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Getting Down to Business: An EFL curriculum design for the business setting

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Getting Down to Business: An EFL curriculum design for the business setting

Gabriel Brito Amorim

Thesis submitted to the
Eberly College of Arts and Sciences
at West Virginia University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Master of Arts
in
Foreign Languages

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2010

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ABSTRACT

Getting Down to Business: An EFL curriculum design for the business setting

Gabriel Brito Amorim

In today's world of international commerce and technology-driven communication, the exchange of information across countries and cultures has become crucial to creating a global citizenry. After World War II, efforts to create a global commercial market resulted in the promotion of communication across cultures. The purpose of this thesis is to outline a theoretical rationale for a beginner English for Specific Purposes (ESP) curriculum in a foreign setting (Brazil). The curriculum consists of four courses organized around three pillars: (a) the production of spontaneous contextualized communication in the target language, (b) the development of cultural competence specific to the business arena, and (c) the applicability of praxis-oriented learning to the workplace. The *Getting Down to Business* model takes an innovative approach by drawing its rationale from a variety of methodological documents traditionally used for foreign language instruction – the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Guidelines, and the Languages Across the Curriculum reform. Based on these documents, the *Getting Down to Business* curriculum places the ESP curriculum in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) scenario. Its state-of-the-art assessment system utilizes the ACTFL's Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) prototypes as its central assessment instrument and implements a praxis-oriented approach to language teaching and learning providing immediate application of the tasks learned in class to job related activities. The document provides a four-semester course curriculum, from novice-mid to intermediate-mid in the ACTFL proficiency scale and includes ideas for the assessment of the curriculum.

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Dedication

To the memory of my beloved grandfather, Manoel, who did not live to see the accomplishment of this academic journey. Despite the lack of education, he outdid many with titles and degrees. Grandpa always assured that me and my family had the very best, but never forgot to teach us the value of things so that we could appreciate them. And I truly treasure everything he did for me even in the most difficult times. His lessons will live on in me. We miss you.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In today's world of international commerce and technology-driven communication, the exchange of information across countries and cultures has become crucial to creating a global citizenry. The learning of a second language (English being the dominant one) at an early stage figures prominently in the preparation of students to meet future demands of intercultural communication in academic and workplace settings. In Brazil too, whose educational system served as the impetus for this study, proficiency in English as a second language is of great importance in the country's growing economy. For this reason, the role of world language instruction in Brazil's primary and secondary school system has been one of major discussion for years. Nevertheless, the system continues to struggle to incorporate effectively world language instruction and assessment into the national curricular framework.

The Brazilian Ministry of Education has produced two main documents that dictate the standards for all disciplines, including world languages. These documents are called the National Curricular Parameters (known in Brazil as the PCN) and the Law on Brazilian Education Guidelines and Bases (known in Brazil as the LDB).ⁱ According to the Brazilian PCN (1998 for Elementary School and 2000 for Secondary School) and LDB (1996) documents, students must receive world language instruction from elementary to high school. The PCN document for Foreign Languages states that "The new *Law on Brazilian Education Guidelines and Bases* sees Foreign Language as a mandatory discipline starting at the third cycle [fifth grade] of elementary school" (p.

37).ⁱⁱ With regard to world language instruction in high school, the PCN-FL for high school state:

[...] integrated to the area of Language, Codes, and Technology, the Foreign Languages assume the condition of being an indissoluble part of the array of essential knowledge that will permit the student to be closer to various cultures, and, consequently, allow his/her integration in the globalized world (p. 25).ⁱⁱⁱ

This curricular standard applies to both public and private schools. For economic and geopolitical reasons, most schools adopt English as their second language of choice (though some private schools offer both English and Spanish) and provide instruction from beginner to intermediate levels of proficiency.

According to a summary of the National Curricular Parameters for Secondary Education prepared by the Ministry of Education of Brazil, a few issues in foreign language instruction in the regular educational system have been the focus of the educational reform in the country for the past several decades.^{iv} Some of these major factors are, for example, the number of hours allotted to the study of foreign languages and the instructors' lack of linguistic and pedagogical expertise in the foreign language, which leads to non-enforcement of the legislation. The document states:

[...] instead of training the student to speak, read and write in a foreign language, Foreign Language classes at Secondary Education schools ended up taking on a tedious and repetitive overtone, which often deprives both students and teachers of motivation, while failing to appreciate the value of contents that are indeed relevant to the students' educational development.

The revised parameters (1996 and 2000), like the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Standards discussed later, highlight meaningful communication as their central purpose for foreign language teaching and learning. Prior to the revisions, however, Brazil's educational system had begun making changes to achieve meaningful and authentic communication. Nevertheless, the new principles of the revised parameters are not put into practice in the majority of the public and private schools, and students tend to be unmotivated with the long-established teaching practices of rule memorization, grammatical pattern drills, and focus on the written language. From my personal experience, first as a student and second as an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructor in private language institutes, the lack of emphasis on meaningful and authentic communication by the academic leadership leads to disinterest on the part of the students. In addition, the demands for second language instruction in the regular curriculum are not particularly high because students and parents do not see the immediate application of the language. Even if parents may be aware of the need of mastering a second language in today's world, they do not readily support their children's study of a language.

The general learning outcomes for elementary school, developed by a group of educators hired by the federal government, state that language learners should have a global (oral and written) understanding of the world language studied by the end of eighth grade or in four years time (PCN for Elementary School, 1998, p. 66). It appears, however, that there is little effective supervision determining whether or not the ultimate goals are being achieved. In the national comprehensive exam for high school graduates (ENEM – Exame Nacional de Ensino Médio), for example, which is administered every

October, students' English language skills are not tested. While high school students are expected to take the national comprehensive exam every year to assess the achievement of benchmark levels in the core curriculum, including Portuguese, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Geography, History, etc., English is not included as one of the areas to be assessed. Given that students are not tested on what they have learned they demonstrate little interest in truly learning the material, and their parents do not hold them accountable for doing so. Although students receive instruction from an early age, they are neither encouraged nor expected to demonstrate the achievement of a baseline proficiency level in English, and therefore, they do not invest the same amount of time into acquiring knowledge in the subject. Given that a culminating assessment serves as a motivator for good student performance, the lack of a comprehensive exam in English results in lower-than-expected student performance upon graduation with most students demonstrating only low levels of proficiency in the English language. Abreu-e-Lima, Oliveira & Augusto-Navarro (2007) also claim that the unsatisfactory results of EFL instruction in Brazil are based mainly on the lack of EFL training provided to Brazilian educators, a subject which cannot be encompassed within the scope of this study (p. 179).

