 at Ethiraj College, Chennai

A one-day international workshop on *Perspectives in business English training* was conducted on 28 July, 2018 by the BESIG of the English Language Teachers' Association of India, (ELTAI) in collaboration with the Ethiraj College for Women, Chennai, India. The purpose of the workshop was to facilitate understanding of the best practices of trainers/teachers of business English.

Dr.V.M. Muralidharan, Chairman of Ethiraj College, spoke about the importance of English as a global language and how learning to communicate effectively is important in today's global workplace.

Evan Frendo, the Joint Co-ordinator of IATEFL BESIG, spoke on *Minimising miscommunication in the work place*. He emphasised the prominence of speaking English in the fields of Navy and Aviation and demonstrated how intelligibility of a conversation lies in recognising how expressions are used in this particular context. He explained the difference between comprehensibility and interpretability and said that



*Evan Frendo from IATEFL BESIG, and Lalitha Murthy, Adi Rajan, and PV Vivekananda from ELTAI BESIG discussing future collaboration between the two SIGs*

misunderstanding arises when the communicators are unaware of any existing problem.

During the course of the workshop, Evan expressed a clear distinction between EFL (English as a Foreign Language) and ELF (English as a Lingua Franca),

and listed various options one has before beginning a business English class, i.e. focusing on needs analysis, ELF not EFL, accommodation skills, active listening and cultural awareness.

In the second part of the workshop, *Teaching the language of negotiation*, he went on to discuss the challenges that a teacher of business English could face.

In the words of one of the participants: "The two takeaways from the session were accommodation and active listening. He explained as to how with the changing global economic scenario, it is not enough for an employee to be a native speaker. One needs to interact more and more with people from other countries. It involves listening actively and understanding what they mean, keeping in mind the circumstances in which conversation takes place."

Mrs. Lalitha Murthy's brainstorming session gave the participants a clearer insight into what the Indian industry is



*Evan in full flow*



looking for in its employees and how a course could be customised to tailor to the needs of the industry. The concept of 'backward design' (<https://goo.gl/MLD1u5>) and creating a self-assessment grid were the key takeaways. This was explained through the case study of a course created for IT managers from a Danish pharmaceutical company.

In the subsequent session, Mr. Adi Rajan presented the app *OneNote*, which could be used to create a paperless business English classroom. The teachers had a hands-on experience of using the app and they were also taught to share learner materials via the app.

The closing session was that of Mr. P. V. Vivekananda of Tata Consultancy Services who threw some light on the usage of technology in the classroom. He spoke on the way technology is being used to train a large workforce in a global company and highlighted the usage of certain apps like the Fresco talk/ Fresco Play, Idea Accent, etc.

In essence, the workshop provided a high-quality learning platform in the areas of career development, personal enrichment and professional development. Overall the session lived up to its expectation of providing participants with perspectives on business English.



From left to right: Lalitha Murthy, P.V. Vivekananda, Adi Rajan, Evan Frendo and Dr.V.M. Muralidharan



Dr Mangai Wilson, whose English department organised the event



**Lalitha Murthy, Convener, ELTAI BESIG, has been a teacher for over 15 years and a business English trainer since 2002. She is a consultant for a number of IT companies and trains software engineers in India.**

Jayashree Chetan holds a M. Phil in English Literature plus CELTA and TESOL course completion certificates. She teaches at the tertiary level and conducts training in business English communication. She is also a speaking examiner for the Cambridge BEC exams.





## Business Issues over the years

Chris Stanzer charts the changes to the newsletter since the publication of the first issue in 1988.

1988



The very first issue of the newsletter back in 1988

1989



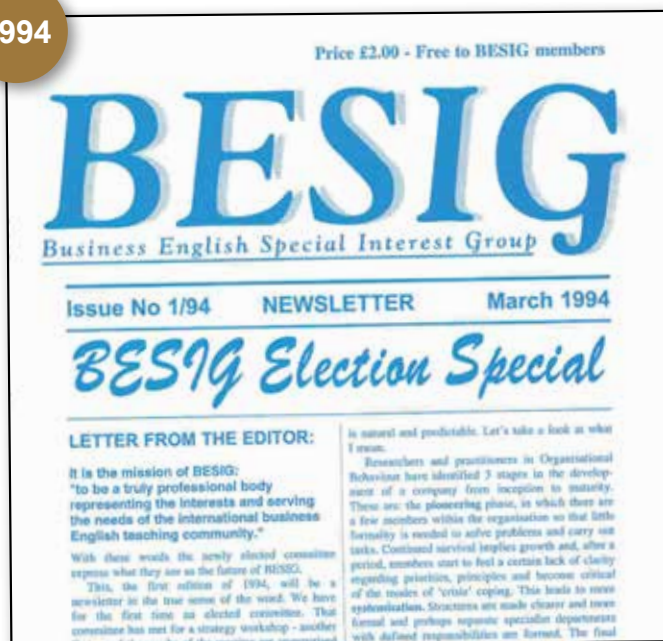
Report on the Avery Hill Conference in the May 1989 issue

