

# Anon business english assignment



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After all, accountants, salespeople and designers all communicate in the same language. Write a few paragraphs expressing your own ideas on each of these statements. The two quoted statements invite one to assess the similarities and differences between General English and Business English courses, statement 1 stressing the differences and statement 2 the similarities. I shall begin by examining statement 1 in some detail and try to assess how fundamental the differences in teaching methodologies are.

My comments on statement 2 will be more brief as much of what I say about statement 1 will, not surprisingly, be an implicit comment on statement 2 also. Although any assessment made may be wide of the mark for lack of experience in teaching Business English, it will become apparent that my sympathies lie more with the second author who stresses the elements common to both kinds of teaching, even though there is clearly something to be said for both sides in this debate.

Setting aside the implication that Business English is a more serious affair than General English (with which I disagree), statement 1 implies that the corporate trainer must differ fundamentally from other English teachers in both teaching methods and specific techniques. Although the writer is correct in identifying differences between these two kinds of course, I think these are differences in emphasis that result from employing different techniques in different contexts.

Chapter 3 of the course manual on the methodology and techniques of teaching Business English lists the following three basic approaches: \* Communicative language teaching \* Task-based instruction \* The lexical

approach All of these are fundamental to SSL teaching and General English courses and do not, in my opinion, imply any basic distinction between General English and Business English. Exactly the same can be said about the techniques listed in the same chapter, such as setting objectives, eliciting, providing substantive input, giving instructions, concept questions, monitoring, and feedback and error correction.

Not merely are the methods and techniques in essence similar, the general requirements for, say, giving clear instructions, testing students' understanding through concept questions, and giving constructive and supportive feedback are similar for both kinds of course or lesson. I think the main differences between teaching Business English and General English will show up in the areas of course syllabus, course materials, and the role of the trainer discussed in Chapter 2 of the course manual and that they will take the form of greater levels of customization for Business English courses.

As the manual indicates, in a way that may often not be true of the General English teacher, the trainer may have to function as a coach on matters like presentations and also function as an informal business consultant of sorts to give help specialized topic-specific vocabulary. Exactly what customization takes place with course syllabuses and materials will largely be determined by the Needs Analysis done prior to the course and also by the requirements of the HRS Department of the corporate client.

These together will help specify what tasks are done more frequently on the job by the students rather than less recently (more e-mails? More presentations? More telephone selling? ) and therefore which business

communication skills (telephone English, e-mail English, presentations, report writing etc. ) need more emphasis in the course. Exactly the same general observations apply to determining the relative importance and time spent on different business topics (advertising, branding, e-commerce, international finance etc. ) in a topic-based as opposed to a skills-based syllabus.

This greater level of customization in an attempt to improve immediately needed workplace skills is, I suspect, what the writer of statement 1 has in mind when eying that Business English is more “ serious and goal-directed”. His or her observation would apply also to the use of authentic or customized materials such as using e-mails or reports the students have written or preparing them for those they will at some point have to write, or examining teleconferences or oral presentations the students have already taken part in or delivered or giving guidance on those they might yet have to prepare for.

To me all this suggests that the main difference between teaching Business English and General English is one of context setting so that students practice the kind of functional language that will help them most in the corporate settings in which they have to function, as stated in the English for Special Purposes section of [www. Anglophiles. Com](http://www.Anglophiles.Com).

However, the corporate trainer remains a language teacher first and foremost, and the basic language skills that have to be imparted in both General English and Business English are not affected by the kind of customization we have been dealing with. An example of what I mean here

can be found on [www. Golden. Com](http://www.Golden.Com), where one suggested lesson plan examines appropriate use of tenses in the context of a lesson on “Describing Self, Company, and Products”.

Another is given in the English for Special Purposes section of the website [YMMV. Anglophiles. Com](http://YMMV.Anglophiles.Com) already referred to where the writer (writers? : names are not given) suggest that reading can be practiced by getting students to scan company websites related to the industry in which they work so that they can be introduced to business topic/industry-specific vocabulary and start acquiring functional language that will be of immediate use to them.

As it is not necessary for students to understand every word they are reading activities like this have the additional benefit that they can also be used to teach classes in which dents differ in level of proficiency (tasks of different complexity can also be based on the material and assigned to individual students as appropriate), but here again the basic teaching strategies do not differ in kind from those commonly used in general courses. I shall give one more example related specifically to a writing exercise.

The following link, [http://www. Sony. Net/Synonym /lore/news/COXCOMBS. PDF](http://www.Sony.Net/Synonym/lore/news/COXCOMBS.PDF), contains a fairly recent announcement of corporate restructuring and workforce reduction. Although this allows students in a Business English class to deal with functional language (expressions, collocations etc. ) relating to numbers and percentages and also with the structure and necessary features of an announcement and/or press release in a relevant

way, there will again be great overlap with the use of such expressions and documents outside business settings.

Statement 2, obviously, emphasizes the similarities of General and Business English. My comments on Statement 1 will already have made it clear that I think the differences between the two kinds of courses are contextual rather than fundamental. The references to the three websites above have already indicated how corporate websites and Business English lesson plans on business-specific topics or communication skills can be used to teach functional language, reading and grammar skills etc. That are important in mastering English more generally. The converse is also true: websites and teaching materials that could be used in General English classes can, with a difference in emphasis, be made equally useful in a corporate context. For example, in a fairly basic (say pre-intermediate level class) one could use the website of a department store like Woolworth to teach basic vocabulary concerning food, clothing etc.

Exactly the same material can be used in a Business English setting to teach how to place or take an order of a particular kind and so on (the orders could be written or placed over the phone, giving an opportunity for writing or speaking exercises). Job-related themes often occur in General English courses, even at early levels. Websites like [www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com) or <http://www.sporadic.com/> in addition to being useful in such courses can be used in an office setting by corporate trainers to teach all sorts of useful vocabulary concerning jobs, job advertisements, resumes etc. They provide writing assignments relating to these documents. This demonstration of overlaps between General English and Business English could go on and on. I will <https://assignbuster.com/anon-business-english-assignment/>

conclude with one or two more examples. The following link on writing business letters, <http://www.Nightclubs.Com/business-English/business-letters.HTML>, comes from the Business English section of the SSL site [www.Nightclubs.Com](http://www.Nightclubs.Com). The related link listing vocabulary related to business letters, <http://www.Nightclubs.Mom/business-English/business-letters-vocabulary.HTML>, will immediately make it apparent how many of the words would be useful in a General English course. As a final example, the fine Online Writing Laboratory of Purdue University (see the estimate at <http://owl.English.Purdue.Due/estimate/>), in addition to containing SSL-specific sections, is a mine of General and Academic materials that can be adapted to good effect by corporate trainers (see the section on e-mail etiquette at <http://owl.Anguish.Purdue.Due/owl/resource/636/01/> as an example of what I mean). The course manual does mention differences between the circumstances of the General English teacher and the Business English teacher that have not been touched on here, like the constraints that may be imposed on course design by the HRS department and the fact that a corporate trainer has far less control over access to the classroom or, indeed, the nature of the venue in which lessons are to be given.

But while these undoubtedly create logistical or diplomatic problems, they do not affect the fundamentals of the teaching process. Neither, I think, do the potential problems posed by having classes in which the students differ greatly either in proficiency level or status as these can occur in other classes also even if this is less frequent. In both cases, careful rope and pair work can at least do something to lessen the resulting problems and the logistical and pedagogical concerns are similar in both cases.