Given the inadequate emphasis in EFL training in Brazilian schools, students are not currently achieving a level of basic proficiency by the end of high school, and, perhaps more importantly, they are not being prepared to employ English in the workplace, where their language skills will be put to the test. This lack of preparation requires students to resume preparation in English at a later time in order to be able to use it in daily transactions in their work lives. Students who continue their English training generally receive instruction in English for the workplace in an English for Specific

Purposes (ESP) course. Given the need for training to close the gap between insufficient secondary training and professional needs, one might expect an abundance of ESP courses on the language school market. Yet, Celani (2008, p. 413) notes that in Brazil not enough courses have been developed, and government educational policies have not been designed to meet the demands of learners. The lack of ESP courses coupled with low student proficiency levels after high school have become a growing problem in Brazil, particularly because of the growth of international trade and the establishment of multinational companies in the country, which require a larger English-speaking population. In the year 2007, for instance, one of the largest revenues, US \$10.1 billion, was registered in the sector of professional and business services. The service sector, in which English is most likely to be needed, employs more than half of Brazil's workers, and most of the country's investments come from foreign businesses (Outlook of International Trade in Services - Ministry of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade, Brazil, 2007). This large flow of international engagement and capital in Brazil has impacted the teaching of English as a foreign language as well. The Language Center at the Federal University of Espírito Santo (UFES), for example, holds a population of approximately 5,000 students of English as a Foreign Language per academic semester (L. Puppini, personal communication, April 5, 2010).

Since students generally do not receive or take full advantage of language training at the elementary and high school levels, when they enter the university or the workforce, they must seek out additional language training at specialized language institutes to prepare themselves for the demands of communication in English in the classroom or on the job. If they wish to raise their proficiency level in English in order to travel abroad for

leisure purposes or other activities, they generally matriculate in a private language institute. Those who wish to develop their English skills enough for professional practice generally take one of two paths in terms of instruction: a) they enroll in general English classes offered at private language institutes; or b) they matriculate in an ESP course, also offered privately. The first option of general English courses is popular for two reasons: (a) the course curriculum is broad, (i.e., students gain a good overview of basic conversational English while also learning about the culture of English-speaking countries); and (b) it is cost effective. The second curricular option, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), is often preferable, however, because of its specialized nature; it prepares students for immediate workplace communication. ESP courses focus on the vocabulary, syntactic structures, and cultural knowledge that are most pertinent to the business world. Students gain immediate access to the information they will use most later on. Such courses are, however, also less desirable because they are costly, given that the price of courses are based on the matriculation of clients who make up the majority of the class enrollments. In addition, students must have fulfilled prerequisites elsewhere and achieved a high level of proficiency prior to enrolling in an ESP course. Most private citizens in Brazil have neither the money nor the training to enroll in such courses. As Hutchinson & Waters (1987) state “time and money constraints created a need for cost-effective courses with clearly defined goals (p. 7).” For these reasons, a curriculum that presents immediate applications to the workplace and gives the novice learner the opportunity to achieve a higher proficiency level in a timely fashion becomes very appealing to the Brazilian market.

The great demand for but insufficient supply of ESP courses in Brazil has resulted in an educational gap and a market niche in English training. As reported by E. Fonseca, an experienced ESP instructor there, the biggest issue is the “immediacy of learning the language for specific purposes” (personal communication, August 26 2008). Most of the learners matriculated in his classes are established or mid-career professionals sponsored by their companies who need to learn a specific language in a short period of time in order to carry out business tasks. Fonseca, who has been teaching ESP courses for over fifteen years, also reports that, while established professionals often have some basic knowledge of the language, which helps them at the workplace (most of them have completed a general English course at a language institute), the mid-career workers do not have a similar background. These workers, who matriculate in ESP classes (sponsored by their companies), often find it very hard to keep up with the demands in English at work since most of them have never attended English classes (E. Fonseca, personal communication, August 26 2008). Allen & Widdowson (1974, in Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) reiterate the fact that learners encounter difficulties when enrolling in an ESP course because of their lack of skills in the language and also because they are not familiar with the use of the language. They conclude:

We take the view that the difficulties which the students encounter arise not so much from a defective knowledge of the system of English, but from an unfamiliarity with English use, and that consequently their needs cannot be met by a course which simply provides further practice in the composition of sentences, but only by one which develops a knowledge of how sentences are used in the performance of different communicative acts (p. 10-11).

It is therefore not enough that members of the business world are exposed to the English language. They must learn to use language successfully in a meaningful context in order to employ it in similar ways during professional interactions that take place outside of the classroom. The great need for courses taught to a professional public at a reasonable cost serves as the departure point of this thesis, which focuses on a model for an ESP curriculum with a focus on business. The *Getting Down to Business model* targets learners interested specifically in language used in the workplace. It consists of four courses that focus on both linguistic functions and cultural knowledge and addresses the needs of students at the levels novice-low through intermediate-mid according to the ACTFL proficiency guidelines. The *Getting Down to Business* model is a compact, four-semester structure that suits the needs of students operating within professional time constraints and with limited funds.^v

In the following pages, the philosophy, structure, and course content of the proposed curriculum will be highlighted. In Chapter Two, I discuss the basis for ESP course design provided by researchers over the past fifteen years. In Chapter Three, I provide a theoretical foundation for the model based on the shifts in language pedagogy and the subsequent emergence of four main documents: the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning, the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, the Integrated Performance Assessments (IPAs), and the Languages Across the Curriculum teaching initiative. In Chapter Four, I discuss the overarching curricular design, the materials needed at each stage of instruction, and the role of classroom pedagogy, assessment, and educational technology in the program as a whole. Chapter Four also focuses more specifically on individual courses by outlining the course methodology, which is driven

by a communicative praxis-oriented approach to language teaching, as well as the content of courses, the integration of practical experience (real tasks), and course materials. In Chapter Five, I outline the application of the model in the field and discuss implications for future research.

It is my intention that this thesis will serve as a road map for educators, both in Brazil and in other countries, who wish to implement an ESP curriculum. After providing a theoretical overview of similar Language for Professional Purposes courses in the world language context, I apply the pedagogical rationales and theories to underscore the importance of the curricular model I propose. Beyond this initial theoretical overview, my analysis is praxis-oriented, with concrete examples of course structure and materials that can be immediately adapted by educators wishing to integrate such professionally-focused courses into their language programs.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

The idea of ESP courses has been around since the late 1960s. Hutchinson & Waters (1987) claim that the demand for an international language originated with the end of the Second World War when the United States became a hegemonic nation creating a “world unified and dominated by two forces – technology and commerce” (p. 6). The role of international language, they state, fell to English:

The effect was to create a whole new mass of people wanting to learn English, not for the pleasure or prestige of knowing the language, but because English was the key to the international currencies of technology and commerce. Previously the reasons for learning English (or any other language) had not been well defined....but as English became the accepted international language of technology and commerce, it created a new generation of learners who knew specifically why they were learning a language – businessmen and -women who wanted to sell their products, mechanics who had to read instruction manuals, doctors who needed to keep up with developments in their field and a whole range of students whose course of study included textbooks and journals only available in English (p. 6).