1991



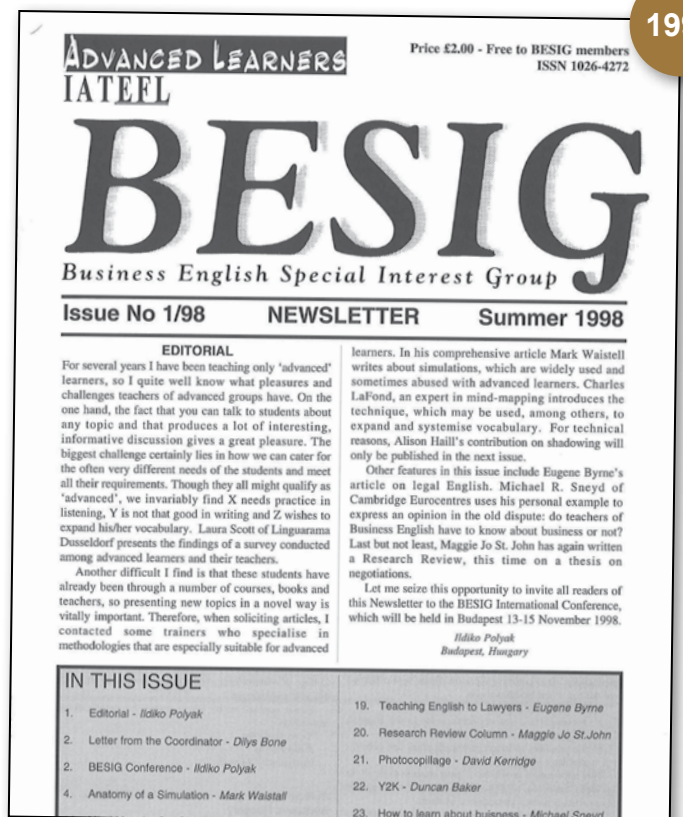
March 1991 issue and a change of colour!

1994



March 1994 issue – BESIG Election Special!

1998



Summer 1998 issue – back to black



1998



1998



Summer 1998 issue – a brief dalliance with colour which was not fully embraced until Spring 2016!

October 1998 issue – print in two colours and the introduction of the new IATEFL logo

2000



The year 2000 – a new shade of green plus logos to enhance the regular articles

2007



2007



Autumn 2007 – first issue with two colour inside plus updated logos

2016



Spring 2007 – first issue with full colour cover



Spring 2016 issue – colour throughout!

# The business communication Twitter Live Chat

On August the 26th 2018, a Twitter Live Chat focusing on online tools, business efficiency, trainer development and technology for the future was held between IATEFL BESIG & the Japan Association for Language Teaching Business Communication SIG. Participants joined from Japan, Ukraine, England, India, South Korea, Germany, Norway, China, Mexico & Argentina, and they agreed that the following extracts including their ideas and names could be reproduced for IATEFL & JALT publications. This article includes a summary of some points, and a few extracts of the exchanges.



## Summary

It depends on the context, standard operating procedures, and privacy or non-disclosure agreements with customers. There may be specific in-house applications for different companies. Some general apps which are becoming popular include Google Translate, Grammarly, and AR/VR for marketing, sales and exhibitions. However, some problems still exist with voice recognition tools, due to the variation in accents.

- Oksana: Slack, Skype, Zoom and some internal platforms.
- Sue: TED talks for building listening skills.
- Adi: Skype is quite versatile although it's not designed for training. It indirectly builds skills like virtual collaboration or navigation of multiple digital interfaces.
- Sue: I think Skype has its place, but it doesn't have access to a whiteboard in the way that other platforms do.
- Adi: The corporate version has got a whiteboard which works fairly well.
- Alan: I like Flipgrid for clients to self-record their videos and review.
- Heike: Using live online tools helps learners with multimodal communication forms (text and voice), improves your learner's quality of video and audio and the teacher can record lessons for playback.
- Dan: Apple is planning to allow up to 32 simultaneous Facetime users on iOS.
- Adi: Yammer, the corporate Twitter, is something that a lot of companies have because it's bundled with the Microsoft enterprise license. Quite useful for running something that's asynchronous and builds microblogging and networking skills that employers value.
- Alan: I guess it's important to be able to have access to the online students to collaborate on projects where you can simulate business interaction.
- Dan: I agree. Simulate the work application.
- Heike: Couldn't agree with you more.
- Oksana: Skype's ok for lessons, Zoom has more functions oriented at teaching. Even FB Messenger works well for needs analysis interviews.
- Rob: I agree. I think Zoom has better functionality and is more reliable than Skype.
- Reid: Tools for training should reflect the communication practices that will be used when training is finished. It also depends on the training perhaps industry communication tools such as @SlackHQ can be used for some training.

## Q2 What do you think are effective online training tools and how do they relate to workplace usage?

#bizcom







## Summary

The initial point here was about an effective needs analysis, with realistic and achievable goals for that specific workplace, taking care of the comfort people have with the technology. The changes are both exciting and frightening. However, established communication cues are often lost online. Zoom cuts out when people try to overlap, and while there are still non-verbals in video chats, in bigger group calls, there is a lack of experiential and involved components of interpersonal communication.

It may not be so much 'training tools' rather how to give people quick answers to their questions. Instead of wanting to do some training, it is more common to ask, how do I do this in English? It may come down to helping the business sharing expectations of how they want members of staff to communicate, which leads into business English as a lingua franca (BELF). A large part of BELF communication is to also focus on the receiver of the message and negotiating meaning, more so than just knowing the correct business vocabulary.

- Reid: Twitter! bite sized and usually in real time.
- Evan: Corpus analysis tools are just fantastic for focusing on the specific language used by a discourse community / community of practice. Without them we are just guessing.
- Sue: I've just been doing some training with the BNC and comparing it with COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English). This was an eye opener for my students.
- Dan: COCA is an excellent writing tool!!
- Evan: And a real eye opener when you start showing people (using company specific corpora) what is actually written in emails, instead of what is in the coursebooks ...
- Sue: Absolutely. We were looking at how 'must' is being used much less, and replaced by 'need to'. Very cool to see the instances where it is still popular and where it has been eroded.

