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1. Identify and describe the training program.

China's economy has developed at a steadily rapid pace for over twenty years. Some traditional manufacturing centers in the east have seen rising labor and production costs and some businesses have begun to move their operations west. As these businesses grow and markets become saturated, the pressure to find new markets becomes more obvious. Because of its wide-spread use around the world and particularly in international business, English is a valuable asset for college graduates looking for jobs in modern-day China.

The training program described herein was part of the curriculum for English majors at Tongren University in the Tongren prefecture of the Guizhou province in southwestern China. Classes were held for two hours once per week for eighteen weeks. The only teacher for the program was the author of this case report, Sky Lantz-Wagner. He received a bachelor's degree in international business from the University of Georgia and is pursuing a Masters of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (MA TESOL) at the Monterey Institute of International Studies (MIIS).

2. Describe the target audience for the training programs.

The target audience for this course consisted of fourth-year university students. The students came mainly from rural areas in southwest China and many of them were the first in their families to attend college. Because the students were English majors, the majority of them will seek teaching jobs upon graduation. However, several students have expressed distaste for teaching and hope to use their degree to pursue a job in either the public or the private sector. The audience was divided into three classes with each consisting of approximately thirty-five students, most of whom were female.

3. Describe the needs assessment procedures utilized to develop the program.

As this was the first time the program had been conducted at the university, no existing instructional goals were available to help develop the curriculum. During the second week of the program, an ad hoc needs analysis was administered in order to match the instructional goals of the course with the perceived needs and wants of the students. The instrument included questions about preferences on a range of both theoretical and practical business topics, including the global economy, corporations, business communication, and professional presentations. The participants first ranked each topic in order of importance individually, and then in small groups. The findings from the needs analysis showed that the participants were interested in both practice and theory, and the curriculum was developed accordingly.

4. Explain the English language training program's over-arching goals and specific objectives.

The training program was designed with the overarching goal of familiarizing students with English as it is used in practical and theoretical business contexts. The educational objectives were more specific and were divided into four categories: cognitive, performance, affective, and metacognitive. The cognitive instructional objectives for the program were to introduce students to formal and informal English language and vocabulary used in various business situations. The performance objective was for the students to create a professional presentation based on the industry in which they would like to work after college. The affective objectives were to increase the students' understanding of cross-cultural differences in business, specifically between the U.S. and China, and to increase their confidence in speaking and listening. The single metacognitive objective for the course was to provide students with resources to become more autonomous learners upon completion of the course.

In addition to the course goal and educational objectives, each class had specific instructional objectives. For example, in week three, the instructional cognitive objectives were to define *corporate responsibility* and give an example to illustrate the term. The performance objective was to create an environmentally conscious rule for a company in Tongren. To help achieve the broader affective objectives, the participants worked together in groups to articulate one or two specific rules which they then presented to the class. To help achieve the metacognitive goals, the students were given a homework assignment to search the internet for the words *corporate responsibility* and find an example of an existing rule showing how corporations can be responsible for the environment.

5. Describe the teaching methods and training procedures used in the program.

The teaching methods for the course were varied and were chosen to promote interpersonal communication in the target language as much as possible. In a typical class, a topic was presented either on the blackboard or on the overhead projector, depending on the technological resources available.

The training procedures were as follows: A syllabus was presented to the participants that contained all of the topics to be covered during the program, as well as a tentative schedule for the program. At the beginning of each class, the professor wrote the topic(s) on the board and began instruction. Most courses followed a presentation, practice, and production method. First, new material, such as vocabulary, was introduced and discussed.

Then it was used in context (e.g., in a cloze passage). Finally, it was recreated in a productive task, such as a business letter, a comic strip, or a role play that illustrated an understanding of the topic as well as creative use of the new information, vocabulary, and so on.

There were classes that did not follow the presentation, practice, and production method, however. In those cases, different students were given different reading passages as homework. In class, students who read the same passage would meet for several minutes in "expert" groups to discuss the reading. Students would then break into "jigsaw" groups which consisted of one member of each expert group. The "expert" students would discuss their knowledge of each passage while the others listened and took notes. Finally, a whole-class discussion would ensue about all of the reading passages. The whole-class discussion included compare-and-contrast questions and the students' opinions on the most and least interesting points from each passage.

6. Describe the teaching materials used in the program.

The university provided a textbook for the course; however, it was out of date, highly technical and specific, and too far above the participants' English proficiency level to be of value for the course. As an alternative, the teacher mainly used internet resources to design lessons. Some of the most useful websites were www.breakingnewsenglish.com and www.english-4u.com, because of the variety of topics related to business English, the adaptability of the lessons to suit diverse learners, and the communicative tasks they offered. Materials taken from the internet were adapted and implemented in most class meetings during the course.

7. Explain the content of the English language training program.

A. What written and spoken genres are covered in the training program?

Like the teaching methods, the content of the training program was also varied. In terms of written genres, business letters and emails were covered in-depth, while memos were covered to a lesser extent. For spoken genres, telephone interactions, such as customer service calls, were covered in the presentation, practice, and production method. Job interviews were discussed and practiced, and professional presentations were integrated into the course and used as an assessment method (see below).

B. What communicative functions are covered in the training program?

The curriculum for the course was designed to be thematic. However, language functions were also incorporated into the lessons. For example, in a lesson about customer service, the participants engaged in a role play where they had to request information and clarify points of uncertainty, both of which are functions of language. In another lesson about business meetings, students created a dialogue where they were to make and politely decline invitations to lunch. A final example of functional language used in the course was persuasive language. When studying advertising, students were put in small groups and given the task of creating a persuasive advertisement for a product of their choice. Each group had to convince the class that the product they were representing was better than their competitors' products. The audience used a checklist to determine the persuasiveness of each group.