With these developments in varied fields and in different parts of the world, the demands for English language teaching increased dramatically. Hutchinson & Waters also point out that since the subject of ESP first arose, it has gone through different phases and, depending on the target situation, it has focused on different language skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

A great deal of research has been done about ESP course design in different settings (Edwards, 2000; Sifakis, 2003; Brown & Lewis, 2003; Esteban & Canado, 2004; Aiguo, 2007; Zhang, 2007; Holmes & Celani, 2006; Celani, 2008). Little attention, however, has been paid to the make-up of beginner ESP curricula. Ultimately, my objective is to draw attention to the fact that there is a growing need for a novice learner ESP curriculum; therefore, curriculum developers must invest in it. It is important to remark here that, for the current study, the term “novice learner” refers to the ACTFL proficiency scale, which will be discussed later. The projected audience for this study is the learner who has had little exposure to the language and, therefore, falls under the novice-low proficiency level when starting the program. The following literature review gathers examples of ESP curriculum development experiences, all of which began with a needs analysis or needs assessment (the terms will be used interchangeably throughout this thesis) survey, to demonstrate the growing need for ESP courses for learners of English.

According to Berwick (1989), planning in educational systems normally begins with a discussion of purposes and sources of curricula (p. 49). New perspectives on language curriculum planning throughout history have reflected the developments in applied linguistics, changes in educational practices, and/or the specifics of a target situation. More recently, other researchers have reinforced the idea of needs analysis as an integral part of ESP course design (Graves, 2000; Johns & Price-Machado, 2001; Nunan, 2001). Needs analysis is important because it helps to shape program goals and consequently informs teaching objectives which, in turn, will serve as basis for lesson planning, materials selection, and assessment. Graves (2000) provides a thorough

definition of needs analysis (or needs assessment) for the purpose of curriculum and course development:

...needs assessment is a systematic and ongoing process of gathering information about students' needs and preferences, interpreting the information, and then making course decisions based on the interpretation in order to meet the needs (p. 98).

She reinforces this idea by advocating for learners' participation in the teaching-learning process and assuming that "needs are multi-faceted and changeable" (p. 98). Hutchinson & Waters (1987) argue that learners in both a General English (GE) course and an ESP course have needs; however, what distinguishes students in one course from the other, they say, is the "awareness of the need," a fact that is particularly apparent in adult students seeking instruction in English for professional purposes (p. 53). The projected students of the current study, too, would demonstrate this awareness; they are novice learners who are in the work market and need English language training in order to carry out tasks in the workplace.

Hutchinson & Waters (1987), Graves (2000), and Nunan (2001) agree upon the fact that Munby's (1978) *Communicative Syllabus Design* book pioneered the research on needs assessment. Each one of these researchers, however, pinpoints different aspects of needs analysis. Hutchinson & Waters make a distinction between *target situation needs (necessities, lacks, and wants)*, or what the learner needs to do in the target situation, and *learning need*, or what the learner needs to do in order to learn (p. 54). They also suggest a number of methods to collect data such as questionnaires, interviews,

observation, gathering of texts, and informal consultations with sponsors and learners (p. 58).

Graves emphasizes the cyclical nature of needs assessment, which involves a set of *decisions*, *actions*, and *reflections* – deciding on what information to get and why, when, how, and from whom; acting on the information; and evaluating the outcomes (p. 100). The cyclical nature refers the fact that needs assessment may occur at different points in the course: prior to the start (pre-course), during its initial stages, and/or throughout the course. Pre-course assessment, for example, helps identify areas that need to be addressed in a given course as well as collects information about learners' needs, which in turn determines the content of the course or the methodology to be used. This type of needs assessment can be followed up on during the first few weeks of class with a second needs assessment to help shape the course structure. Both of these types of needs assessment rely on ongoing needs analysis. It is through ongoing needs analysis that one can evaluate the effectiveness of the content, the methodology, and the assessments of the course (p. 110). In order to gather this informative data, Graves also recommends the use of questionnaires and interviews but adds to the list grids, charts, and lists; writing activities (i.e. letter to a friend); group discussions, and ranking activities. As ongoing needs assessment methods, she proposes that one utilize feedback sessions, dialogue journals, learning logs or learning dialogues, and portfolios, all of which match a particular setting, population, or purpose (pp. 114-120). Questionnaires, for instance, can be tailored to a specific group, such as prospective ESP students with the purpose of identifying their desired goals.

Brindley (1989) elaborates on the notion of *subjective* (attitudes and expectations) and *objective* (factual information) needs when preparing a needs assessment plan. The ability to write a business letter is, for instance, an example of a subjective learner need whereas information such as learners' age and language proficiency are examples of objective needs. In other words, one has to keep in mind what kind of information to gather, with what purpose, and what the best way to gather it is. Johns & Price-Machado (2001) suggest job-shadowing as a helpful strategy to explore linguistic, cultural, and pragmatic features of a job. They also recommend multiple intelligence and learning style surveys of students to determine student production (p. 49).

As these authors show, needs analysis is an integral part of ESP course design. The researchers provide a vast array of methods to conduct needs assessment; however, they all agree upon the fact that there is a most suitable method depending on the type of information to be collected and with what purpose. As shown below, the concrete implementation of needs analysis results can be seen in a variety of ESP courses based on learner responses; none of the needs analysis surveys, however, are applied to an EFL model.