**Q4**  
**How can trainers find ways to include CALL skill development into their B.E. bag of training tricks?**



#bizcom



- Heike: Trainers could take online courses to learn to master business communication skills at free MOOCs like FutureLearn, Coursera...or paid ones like Udemy etc.
- Heike: I would love to learn how to use corpora for BE, could anyone of you direct to me some courses/ recordings?
- Sue: Have a look at Futurelearn. I think they have a course for using corpora.
- Heike: <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/corpus-linguistics>
- Sue: Yes. The uni of Lancaster is a good course provider.
- Sue: You can also use twitter as a mini corpus.
- Reid: I think we will see #Al starting to 'creep/ into the discussions and trials in some of the early adapter classrooms.
- Heike: I would be happy if you join the discussion on #Al (<https://goo.gl/JR3xMo>) on 9 Nov at an online event LTSIG is organizing. <https://bit.ly/2OwCSqn>
- Heike: Has anybody of you been able to use the conversation function of Microsoft Translate at a conference? You just start a conversation and then a URL and a barcode is generated like <http://translate.it/> QTDry Listeners can call on this URL without having to download the Translate app, select their own language and see a machine translation of the spoken presentation.

Thank-you and the IATEFL BESIG very much for joining this #bizcom Twitter Chat. It is supporting the development of the BizComSIG in Japan, Asia, and it's amazing to be building connections with all of you around the world. We are looking forward to talking to you again soon.



Alan Simpson was an engineer, fundraiser, teacher-trainer, and then in-house corporate trainer for a Japanese engineering company for a decade. He recently transitioned into academia, and has been building the JALT Business Communication SIG since 2015.



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# The Disney strategy in meetings in the business world

**Marjorie Rosenberg looks at how conflicting roles within business meetings can lead to success.**

Meetings are a regular part of business life. They are held to report and update others, to discuss important issues and come to decisions, or as regularly scheduled formal events. People often have assigned roles in meetings, however, the way they express themselves and their points of view may be consistent, regardless of the particular meeting they are taking part in.

## Background

In order to be successful, it can be helpful to pinpoint the elements that others use to achieve their goals. Taking this one step further, Robert Dilts felt that by breaking down these elements and explaining them, they could be taught to others. One of the people he saw using a successful model was Walt Disney, who had a rare ability to combine dreams with both practicalities and a critical point of view. Looking at a project from these different perspectives usually ensured that when they were implemented, the final product was both creative and financially successful. In researching those who had worked with Disney, Dilts found that: "One of the major elements of Disney's unique genius was his ability to explore something from a number of perceptual positions. Each one of these personae represents a whole thinking strategy all on its own – strategies that more often tend to conflict with each other rather than support each other." (Dilts 1990: 1-2) In meetings with Disney, his staff never knew which of the three personae identified by Dilts would be present. It could be the dreamer who was known for thinking outside the box and for whom everything

was possible, the realist who emphasized the need for sufficient financial and human resources, or the critic who looked at the worst-case scenario and commented on all the elements of the plan that could go wrong. What made Disney special was his capability of moving fluidly from one of these positions to another while constantly changing and modifying his original idea.

## How is this relevant in business meetings?

Once we realize that these personae may well be present in a business meeting, we can work with our students on the roles. We can explain that the dreamer does not stop to consider practical aspects, the realist may be seen by the dreamer to shoot down his or her ideas and the critic never seems to be satisfied with the suggestions made by others. Learners can first discuss the three roles and think of examples of the three personae in their own experience. With facilitation by the teacher, this can lead to a lively discussion and learners can be encouraged to comment on meetings they have taken part in where these personae have appeared. The teacher can remind the class that the dreamers use 'blue-sky' thinking – assume everything is possible – and may ignore details and facts. The realist is the person who immediately asks questions such as "How many people will need to work on this?" "What will it cost?" "How long will it take?" whereas the critic will say things such as "But what if ... happens?" or "I think ... may go wrong." It is important to remind learners that these can be seen as personality traits and that they may be fluid depending on

the situation, past experiences, and the topic in discussion. This can then be taken further and the class can work together to find ways for each of the three personae to acknowledge the others' opinions and arguments as valid and eventually work together to come up with a solution that everyone can be happy with. It provides the chance to work on different types of language, can be used for role plays when working on meetings, and may help learners when they return to the workplace to better understand the other participants in meetings they take part in.

## Summary and reflection

After a general discussion and a role play it would be helpful to ask the group several questions in a debriefing. By being aware of the roles they played and observation of others, it will help them to better understand how these personae can influence what happens in a meeting. They may benefit greatly by thinking about what helped people change their point of view and raise awareness to better understand how people react in meetings, as well as the concessions that were made to come up with a solution which everyone was satisfied with.

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- Rosenberg, M. (2018). *Communicative Business English Activities*. Newbury, UK: Express Publishing.

Marjorie Rosenberg lives in Graz, Austria, where she trains corporate clients, carries out ELT research projects at the university and writes business English and other ELT materials. Her latest book, *Communicative Business English Activities*, was recently published by Express Publishing.



# Think again before you send: reviewing workplace emails

**Oksana Hera raises her learners' awareness of how their emails might be received.**

I tend to hear mixed reactions when approaching the topic of emails with my learners. On the one hand, in some professional contexts emails are considered as an outdated, very slow, and doubtfully effective form of communication. Therefore in these instances most correspondence has quite naturally moved to various messenger and chat tools. On the other hand, some companies have to follow strict confidentiality and security guidelines and all the communication flow takes place through emails.

In either case, in my role as a trainer I take it as my direct responsibility to raise my learners' awareness of how they can make the most of emails in their particular setting.

Be it a group or a one-to-one session, every learner operates with a set of beliefs and experiences they have gained. Discussing the essentials of what emailing is and revisiting these ideas proves to be effective with my learners.

Applying the series of activities described below, I aim at reminding them that email is a communication tool and not a goal as, being overwhelmed with the choice of salutation and closing, correct selection of the introduction, and the structure of the main body, the sender may overlook the whole aim of writing it; that is to get a certain message across.