C. What speech events are covered in the training program?

As mentioned previously, the majority of participants in the program will become teachers after graduation. Therefore, the context in which the participants will most likely use English in the future is in the language classroom. The curriculum requires students to complete a practicum. The program thus attempted to provide the participants with examples of teaching strategies and methods that they might use in the future, while also delivering a solid foundation in business English. Thus, the students' primary speaking opportunities in the course were presentations, and role plays.

8. Explain the delivery mechanisms employed by the program.

The delivery mechanisms employed by the program were face-to-face classes taught in the English Department of Tongren University. The majority of the lessons were lectures. However, small groups were occasionally used for discussing reading passages or answering questions about topics covered in the class.

9. Explain the assessment procedures used in the program.

Two main assessment procedures were used to gauge the participants' learning during the program. The first was a midterm exam. The questions on the midterm consisted of multiple-choice and short-answer items. The second assessment was a group project and presentation. Because not all participants want to become teachers after they graduate, the project was designed for participants to explore their "dream job." The groups were selected by the students. After the groups were formed, each group chose a sector and industry of the global economy that they found interesting and then came up with a business plan for a new company. For example, if a group of students was interested in tourism, they could design a tourism company, or if a group was interested in education, they could design a tutoring company or their own school. At the end of the term, each group was given five to ten minutes to present their company to the class. A visual aid was required and most groups chose PowerPoint; however, several groups opted to create a poster using butcher paper.

The project was comprehensive and contained both language and content requirements. The content requirements included a mission statement, managerial structure, requirements for employees, and a "green" element that explained how the company would be environmentally friendly. The language requirements were designed to distribute the presentation evenly among all participants. Some groups contained members with higher oral proficiency than other members. Therefore, points were deducted if one or more group members did not participate. Other language requirements were to speak clearly and with the appropriate pitch and volume, to make eye contact with the audience, and to use body language to emphasize key points. Despite the language requirements, some participants did not speak during the presentations, but the vast majority distributed the work evenly and received high marks for their presentations.

10. Explain the program evaluation mechanisms used.

Three main forms of evaluation were used during the course. The first was peer evaluation. The course was observed twice. The first observation included the dean and vice-dean of the English Department, as well as one other professor from the English Department. After class, a debriefing was held and comments and suggestions were made by both the teacher and the observing parties. The second observation was made by another teacher from the English Department. This observation was less formal than the first, and after the lesson, the teacher was given oral feedback by the observer.

The second type of evaluation was the students' evaluation. After the midterm exam, a ten-item questionnaire was given to all students to complete in class. The open-ended questions asked for information on the students' thoughts and feelings about the teaching methods and the content of the course, as well as the general attitudes of the students. The results of the questionnaire were analyzed and used for planning during the second half of the semester.

The final form of evaluation was a teaching journal. After each class, the teacher made a journal entry that included a summary of the lesson, the perceived high and low points, notes on students who participated more than others, how much time the teacher talked compared with the students, etc. The entries were intended to be used as a form of reflection so that perceived mistakes in one class would not be repeated in another. In some cases, the entire procedure of a lesson was changed if the first class of the week responded negatively, or not at all, to the teaching methods or content covered.

11. Discuss the challenges involved in offering this English training program.

The course presented several challenges throughout its duration. The first challenge was with regards to resources. Lantz-Wagner was the first non-Chinese professor to teach in the business training program, and there were no models of success or failure upon which to base a syllabus. Also, the textbook provided by the university was impractical for the students' English proficiency level because it did not contain any applied business English, other than long vocabulary lists. The challenge of limited resources was overcome by requesting materials from colleagues abroad and by utilizing the internet for ideas and lessons.

Another challenge was trying to maximize participant interaction. The majority of participants in each section were reticent to speak out in class when called upon. After designing several whole group and small group activities, it was discovered that the participants were much more likely to interact with one another when they were in groups of two to five people. Then group activities were done more frequently because the students showed more willingness to communicate in groups. Another means by which interaction was encouraged was through role play. Students seemed to feel more comfortable when they knew that everyone in the class was participating in the same task. Thus, role plays and acting were strategies used to encourage interaction.

12. Describe the successes of the program and explain how they are documented.

Because of the context of the program, its success was measured mainly by test scores and project scores. Individual scores were calculated by a weighted average: The final presentation was worth 50%, the midterm was worth 30%, and homework and participation were both 10% worth of the final grade. The university grading scale was adopted for the training program, where a score of 60% meant a passing grade. Of the 107 participants, 103 passed the midterm exam. Of the same number, 101 passed the final project, and 103 passed the course overall. The records for the previous business courses were unavailable and therefore no comparison can be made between Mr. Lantz-Wagner's program and previous programs.

An informal measure of success was based on how often and for what length of time students spoke during class. Attempts were made during each session to limit instructor speech to 50% of the class time. If the instructor spoke more than the students, the class was considered less successful than if the students spoke more. Notes were kept in the teaching journal regarding the ratio of student to instructor speech and in approximately 50% of the class meetings, the teacher spoke the same or less than the students. Based on the number of students who passed the course, it was a success. For the teacher's standards, the course could have been planned and executed to include more communicative tasks to engage the students further.

This course/training program was designed to give students a greater understanding of current business trends and how English can be used as a business tool. The students also learned the advantage that speaking both English and Chinese has in the global economy. Personal conversations with students revealed that, while they are nervous about finding jobs after graduation, they are more confident now about finding a job than they were before starting the business English course. Similarly, students reported that their knowledge and understanding of the global economy, especially the Chinese and American economies, greatly increased as a result of this course.