Edwards (2000) outlines the course design process in a case study with a group of German bankers whose aims and objectives for the course were defined based on an interview between the school director (for whom the author worked) and the employer. The instructor (the author himself) conducted an informal needs analysis during the first day of classes – which consisted of general questions posed to the students about their past learning experiences and future objectives in an attempt to trace some specific objectives for the course as well as to make a decision about how the course should be

structured. Based on the initial phase needs analysis and on the school director's suggestions, the course designer decided to focus on spoken English used in business meetings and negotiations (p. 292). The goal of the course was to boost the participants' self-confidence when speaking in public (in a meeting), although the course would also allow some room for listening with a particular focus on "small talk," writing reports, and reading articles related to banking. The course was designed to build general and specialist vocabulary. The program offered what the authors called "high surrender value," which implies that the students would be able to use the activities they performed in class immediately in their workplace (p. 292). Edwards describes his syllabus as multi-layered and consisting of functions, topics, and vocabulary. He found it to be a valuable experience to re-institute a few textbooks that were already on the market to compose the course materials; he also used articles from magazines such as *The Economist*. The class met for three hours per week. The course instructor adopted a communicative approach, focusing more on meaning rather than form, with deductive presentations of grammatical structures – a method already familiar to the learners. The students were often encouraged to guess the meaning of new pieces of vocabulary from the context in order to become more familiar with different structures and text genres. Edwards positively evaluates his course design since, according to him, the ESP curriculum requires flexibility and authenticity. In his course, he believes he achieved these two objectives by carrying out a needs analysis and tailoring the course to his student's expectations. Authenticity was incorporated into the course through the use of different textbooks and articles from well-reputed target-language magazines.

Edwards provides a fine foundation for ESP course and syllabus design by raising crucial issues such as flexibility and authenticity. He also reports that his students had learned the English language in some capacity prior to taking his course, and "...had an impressive vocabulary and store of idioms..." (p. 291). This fact might have contributed to the successful completion of the course or even the success of the course design. In contrast to Edward's study, the target audience of the current study has had little English language learning experience, which requires a more customized syllabus. Although Edwards failed to provide the results of the needs analysis in his study, it offers a number of points (i.e., flexibility, adaptability, and language experience) that are useful for the current study.

Sifakis (2003) proposes an integrative model for ESP teaching. His model takes into account learner characteristics as well as the role of the ESP instructor. He uses the elements of the learners' profiles to lay out his suggestions for ESP practices. Sifakis builds a rationale around the notion of "adulthood", which he describes as adult behavior and not simply an age (p. 202). For him adulthood means that students are generally "mature, in relation to their personal growth and development; autonomous, responsible decision-makers; motivated, having to do with their degree of voluntary participation and involvement; and critical, having ability to make judgments based on experience" (p.198). Sifakis concludes that the ESP learner is considered a 'student participant' rather than a passive subject (p. 204). Sifakis' two-sided model has important points with regard to the classroom, (a) that ESP learners are student participants and (b) that the ESP teacher has a dual role – that of teacher and that of counselor. The latter term should encompass actions to enhance "learners' learning and studying needs" as well as sessions

of self-confidence boosting in personal issues (p. 209). In order to address the learners' portion of the curriculum, the author suggests that an overall needs analysis be carried out to gather information about the following: (a) personal vocational experience (attitudes toward their profession); (b) general learning theory (learning beliefs); (c) personal language learning experience and beliefs (second language learning background); (d) learning strategies (attitudes toward teacher-centered, subject-centered, and learner-centered approaches); and (e) decision-making abilities (problem-management). The teacher, Sifakis explains, is in charge of engaging the learners in communicative task-based activities in order to enhance their problem-solving skills. Furthermore, the author claims that the teacher has to act as a counselor as well as help students in their new learning situation or in the event of a personal crisis.

The theoretical rationale of Sifakis's model offers a very good foundation for ESP curriculum design. The needs analysis survey is crucial especially in ESP curricula because, as the author states, the "ESP domain is characterized by wide diversity – different learners, different classes, different needs, different syllabi, different teachers (p. 197)." The use of a task-based methodology is also a key factor in providing learners with real practices of the ESP arena (like Business English). Nevertheless, the author does not provide a materials design section in order to illustrate how these concepts of the adult learner can be translated well into classroom practices. With regard to the current study, another weakness of Sifakis's model is the fact that it does not account for novice students. According to the author, "ESP teaching/learning situations can be considered a part of post-initial education, since they presuppose, in most cases, some basic linguistic competence in the target language" (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998 cited in Sifakis,

2003, p. 202), meaning that learners are required to have some English proficiency prior to enrollment in an ESP course. It is important to remark that the prospective learners of the proposed model are expected to have basic knowledge of the language (novice level), but they still need to be trained in business-specific situations and language contexts.

In another study, Brown and Lewis (2003) conducted a study on the role of authentic situations as a basis for course materials, a topic that figures centrally in the materials section of the current study. The authors did a corpus analysis in which they recorded ten hours of authentic conversation in the pay office of a factory. Their objective was to collect oral interactions and use them as a basis for ESP classes. The research questions included the following: (a) what work-related topics are discussed and (b) what similarities there are between the spoken and written vocabulary on the same topics. The participants were a pay clerk (Samoan and English speaker), a manager (English speaker), and shop-floor employees (mostly non-native speakers of English). Of the ten hours of talk, half of it was about non-work topics; therefore, the data was eliminated.

After a careful analysis of the audio material, six topics could be identified: money, job termination, accidents and illness, governmental departments, doctors, and filling out forms. According to the authors, the results imply that this type of corpus analysis, although limited, can be the basis for materials development (p. 96). Also, the fact that fifty percent of the interactions represented social-personal topics, which included husbands and wives, haircuts and leisure activities, etc, entails that such themes should not be ignored in the ESP curriculum design since the ESP learner could be ‘disadvantaged socially’ (p. 97). Brown and Lewis's study initiates a good pedagogical

discussion on the use of corpus-based research practices for materials development and argues for the authenticity of the collected data. It does not, however, lay out how these data could be effectively used in ESP course materials.

Esteban & Cañado (2004) conducted research on the use of the case-method in ESP and found interesting results. First, they define the “case-method” as “a technique based on analysis, discussion, and decision-making...[in which students] have to reflect, interact, take responsibility, solve problems, and determine possible courses of action and their consequences” (p. 138). Flexibility and adaptability are some of the advantages they cite in this method, and the authors claim that the case method narrows the gap between theory and practice because it allows learners to observe how the content learned in class can be applied to real world situations (p. 138-140). Thus, it presents learners with real situations, helping foster their decision-making skills. Esteban & Cañado made use of existing material in the Foreign Commerce course they had taught by adapting a published case study to better suit their students’ needs. Assessment was not mandatory in any of the modules, but informal evaluation was carried out in order to prove the effectiveness of the curricular innovation. The assessment materials included teacher observations, corrected student diary entries and written exercises, self-evaluation, and note-taking. Course assessment was conducted via teacher and student feedback, both direct and indirect (p. 154). Overall the results were very positive given that learners improved their decision-making, reading, and oral skills as well as self-confidence throughout the process. This study provides a substantial ongoing assessment foundation for ESP. As the authors state, however, case studies “normally involve a high level of linguistic difficulty, and generally require extensive reading (p. 140).” The methodology

proposed by Esteban & Cañado would not suit the linguistic level of the audience of the current study. As mentioned elsewhere in this chapter, the *Getting Down to Business* curriculum focuses on the novice learner who does not possess the linguistic knowledge to carry out tasks that require a higher level of proficiency in the target language.