When – together with the learner – we select a topic for their email writing practice, I encourage them to answer three questions:

- 1 What is the main message behind the email?
- 2 What response do you want to receive? For example, positive or negative, agreement with the decision

provided or asking for another opinion on the issue.

- 3 What do you want to achieve with it? This includes looking at a wider context of communication that a single message may influence in terms of long-term relationships with the receiver of the email.

I do not limit the word count and let them write the email between classes. When I receive the email and we start analysing it, I ask them to take off their sender's glasses so to say and put on the receiver's ones. Then they have to review the message objectively and see what the target reader eventually gets out of it. As the last step, they rewrite the email based on their conclusions from stage two and using questions 1-3 from stage one as guidelines.

Let me illustrate this sequence with the practical samples produced by one of my one-to-one clients:

A recruiter for an international company works in one of its offices located in Ukraine. Her task is to fill high-ranking vacancies for one of their key US offices. Figure 1 demonstrates a typical email that initiates communication with a prospective candidate.

Having analysed the main idea of the email, which was to raise the receiver's interest in the job opening, we identified the expressions which the learner preferred to keep in the body of the email, as well as those that had to be corrected to conform to the norms of Standard English.

She was aiming at a positive response and therefore we focussed on the following point: the gadget the receiver would be most likely to use when reading the message. Smartphone came top of the list and as the text did not fit on a single phone screen (Figure 2), it led us to select the information that was

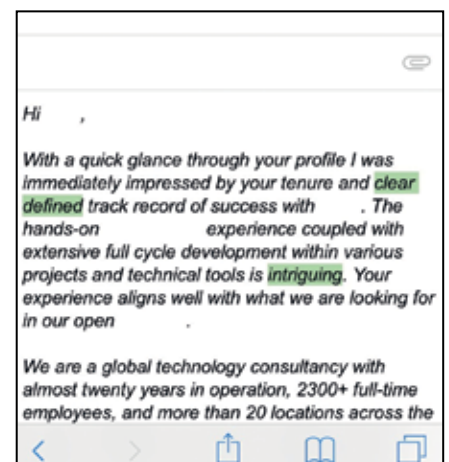


Figure 2

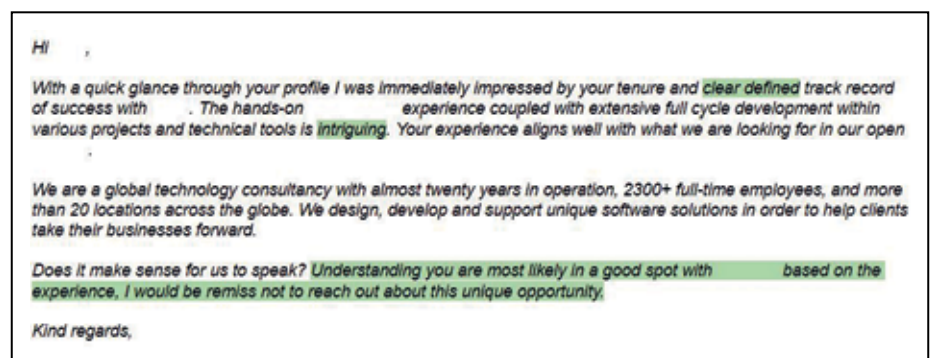


Figure 1



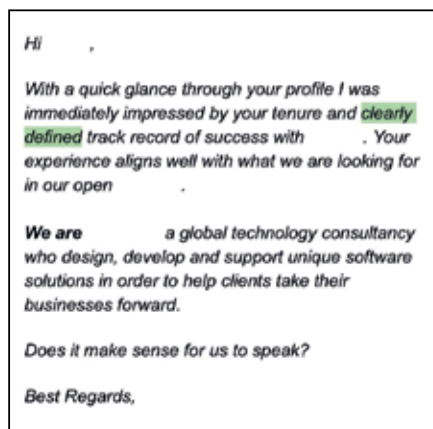


Figure 3

pertinent to reaching the objective of creating a rewarding reader experience for the receiver.

The result of editing is shown in the final version in Figure 3 which communicates the message, balancing adequately the information about the company as well as the strengths of the candidate's profile that attracted the recruiter's attention in the first place.

As the learner was working on a series of emails to correspond with the candidates at different stages of the interview process, we looked at one of the most sensitive messages to be sent out – the rejection email. Having the template ready, there was one phrase which seemed to be slightly misleading: Thank you again and *let's stay in touch*. This phrase seemed out of place as, being turned down, the candidate was encouraged to continue corresponding with the recruiter. Thus, it was decided to substitute it with *I'd really like to have a possibility to contact you in future* to signal that any further communication would be resumed by the recruiter having suitable vacancies for the candidate in question and not to leave candidates guessing what else was expected of them.

Remembering that emailing is one of the channels of communication with another human and allowing for the multiple interpretations of the same phrase helps the sender to put themselves in the receiver's shoes and makes

their communication more flexible and effective. By verifying if the text you have written meets your initial intentions, your learner may be saving themselves a couple of minutes or sometimes hours dealing with endless emailing threads.

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# High context and low context communication styles

**Kirsten Waechter offers a game to help learners deal with different communication styles.**

When teaching global business English communication, there is still the myth of politeness. How to define it? Is someone who words things more indirectly automatically more polite? Isn't politeness something that depends on context and on communication styles, and on what is accepted in the culture of my communication partner?

When communicating with others, we need to agree a compromise on and be flexible with our communication style. This means we also have to find a way to teach our learners this or help them build awareness. How can we help them understand different communication styles and find out what is polite and acceptable in their communication context? To do this, I would like to introduce the high-context/low-context game.

First of all, let's have a look at the concept of high and low context which was coined by Edward T. Hall in his book *Beyond Culture* (1976). In 'high-context' cultures, the context of what is said is important, as messages are conveyed between the lines and need to be embedded or dressed up. You have to listen carefully in order to understand the full message, as more is expressed than is actually being said in words!

In 'low-context' cultures, words convey the message as clearly or as briefly as possible. Communication in these cultures expresses exactly what is meant and gets to the point rather fast; there are only few words and all of them are part of the message. You can already see that both sides are heading for misunderstanding and conflict, aren't they?

Let me illustrate this with an anecdote from my own life: fifteen years ago, I was travelling to Scotland to see some friends and called one of them, asking: "Shall we

meet on Tuesday?" His answer was: "If you like." So I thought we'll meet up and have fun, while he was thinking: "Well, Tuesday is not really that good as I'm working long and I'll be tired, but she wants to meet on Tuesday so..." You can imagine our get-together was not that enthusiastic! You won't win any prizes if you can guess which the high-context and the low-context person was. What caused trouble here was lack of awareness on both sides: I was not aware that my wording was cornering him and did not leave him any choice; he was not aware that a simple, "Sorry, I'm working long hours on Tuesday" would have been no offence to me. We both behaved within our learned or preferred communication styles and did not reflect on that. In my opinion, this is how most misunderstandings in business actually occur.

Remember, there is no right or wrong to this. Both sides are polite in their own way. Low-context business partners choose their words carefully in order to make themselves clear. The communication partner should understand exactly what is meant. High-context people also speak very carefully, but the motivation is rather to not harm the relationship, i.e. not to offend another person and make anyone lose face.

Being direct can be effective when communicating with Northern Germans, but it can be considered blunt or even rude when you communicate with people in Austria. Americans are often more low-context whereas people in England tend to be very high-context; thus, Americans may prefer to do business with Germans over their fellow native speakers in the UK as the styles used by many US and German people seem to be more similar (never mind the quality of their English).

High-context speakers often say something that sounds very positive to

hide a negative opinion or criticism. Here are some examples:

- I'm afraid we might have to review that decision once more.  
Really means: *This decision is not good.*
- You may want to have another look at that letter again.  
Really means: *You have to rewrite that letter.*
- It could be that we are facing a tiny bit of a problem here.  
Really means: *We are in deep trouble.*

Now, people often complain that they find it difficult to understand what high-context speakers really mean. Very often, this boils down to what the British mean (regarded to be one of the more high-context cultures in Europe). This interpretation is the basis of my game on the next page which helps your learners understand such hidden meanings. The version I use is the one printed in the Telegraph from September 2013 (accompanying an article by Alice Philipson).

## The high-context/low-context game

**How to prepare:** print the worksheet and cut it up (you don't need the headings as cards, but write them clearly on a flip chart or project them on a wall). To be able to reuse them, print either on thin cardboard or laminate the cards. In total, there are fifteen sets of cards. Each set consists of three cards: one card that states what the high-context speaker says (green); one that states what the low-context speaker understands (blue), and finally, one that clarifies what the high-context speaker actually wanted to say (purple). You may also use different sets (you can find plenty on the web) and



enlarge them using a photocopier.

**How to play:** explain the concept of high-context and low context. You can use your own experience or your learners' ideas, or even check online for some videos with funny anecdotes. Then, ask your students to sort the cards. This may be a bit time consuming, so you can reduce the number of sets or divide the cards among groups of three to four. If you decide to divide your learners in groups, make sure that the cards match. You can also give different groups the same set, and check whether the learners come up with the same results – there are a number of variations. Set a time, but not too short – many of my learners find this really difficult (but I teach mostly in low-context cultures).

**How to end:** stop the activity and ask your

students to compare their version with the answer sheet (which you can project on a wall or put on a flipchart or even hand out to your learners). Some useful follow-up questions are: which statement was the most difficult (or the easiest) to identify? Which statements have they heard before? What did they think the high-context speaker meant? How could the high-context statement be reformulated (not too direct, but less obscure)? This makes a great group writing task.

I coined the term medium context which allows students to be more clear but – using modal verbs and some softening language – avoids being too direct. For example: "You may want to have another look at that letter again." could be rewritten as "You should check that letter again before you send it."

By the way, my Scottish friend and I soon found out what went wrong – I simply asked him. We both learned to adapt our communication styles. I now say something like: "I'm coming up next week, when would be a good time for you to meet?" And he learned to say: "Well, Tuesday is not good for me, how about Thursday?" And he told me a couple of years ago that he is quite happy about that i.e. that he doesn't need to beat about the bush all the time when communicating with me, (which is something I try to pass on to my business communication learners as well).

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## Worksheet/answer sheet: The high-context/low-context game

WHAT HIGH CONTEXT SPEAKERS SAY	WHAT HIGH CONTEXT SPEAKERS MEAN	WHAT LOW CONTEXT SPEAKERS UNDERSTAND
I hear what you say	I disagree and do not want to discuss it further	He accepts my point of view
With the greatest respect	You are an idiot	He is listening to me
That's not bad	That's good	That's poor
That is a very brave proposal	You are insane	He thinks I have courage
Quite good	A bit disappointing	Quite good
I would suggest...	Do it or be prepared to justify yourself	Think about the idea, but do what you like
Oh, incidentally/ by the way	The primary purpose of our discussion is	That is not very important
I was a bit disappointed that	I am annoyed that	It doesn't really matter
Very interesting	That is clearly nonsense	They are impressed
I'll bear it in mind	I've forgotten it already	They will probably do it
I'm sure it's my fault	It's your fault	Why do they think it was their fault?
You must come for dinner	It's not an invitation, I'm just being polite	I will get an invitation soon
I almost agree	I don't agree at all	He's not far from agreement
I only have a few minor comments	Please rewrite completely	He has found a few typos
Could we consider some other options	I don't like your idea	They have not yet decided

# ‘Glocal’ business English course design

**Nassira Houat asks if we can we plan for the unpredictable.**

In order to become more effective global citizens, students should first be a good local citizen. Moreover, learning is also more meaningful when it is connected to students’ everyday life, and to their local context. This article demonstrates some techniques and useful steps for adopting a ‘glocalized’ approach to develop a business English lesson plan. By ‘glocalized approach’, I mean the combination of local and global content, that could be open for any type of pedagogical transformation and improvisation. The rationale of this approach is to maximize student’s motivation, creativity and local awareness, and it is guided by the argument that the appropriate approaches to language teaching should emerge from the local teaching context rather than being imposed on teachers (Larsen-Freeman 2016; Frendo and Koester 2015; Anderson 2015).