In a setting with some similarity to the current study, Aiguo (2007) reports the development of an ESP curriculum based on aviation English in China where, similar to Brazil, college students often lack sufficient English language skills despite the fact that they have received instruction in the language since grade school (p. 123). Likewise, China has opened up its international relations policies, which has created a great demand on the field of English language for special purposes. The expectations of the huge aviation market in China have created a need for the development of new courses. This segment of business requires its workers to possess a good command of the English language. Learners are motivated to learn the language because it will better their chances of getting a professional promotion by the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC). Aiguo claims that each ESP teaching situation should have its own methodology and curriculum given the variability of contexts, content, and objectives. Aiguo describes some very insightful perspectives on ESP curriculum development in the Chinese context, which may be applicable to the context of the current study. First, the author argues that, despite its popularity in the Chinese setting, the grammar-translation method is not beneficial to ESP learners since it is “teacher-centered and students’ roles are rather passive (p.123).” By learning through this type of methodology, according to Aiguo, the students acquire an “ossified” language which most likely prevents them from being able to communicate in the target language (p. 123). As for the proper teaching

methodology, Aiguo recommends a contrastive approach combined with a linguistic analysis (which is going through an experimental stage now in China) because the Chinese learners usually lack enough English language skills to adapt to foreign ESP teaching methodologies (p. 124). The author also considers needs analysis to be a “...central element in ESP curriculum design. To teach ESP in China, one must take into consideration students’ English proficiency, their learning backgrounds and the proper use of teaching methods (p. 124).” The methodology suggested above seems to be working well according to the responses to a questionnaire passed out by the author. Another valid point that Aiguo makes is about the use of technology in the ESP classroom. Besides the technologies that are most important (like slides, figures, pictures, etc), Aiguo recommends, for example, the use of computer for self-study, by which the students find dialogues, *cloze*-tests, multiple-choice exercises, among other activities for practice in their free time.

Ultimately one can relate the challenges in designing ESP courses for the Chinese setting to the proposal of the *Getting Down to Business* curriculum. Aiguo states that the biggest challenge for ESP curriculum design in China is the learners’ low proficiency in English. The program that Aiguo describes includes a General English (GE) section aligned with a content-based aviation linguistics course so that the participants can keep up with the workload. While Aiguo advocates for the design of ESP courses in order to be able to “communicate throughout the world as far as technology is concerned (p.127),” one could argue that given the urgent need and the lack of sufficient English language skills, the ESP curriculum must supply general English skills for

communication because learners, at least those in Brazil, cannot afford to spend two years in a general English class.

Also in the Chinese context, Zhang (2007) traces the history of ESP with a business focus in China and points out that ESP courses have adopted a content-based approach, which means that the course is “organized around the content or information that the students will acquire, rather than around a linguistic or other type of syllabus” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 204). After establishing a definition of ESP and ‘language-as-a-discourse’, the author reaches a ‘working definition’ of Business English:

Business English involves the teaching of the system of strategic communication in the social and economic domain of international business in which participants, adopting/adapting business conventions and procedures, make selective use of lexico-grammatical resources of English as well as visual and audio semiotic resources to achieve their communicative goals via the writing modality, speaking modality, and/or multi-modality (p. 406).

Due to the complexity of the Business English branch of ESP, which teaches strategic communication rather than language forms only, Zhang proposes an integrated approach to teaching Business English. The curricular framework is composed of three interdependent parts: (a) business knowledge; (b) business practice; and (c) business discourse. In terms of business knowledge, learners get acquainted with business practices such as international business, professional etiquette, and business ethics. The author suggests lectures, seminars, and computer-assisted learning as a good way to run these courses (p. 408). With regard to business practice, Zhang points out that the use of computers with interactive software gives rich experience in business practices in which

Chinese should be the medium of instruction. Business discourse sets the tone for the development of the two courses described above by improving study skills in genres such as academic writing, leading discussions, and delivering presentations.

On the one hand, Zhang provides useful insights into Business English curriculum design by making an argument for the use of content-based instruction with an integrated approach for the teaching of the sociolinguistic features of Business English and for the introduction of real business practices in the curriculum (i.e., a task-based approach).^{vi}

On the other hand, the author does not provide ways to assess the learners throughout the three interdependent modules, nor does he mention whether the framework proposed was implemented successfully. Another drawback of the framework is the use of the native language as a medium of instruction for the business practice module. As a general rule, EFL learners (the audience for the current study) expect to use the target language as much as possible in the classroom (for more details on the importance of using the target language in the EFL classroom see Oliveira, 2005).

The role of ESP courses in Brazil has likewise been a long-debated topic. In 1978, a group of practitioners decided to study the ESP approach and its implications for English instruction in the Brazilian context. This ESP movement resulted in the proposal of an ESP approach with a focus on reading for the teaching of English as a foreign language in the Brazilian school system. The Brazilian National ESP Project that Holmes & Celani (2006) describe is collaborative in nature. Over a period of twenty-five years, twenty-three universities from around Brazil were brought together to discuss language teaching matters and produce documents for the successful project journal, *The ESPecialist*. Because most of the participants were college-level instructors, the ultimate

project goal was to come up with a unified methodology for the teaching of English (in their case, English for Academic Purposes – EAP) in the participating universities. Moreover, the project participants also aimed to design authentic and meaningful materials for the Brazilian context. The project design parameters shed interesting light on the aims of this study. The project heads were very much concerned with both the originality and the “ownership” of design/ideas of the project. The parameters were the following: (a) no central or national textbook would be produced; (b) no ready-made ‘imported’ methodology would be used; (c) materials production would be based on local resources; (d) no one-to-one counterparts would be identified or trained; (e) a center of communication would be established; (f) the project would be open to the admission of other institutions and people; and (g) there would be no anxiety to obtain central support at the Ministry of Education (Holmes & Celani, 2006, p. 112).^{vii} The project had an EAP focus with special emphasis on the skills of reading and writing.