In this approach a dialectical movement between the global and the local content is fundamental. Therefore it is important to avoid ready-made lesson plans which could possibly restrict creativity and improvisation.

Here are two examples of glocalized activities that I devised for my classroom. The learners are all Moroccans who are preparing for the transition from university to the world of jobs. Thus, they seek purpose, passion, practice and concrete learning. The suggested glocal approach is in response to their needs.

## 1. Local business meetings versus international business meetings

In this activity, students are asked to compare Moroccan business meetings with international business meetings, to identify potential communication problems which could arise in the latter, how to avoid them and how to undertake these meetings successfully.

- a. Students are provided with a handout listing various mistakes that could happen during international business meetings. For example:
  - problems of punctuality
  - incorrect/inappropriate introductions and greetings
  - misplaced humour
  - interruptions at prayer times
  - talking about personal things
- b. Introduce context for roleplay: Some Moroccan business men’s first visit to Ericsson, a multinational ICT company in England. They are going to attend a meeting with the marketing managers.
- c. Divide the class into three groups. Each group selects some gaffes from the handout list and devises a short scenario for the meeting.
- d. Students reflect on the task: in doing this with my students they found that there is no correspondence between business meetings in the textbooks and real Moroccan business meetings. They realised that each country has its own cultural background, local ethics and standards of thinking, being and acting. Consequently, these comparative activities between the local and the global content fostered their intercultural awareness.

## 2. Comparing a local entrepreneur with an international one

- a. Invite a local entrepreneur to be interviewed. In my case, the owner of a milk company called Colaimo, who my learners consider as a model of business in our area.
- b. Before interviewing the invited speaker, the learners should watch a YouTube video interview with Sir Richard Branson, founder of the Virgin Group: <https://goo.gl/mln4HW>. The rationale behind this video is to inspire the students to use the (wh) questions of the interviewer and to acquire some techniques for conversation starters, connections and transitions.
- c. Students interview the invited speaker and compare their answers with Sir Richard’s.

To conclude, I would argue that adopting a glocal approach can make students better aware of their own real local business context and help them to be aware of the uncertainties of real life outside the academic walls of the university.

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# ZEITGEIST UNLEASHED:

## Business English any time.



I can't remember the last time I turned my phone off! I always get my news online, whenever I want. Why would I wait for a TV news broadcast at a specific time when I can access news outlets from around the world 24 hours a day on my phone that I never turn off? Whether we like it or not, we now find ourselves living in an 'always on' kind of world.

If we, as a society, are no longer satisfied with 'just' sitting down to watch the news at a certain time every day, can we expect business English learners to be satisfied with 'just' taking part in an English lesson at 2 o'clock every Tuesday afternoon too? Probably not. These days when we – and this includes our learners – are interested in or involved in something, we expect to be able to access it online whenever we want. What's more, we're often tech-rich and tech-savvy but time-poor, so we want to go directly to content that gives us just what we need – and we want that content to be as sophisticated as we are. However, as legacy news broadcasters like the BBC have discovered, there's definitely still a place for those top-of-the-hour news broadcasts and live coverage of important events, but media consumers also want online content they can access at their own inconvenience. I think this 'access any time' model is one that business English teachers would do well to embrace.

So what does 'Business English any time' look like? Well, it certainly doesn't mean teachers being accessible to their learners 24 hours a day – that's just a short-cut to burnout. Instead the teacher's job is to guide learners towards online content which they're compatible with. By online



content, I mean apps, websites containing English learning content, or authentic online content in English, i.e. content that hasn't specifically been written for English learners. When we're doing this work of guiding with learners, I think it's important that we don't impose our own preconceptions about what online content works best. We need to let the learners take the lead instead. We may love TED Talks, for example, and the world of ELT may be telling us what a great resource they are, but our learners may hate them and get nothing out of viewing them.

Rather than giving learners a list of websites or apps, I'd suggest drawing their attention to these five types of online content: 1) news, 2) videos, 3) podcasts (or other audio material), 4) blogs, 5) pure and simple language exercises. Learners can then focus on one content category at a time and use their online search skills

(review these during your face-to-face sessions, if necessary) to find specific content which appeals to them. Your role is then to regularly check in with the learners to find out what content they've been using and how it has helped them increase their passive and, hopefully, also active language and communication skills. These check-in sessions also give learners the chance to give each other tips for useful online content, so they're building learner autonomy rather than being spoon-fed 'independent' learning by their teacher.

So 'Business English any time' isn't about being glued to your phone, watching videos your teacher sent you the link to; it's about teachers offering learners a way of interacting with business English which reflects the way they now interact with other subjects they're interested in, while also building learning autonomy.

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# THE PRACTICE:

## The 100-minute classroom.



### A matter of time

**B**usiness Issues reaches 100, I find myself imagining different teaching scenarios around this magical number. For example, what would a lesson look like if we existed in a parallel universe where all classrooms had to follow a 100-minute lesson format? A thought-experiment like this may at first seem radical, but it makes us rethink how we organise our lessons and the different ways we teach and develop student learning.

The 100-minute lesson sounds like an artificial time-construct. And indeed, it is, but this is no less artificial than other lesson formats. For example, why do we have the 50-minute lesson which we often see in schools or the 2-hour or 3-hour lesson which I often teach my business students? I would suggest that

the different time formats are not only shaped by didactical considerations but are also just as much informed by curriculum constraints or other practical matters, such as the availability of students at the workplace. Investigating the less orthodox 100-minute format allows us to review how we organise learning time in the classroom.

### Fluid structures

So, how could we set up a 100-minute lesson? Good things often come in threes. The 100-minutes format could accommodate a lesson designed around 3 key activities, say of 20 minutes each. So, we would have 1 hour of key activities which work on different skill areas, but which could be 'themed'. For one 100-minute lesson, the connecting theme might be group interaction and peer feedback.

This leaves another 40 minutes to incorporate into our lesson. First, I would punctuate each of the three key activities with an additional 10-minute block and then use the final 10 minutes as slack time. To punctuate each key activity, I would use Extend/Play/Review (EPR) blocks. These blocks could be used to Extend the first key activity, have students Play (perform) an alternative roleplay after the second activity, and then have the class Review their performance after the third activity.

Different permutations are possible, but the lesson could be sequenced as follows: key 1 (20) / extend (10) / key 2 (20) / play (10) / key 3 (20) / review (10) / slack time (10) = 100.





The main idea underlying the EPR blocks is to make the lesson format more fluid. Just like the 'uiterwaarden' (Dutch flood plains) which are used to manage river overflow, we can see these blocks as having a similar function. The best lesson designs are in my view organic: there are no sharp boundaries between activities; indeed, in the classroom they often naturally segue into the next one. Seeing the organisation of a lesson as a fluid structure accommodates for the dynamic of what happens in real-time classroom work. We could therefore say that the EPR blocks can be used to manage the 'learning overflow' of the key activities.

Let's talk about those final 10 minutes left in our 100-minute lesson. I would use this for what I call slack time. Any good lesson needs time for a short break before refocussing or to start or wrap up a lesson.

So, we now have a fluid structure for our 100-minute lesson, and we have to keep in mind that the times allotted for the different lesson blocks are flexible. In real time we may find that key activity 1 needs less time whereas its extension needs more. The structure or design we are considering would therefore be a flexible and dynamic one.

## Key activity

Let's take one key activity as an example to see what this involves and how it might fit in a further sequence. In line with the suggested lesson theme, the focus here is on group interaction. The activity I have in mind could work for smaller groups of 8-12 but can be scaled up to larger groups.

Divide the class into two groups who each have to discuss a specific theme. As an example, recently I had a compliance team in a bank discuss a current hot item in their field: the introduction of GDPR and the broader issue of data privacy. The students are given 5 minutes to explore

the topic and take notes. The next 5 minutes they have to decide how their findings can be visually presented to the other group. This can be quite simple, in the form of improvised visuals on a flipchart sheet.

They then present their visual to the other group (5 minutes), taking turns to explain or elaborate on what they discussed. This activity is interaction-driven, and students need to analyse and synthesise in their choice-making but also respond to the feedback from their peers. With another 5 minutes of feedback for both groups, we have an activity of around 20 minutes. Working in different media is a good way of integrating student work on language with professional content. I've also often used large-format visuals such as flipchart sheets, as these encourage peer interaction which improves their interpersonal communication.

## EPR

The key activity I just outlined could be followed by any type of EPR block. Different permutations are possible as we are aiming for a fluid lesson design. Here are examples of each type to give a better idea how this might work.

**Extend:** A simple extension of the key activity would be to have both groups come together and revise the visuals they've chosen, explore other types and discuss their respective merits. Could they choose a pie chart for example instead of a graph? And does that matter? These 10 minutes are once again group-driven; the teacher feedback I give would focus on showing how important the real-time language which they are using is: the visuals support the storytelling but also influence the language they decide to use.

**Play:** A game that would connect language usage and visual elements would be to have students provide the

bare outline of a visual on a flipchart. Their peers would then have to guess what the visual is about as the designated presenter adds a new element to the visual. I would model this just to show students that this doesn't have to be challenging: I could draw for example a simple ascending graph line with 10% and 50% at both ends. I would also moderate immediate teacher feedback, as this is about encouraging practice and learning through peer interaction.

**Review:** Having their performance in the key activity reviewed naturally orients student attention towards technical aspects of language usage, for example their use of tense or comparatives. So, this would be the EPR block in which students might expect more teacher feedback. But peer feedback could still be a significant part of any review and help raise their awareness of different learning dimensions. One example would be to assign observer roles during the key activity. We could ask students to focus on how their peers respond or interact with others, e.g. what did they exactly say and why? It highlights the interpersonal dimension of their language usage.

## Using (slack) time

There is so much to consider when it comes to designing activities or organising classroom time. A critical question underlying what I've outlined above is: do we organise time or does time organise us? Perhaps the answer is: both. We can use the 100-minute format, yet whatever format we use needs to have a flexible and fluid structure that allows the lesson to breathe and flow. If we adopt a different activity sequence or time to make the lesson work, then we should do that. If it also means using more slack time than we envisaged for a particular lesson, then we should allow for that too. What matters is making student learning meaningful in the classroom.

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# RESEARCH REVIEW:

## Mobile and multidimensional business English



Aside from teaching professionals in organisations, many of us teach pre-service learners – students in tertiary education who will later be expected to use English in the workplace. Academic English courses based on business English are often taught using standard textbooks and are based on learners' ability to recall lexis and produce texts which they are unlikely to reproduce in the real world. In her recent research paper *Mobile and multidimensional: flipping the business English classroom*, Catherine Nickerson relates her experience introducing flipped classroom and project-based learning principles to pre-service business English classrooms. She links the teaching of important language skills to teaching using computer-mediated communication and demonstrates methods of making language learning in an academic setting more engaging and relevant for pre-service learners of business English.