In terms of language methodology, the authors used a ‘top-down’ approach because it was the predominant reading approach at the time and according to the authors, it “worked in the classroom.” At the time the project was being launched there was a common belief, based on the work of psycholinguists, that top-down strategies were the key for reading comprehension. Given their background and their knowledge of words originated from Latin or Greek, the students could apply the methodology r well (p. 118). According to Carrel & Eisterhold (1983), top-down information processing occurs, for instance, when one applies background knowledge (consciously or unconsciously) to what is in view and tries to make sense of it, which makes top-down processing conceptually-driven (p. 557).

This report offers interesting points for the *Getting Down to Business* model because its underlying principles are “authenticity” and “well-informed decisions”. This was evinced the participants determination to design their own materials rather than use textbooks available on the market. During the first year of the project, however, the course they designed had to take a general English shape since the materials had not been prepared yet. The goal of the *Getting Down to Business* model is to provide learners with the language they need to apply readily to their job-related tasks starting with the first course in the series, which makes it different from Celani’s proposal of dedicating the first module of the curriculum to general English instruction.

By discussing the Brazilian National ESP Project (presented above), Celani (2008) intends to address a common misconception about ESP methodology resting on the teaching of reading only. In addition, she analyzes the implementation of ESP courses in the Brazilian educational system. As preparation for the project, the organizers analyzed the PCN thoroughly and came to the conclusion that the document emphasizes the learning of the English language as a whole in order for learners to take part in the world; students are not encouraged to learn just lexical items or grammar structures. That is to say, English is taught for a purpose. The Brazilian Ministry of Education “wanted to offer a democratic, non-elitist and all-inclusive proposal [with the PCN];” therefore, the focus on reading ability would attend to the demands of both public and private schools (Celani, 2008, p.417). Celani argues that an emphasis on reading ability is feasible because of the prevailing conditions of the educational system in Brazil (general lack of infra-structure, over-sized classes, frequency of instruction, p. 421). Celani builds an argument to improve the quality and retention of English language instruction in Brazil

through a focus on reading ability (an ESP approach to ELT, she believes), and she sees the ESP approach to teaching English in Brazil as the best solution for addressing the low level of English language proficiency of high school graduates. She proposes an ESP approach focused on reading ability since, according to her, "...the result of trying to teach the 'full' language frequently ends up in not teaching any language at all (p. 413)." In this way, students gain basic knowledge in the English language, which might put them at ease when entering the work force.

Celani suggests the ESP approach to English language teaching (ELT) in the Brazilian educational context in an attempt to fulfill the goals stated in the PCN document and in the LDB. She first calls attention to the fact that ESP became a subject of discussion in the Brazilian academic environment when a group of scholars from twenty universities throughout Brazil carried out a needs analysis survey in order to find out what was being done in terms of English language teaching around the country.^{viii} Based on this survey conducted in 1978, the group of practitioners discovered that only two universities were developing activities involving spoken language in two courses taught by foreign lecturers. The group of scholars organized seminars in order to design the National ESP Project, which, based on the needs analysis survey, was designed around reading skills. As co-investigator of the project, Celani reports that a misconception of ESP was then found among ESP practitioners. Most of them believed that the ESP approach to teaching English would refer solely to the teaching of reading skills. Despite the efforts of the investigators of the project, as scholars from universities around Brazil joined the project and were asked to define ESP, the study's organizers realized that the longstanding misconceptions about ESP courses remained. Some

examples of the answers stated by ESP practitioners who joined the project included: “...a method of teaching reading”, or “...an easy (a special) technique to teach reading” (Celani, 2008, p. 414 – her translation).

Celani's proposal is interesting in that the learners acquire some general knowledge of English for university entrance exams in which reading ability is the one emphasized. This kind of ESP approach, however, is too general and will not prepare the learners to perform certain tasks in which their aural/oral skills, for instance, are put to the test. Celani's project corroborates the claim made earlier in this thesis about the low proficiency levels of Brazil's high school graduates, which motivated this study. Her proposal, however, deals with current high school students and does not account for the learners who have already graduated from high school and are entering the work force without business language training, a gap which the *Getting Down to Business* model addresses.

This literature review presents what has been done in the ESP field in terms of curriculum development and course design. The studies and reports make insightful contributions to the literature on ESP and reveal that much has been done in the field of EFL teaching. Indeed, the research conducted on the subject reveals that ESP is an area that deserves attention. The various studies pull different aspects of the introductory needs analysis survey in the beginning of the literature review. Edwards (2000) and Brown & Lewis (2003) focus more on the target situation needs and on the reflective side of assessing needs. The last two use corpus analysis as a data collection method. Sifakis' (2003) needs analysis emphasizes the importance that learner characteristics have on ESP course design. Aiguo (2007) looks at the target situation needs as well as subjective and

objective needs of the learner. In spite of the well-organized framework of Zhang's (2007) course, the needs analysis method was not very clear. The studies by Holmes & Celani (2006) and Celani (2008) were based on the National Brazilian ESP Project, which did not have a successful data collection at the beginning and therefore limited an overarching understanding as to how the program was set up.

In conclusion, the *Getting Down to Business* model goes beyond ESP to encompass an EFL curriculum model. Not only does it fill the niche caused by the lack of proper English language training in the Brazilian school system, but it also addresses the needs of the learners who need to use the English language in the workplace. The overview of ELT in Brazil presented in the introduction of this thesis as well as the studies presented above make meaningful and insightful contributions to the “pre-course” needs analysis and therefore, shape the *Getting Down to Business* curriculum (Graves, 2000).

Following Celcia-Murcia, et al. (1995), it is clear that a systematic needs analysis prior to or as part of the curriculum design process is crucial for identifying the general goals of the course or program. Therefore, the *Getting Down to Business* model has used the research from the above studies to narrow down the needs of the ESP learner in Brazil today. As a result, it targets the novice learner with very little English language learning experience who needs to apply the language immediately in the workplace. Another demand of this audience is cost-effectiveness; the *Getting Down to Business* model permits the motivated learner to go from a novice to an intermediate-mid proficiency benchmark in a two-year instructional period. Because the model addresses a novice through intermediate ESP audience who desires a curriculum with a focus on business,

the syllabus must contain elements that involve all language skills in a variety of situations. The model also includes immediately applicable materials for classroom teaching. As follows, based on the factors identified in the pre-course needs analysis, the philosophy of the *Getting Down to Business* model will be outlined.