For those unfamiliar with the term 'flipped classroom', this refers to a blended learning strategy aiming to improve student engagement and outcomes. It requires students to prepare their own learning in advance and engage with peers in purposeful activities, to the extent that "the traditional model of teacher as the sole steward of knowledge has become obsolete". (Jenkins et al. 2017). For pre-service learners this concept allows teachers to tap into the great enthusiasm these students have for using their mobile devices and removes the constraints of time and location (Liu, 2006, Nicholas, Rowlands & Jamali 2010).

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) refers to computer-based communication including a variety of forms of synchronous, asynchronous or real-time interaction, using computers as tools to exchange text, images, audio and video. Nickerson refers to the research carried out by Crawford, Camiciottoli & Bonsignori, (2015) and Darics, (2015) who identify CMC in professional settings today

as one of the most important skills that business people need. In fact, increasing the use of CMC skills in the classroom is not only motivating for learners but it also helps them develop crucial communication skills, such as 'audience profiling': how to linguistically deal with different audiences, and 'media packaging': selecting the most appropriate channel to do so (Gimenez 2014).

Nickerson's research focussed on a group of 60 business English students in a university in the United Arab Emirates, where technological adoption is among the highest in the world and therefore CMC transactions will be standard when students enter the business world. Nickerson used a project-based learning (PBL) approach with these groups as it "aims to promote learning by doing and is an alternative to teacher-led classroom learning" (Nickerson and Planken 2016). Traditionally Nickerson's students would be presented with a series of topics, such as corporate social responsibility (CSR) via traditional channels, e.g. PowerPoint presentation and selected academic texts. Subsequently they would be given a project such as to develop a topic-based presentation. By flipping the classroom and integrating mobile learning assignments, the time that she would have otherwise spent lecturing and discussing the reading materials in one or more plenary sessions was used to work with smaller groups of students to discuss their ideas with them directly.

Nickerson comments that, in order to effectively replace conventional learning with mobile learning, the instructional design needs to clearly define the pedagogical purpose of the learning tasks. Nickerson and Planken (2016) identify that mobile learning tasks have three different forms of engagement: interaction, production and reflection. Students work with the material in different ways in order to complete the task. They may be asked to interact with on-line media, to produce a task using CMC, or to reflect on the use of

CMC by themselves or by others.

In her flipped classroom, Nickerson took the topics from her traditionally taught courses, such as presentation training, and created interactive tasks. These included leaving comments on discussion boards to exchange views on good presentation skills. Her productive tasks included recording and distributing videos on set themes, e.g. 'How to give a good presentation'. Finally, students reflected on a given stimulus provided, such as a pre-recorded presentation, referring back to their evaluations and experiences thus far. The following table outlines her assignments:

At the end of the course Nickerson's students reflected that they had benefitted greatly in the transition from traditional to flipped classroom, combining CMC use with language development. Not only did they find learning more enjoyable, but also more effective, allowing them to develop a range of skills including problem-solving and critical analysis, along with language fluency and accuracy. Learners commented specifically that they were more involved in the learning process and found it easier to retain newly-learned language than when using traditional teaching methods. Flexibility and the ability to learn from peers was a further benefit widely identified, confirming the benefits of mobile learning which have been researched in the past (e.g. Kukulska-Hulme, Sharples, Milrad, Arnedillo-Sánchez & Vavoula, 2009).

For those of us who wish to follow in her steps, Nickerson makes some recommendations. Firstly, it's easiest to transition from traditional to flipped classroom on a course with which we are already familiar as instructors. Selecting

**Task 1: Discussion board comment on informal versus formal writing**

Leave a comment on the Discussion Board and explain three things that you think are different between formal and informal writing. **Interaction/Audience**

**Task 2: Writing reports and improving your writing**

Watch the following short video (Youtube source) and select three ideas that you think are most important in writing an effective report. Why did you choose these three? Write a short report for one of your fellow students and post your response. **Production**

Now watch this presentation (Youtube source) and then complete the Quiz that follows at the end. **Reflection**

**Task 3: What makes a good Powerpoint presentation?**

Leave a comment on the Discussion Board explaining 3 things that you think you need to make a good Powerpoint presentation. **Interaction/Media Choice**

**Task 4: Create your own video on giving a good Powerpoint presentation**

Record a short video (in English) in which you explain how you think someone could give a good Powerpoint presentation. What would they need to think about? You can work on your own or with another student. **Production/Media Choice**

Peer group feedback on Task 4 video. **Interaction/Reflection**

**Task 5: Presenting for different audiences**

Watch the presentations by Indra Nooyi & Tom Peters (Youtube sources), and write a short description of each one explaining who you think the audience is in each case and how you think that would change the way the speaker presents his or her information. **Interaction/Production/Audience**

**Task 6: Analysing a presentation**

Watch the award winning presentation given by M. Qahtani the 2015 World Champion of Public Speaking (Youtube source). Think about how he interacts with his audience and decide why you think he is an effective presenter. Post your answer in the comment box. **Reflection/Audience**

Figure 2 from Nickerson (2018): Mobile learning tasks for course 407: Interaction, Production and Reflection.

technology and assigning mobile learning tasks is difficult if we need to invest time familiarising ourselves with the basic subject matter. Secondly, a reliable learning management system (LMS) is crucial in order to record and distribute student responses and stimuli. She used Schoology ([www.schoology.com](http://www.schoology.com)) though many universities currently use Moodle, Canvas, Blackboard or other LMS systems. Finally, Nickerson promotes a multi-dimensional approach to task design, combining a pedagogically sound learning process with business content and knowledge in order to create and improve language output.

If we too wish to achieve an integrated approach to business English, connecting business content and language practice, Nickerson's research clearly shows that combining mobile learning and flipping the classroom are effective pedagogical tools.

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