CHAPTER 3

Designing an ESP Curriculum

In the early 1970s, a perception of language as the vehicle of communication and the concept of communicative competence emerged, which in turn led to the development of new teaching methodologies. This new view of language encompassed language structures, the understanding of socio-cultural aspects of the target language, and strategic knowledge of the language that the learner utilizes in order to interact with others (Canale & Swain, 1980). This language shift was essentially a pendulum swing from grammar-based approaches to language teaching to a focus on communication instead. As a result of this development of communicative methodologies, less emphasis was placed on grammar and accuracy (Celce-Murcia, 2001, p. 3). The *Getting Down to Business* model proposed in this chapter aims for a focus on communication within a business setting with special attention paid to linguistic accuracy. That is to say, this curriculum model strives for communicative competence, to borrow Hymes' term, focusing on two aspects of the model of communicative competence of Canale & Swain (1980): linguistic competence and socio-cultural competence. Although the proposed model emphasizes these two competences foremost, the reader will notice that other competences such as discourse competence and strategic competence also play an important role within the curriculum.

At the end of this chapter, I present the curricular philosophy for the *Getting Down to Business* curriculum, which is informed by (a) the shift in the language teaching paradigm from grammar-based methodologies to communicative approaches to language teaching; (b) the subsequent National Standards for Foreign Language Learning; and (c)

the Languages Across the Curriculum (LAC) approach to curriculum design, which grew out of changing views of language learning stemming from the drafting of the National Standards. Each of these concepts in foreign language teaching methodology directly inform the three main pillars of my model: (a) spontaneous contextualized communication; (b) cultural awareness for the business setting; and (c) praxis-oriented learning. The pillars of the *Getting Down to Business* curriculum emerged from those concepts because they all share the idea that language is a vehicle of communication and that meaningful, contextualized communication takes into consideration aspects of the culture where the target language is spoken. In the language teaching, instructors provide opportunities for contextualized communication through the creation of meaningful tasks for the learners. In addition, the fact that the *Getting Down to Business* applies world languages methodologies to English teaching makes the model unique and innovative.

In the following pages, I discuss theories of communicative competence by Canale & Swain's and Celce-Murcia et al., which encompass linguistic, socio-cultural, strategic, discourse, and actional competences. I then discuss the Standards document and innovative assessment and curricular developments that grew out of it, which have subsequently altered the world language classroom.

Language as a Vehicle of Communication

Communicative Competence

What does it mean to be able to communicate? With the shift in the language teaching paradigm and an emphasis on communication since the early 1970s, there has been a considerable amount of research that has attempted to answer the above question (Candlin, 1978; Hymes, 1972; Savignon, 1972; Savignon, 1997; van Ek, 1976). The term

communicative competence was first introduced by Hymes (1972) who defined it as the ability to use language. According to Hymes, in order to be able to communicate effectively in a language, not only should learners have grammatical knowledge, but they must also know how language is used by its native speakers, that is to say, they must be familiar with the socio-cultural factors inherent to the target language. The notion of communicative competence influences the theories that underlie the communicative approaches to language teaching developed afterward and is believed by many researchers to be the primary goal of language education (see Savignon, 1997, 2001; Brown, 2006).

In the early 1980s, Canale & Swain (1980) proposed the *model of communicative competence*, whose objectives were to provide insight into second language teaching and to allow valid and reliable opportunities for the measurements of second language communication skills (p. 1). Due to its complexity, the model was modified by Canale in 1983 and came to resemble more closely Hymes' proposition that communicative competence refers to the knowledge and skill in using this knowledge in actual communication. The four-component model includes:

- Grammatical competence, which is related to the knowledge of the grammar, lexis, morphology, syntax, semantics, and phonology;
- Sociolinguistic competence, which refers to the knowledge of socio-cultural rules or the knowledge of the appropriateness of meaning;
- Strategic competence, which refers to compensatory skills for communication;
- Discourse competence, which is related to the ability to produce spoken and written texts in different genres.

This explanation of the model reinforces the idea that communicative competence should take into consideration contextual variables as well as the learner's linguistic and compensatory skills.

Celce-Murcia et al added *actional competence* to the model in 1995. This competence refers to the knowledge of speech acts needed to engage in interpersonal exchanges (i.e., greeting, making introductions). Actional competence refers to the ability of a speaker to align the correct linguistic form with his/her intent. Actional competence works together with socio-cultural competence in order for the speaker to create linguistic utterances that are also culturally appropriate. For instance, the two competences work together to help the speaker understand how to make a request of the Chief Executive Officer of one's company in a socially acceptable manner. *Grammatical competence* was renamed *linguistic competence*, but it includes lexis and phonology as well as syntax and morphology similar to Canale & Swain's linguistic competence. In addition, they argue that the content specifications for the models of communicative competence should be detailed enough in order to inform syllabus design, and they emphasize that course developers may choose to emphasize one of the "sub-competencies" over the other ones depending on the needs of the learner. Celce-Murcia, et al. expand this idea as follows:

... 'communicative competence' can have different meanings depending on the learners and learning objectives inherent in a given context. Some components (or sub-components) may be more heavily weighted in some teaching-learning situations than in others. Therefore, during the course of a thorough needs analysis, a model such as ours may be adapted and/or reinterpreted according to

the communicative needs of the specific learner group to which it is being applied (p. 30).

In certain contexts, for instance in ESP, competences like *socio-cultural* or *strategic* competences should have more emphasis in the curriculum because, in a business setting for example, an appropriate delivery of the message will rely on the specific rules of the target culture. The general clientele of the model proposed here, for instance, needs to have social aspects of business interactions incorporated into the curriculum so that the learners become familiarized with the social rules of the business context (i.e., the importance of small talk before a meeting, idioms related to business, etc).

Many curriculum developers have envisioned communicative competence in different ways and have devised diverse curricula based on these views. Graham & Beardsley (1986), for example, consider communication a major component of their curriculum design. In a pharmacy course model, the researchers emphasize a focus on fluency rather than on accuracy, with role-play activities of speech functions (i.e., reassuring, socializing, requesting feedback, etc) which are part of the reality of pharmacists and addressed the needs of the target learners. They do note, however, that communication is sustained by grammar and lexicon; therefore, these subcomponents should appear in the curricular model as well.

In Yamada & Moeller's (2000) pen pal letter exchange project for students of Japanese, communicative competence is considered an essential component of the curricular model since it accounts for the linguistic and socio-cultural aspects of language. The project enhances communicative competence by creating a real world situation in which the student participants are able to engage. The authors recognize,

however, that the negotiation of meaning – asking for clarification, confirming, etc – may be compromised since the time that one takes to write a letter and receive a response can be longer than, for instance, writing an e-mail. Therefore, Yamada & Moeller maintain that, perhaps, an e-mail exchange could, on the one hand, augment the negotiation of meaning, but, on the other hand, it could harm the content of what is written since an individual has more time to read and respond to a letter than to an e-mail (p. 29). The idea of the message exchange is useful in enhancing learners' communicative competence, but the authors did not provide proven data to claim that the e-mail could harm the content of the message. Actually, e-mails would be faster and would increase the negotiation of meaning (i.e., asking for clarification, confirming, or rephrasing) and consequently augment the learner's communicative competence.

The models described above incorporate real-world applications in foreign language instruction; the letter-exchange project and the pharmacy role-play activities are true representations of tasks performed in the real world and therefore are very useful in teaching strategies for meaningful communication. This emphasis on authentic language use is very valuable for the *Getting Down to Business* model because its goal is to provide learners with tools for replicable work-related tasks. The ultimate outcome for the *Getting Down to Business* model is to provide an immediate application in the real world of business; therefore, pedagogies that focus on the various aspects of communicative competence such as socio-cultural competence and linguistic competence are essential to the *Getting Down to Business* model.

With the high demands of the current global market, a communicative approach to ESP teaching is very beneficial because it provides opportunities for learners to engage

in meaningful interactions that can be replicated in real-world type of situations, be it of an academic or work nature. As researchers (Graham & Beardsley, 1986; Yamada & Moeller, 2000) have pointed out, through communicative tasks that simulate real-world situations, learners are able to improve most aspects of communicative competence – more specifically the linguistic, socio-cultural, and strategic competences – and achieve a high level of proficiency. Nevertheless, it is necessary to observe that linguistic form (or grammatical/linguistic competence) remains a primary aspect of the successful communication of meaning. As a result of the new views of language as a vehicle of communication and of the attempt to shape curricula around proficiency and communication, some curriculum models have de-emphasized linguistic competence. A curriculum based on basic communication alone, however, does not account for the linguistic barriers faced by the beginning learners who do not possess enough target language exposure to activate their knowledge of the social aspects of the language or use compensatory strategies. The *Getting Down to Business* curriculum emphasizes linguistic competence because of the importance of grammatical structures, particularly for the novice learner. Despite the criticism against a solely linguistic approach to language teaching, grammar, and lexicon, one has to be aware that this is an important component of communicative competence and should be addressed in the language curriculum.

Linguistic Competence

Under the umbrella of Canale & Swain's model for communicative competence, grammar knowledge plays a key role. Canale & Swain understand grammatical competence as "...the knowledge of grammar, lexis, morphology, syntax, semantics, and phonology" (1980, p. 30). This means that learners have the ability to recognize and

produce grammatical utterances and use them effectively for communication. Celce-Murcia, et al. renamed the grammatical component *linguistic competence* (a term which I will employ throughout this study). For them, the component consists of the same areas as in the Canale & Swain's model (1980) – grammar, lexis, morphology, syntax, semantics, and phonology.

Litwack (1979) provides an argument for emphasizing linguistic competence in a skills-based ESP curriculum and maintains that the introduction of grammatical structures should occur as the skills being taught necessitate them. In other words, the sequencing of the materials relies on the skills as applied to situations rather than on grammatical features learned for their own sake. Litwack adopts this view of ESP curriculum design because he believes that the core of the curriculum is based on the needs of the learners or on the skills that they need to succeed in their endeavors, such as responding to audible and/or visual alarms (Litwack used a maintenance technician job to illustrate his points). It is hard to determine in a skills-based course, however, which grammar features best suit the level of the learners. One could therefore assume that the audience for a skills-based ESP course has had some foreign language learning experience. In the *Getting Down to Business* model, grammatical structures are introduced when the meaningful tasks featured require them; the structures are, however, always in line with the learner's grammatical knowledge at the level in question.

In a pharmacy course model, Graham & Beardsley (1986) make the distinction between *fluency* work and *accuracy* work. The authors suggest that a learner's communication is "...aided by greater control over grammatical form and a larger repertoire of lexical items from which to choose" (p. 232). This statement implies that

accurate linguistic production is a significant aspect of language learning that is separate from the notion of proficient language production, which may not always be accurate. Graham & Beardsley incorporate the teaching of grammatical structures and idioms that are relevant for the role-plays they introduce. Their model stresses accuracy (i.e., in terms of the linguistic structures they teach) and fluency (through the use of idiom during the role-play activity).

Arguments for maintaining a focus on grammatical forms are also underscored by Rava (2000). She supports the necessity of a focus on form in her five guidelines for an intermediate curriculum for foreign language teaching. Teachers are expected to (a) be as rigorous as possible; (b) integrate language forms into course content; (c) use authentic cultural material delivered through as many resources as possible; (d) incorporate contemporary multimedia supports and material; and (e) consider the classroom a community for communicative, student-centered activities (p. 344). She explains that linguistic knowledge is crucial for communication; this suggests that she keeps the communicative objectives of the course in mind when grammar and lexicon are introduced. She contrasts her proposal with what she calls the “traditional, teacher-directed REEEP approach: Rule, Example, Exception, Example, Practice through discrete, mechanical exercises.” Rava argues that by adopting an input, practice, review, expansion, and recycling approach to incorporating linguistic competence into the curriculum, “grammar moves from being the primary curricular force to being an important instrument for communication (p. 345).”

Leaver & Bilstein (2000) call attention to the traditional foreign language programs that very often begin with a heavy emphasis on the linguistic component of

communicative competence. The authors advocate that linguistic competence should be aligned with discourse, sociolinguistic, and strategic competences so that learners can “...almost immediately apply their language skills to the work, academic, or in-country environment” (p. 87), which puts forth a linguistic front but aligns it with socio-cultural competence. Similarly, the *Getting Down to Business* model stresses linguistic competence as it functions within socio-culturally appropriate communication. Grammar should be seen as an aid to communication and, therefore, should provide the necessary tools for effective communication in the outside world. The *Getting Down to Business* model acknowledges the important research done on accuracy by incorporating linguistic competence as a primary component of the model along with socio-cultural competence, with the objective of having learners produce meaningful and contextualized speech that is socially appropriate for the situation in which it is produced.

Cultural Awareness – its Role in Sociolinguistic Competence

As discussed above, socio-cultural competence is another primary component of communicative competence that is significant for this study. The necessity of the learner to understand the appropriateness of meaning, or in other words, when to say what to whom, is paramount. For that reason, socio-cultural competence plays an equally strong role in the *Getting Down to Business* model. Below, I detail how this competence functions within the proposed model. In order to show the specific socio-cultural climate of the business world, whose members serve as the primary learner group in this curriculum, socio-cultural competence will be referred to as *cultural awareness in the business setting*.

A great deal of attention has been paid to the influence of culture in education. Before laying out how researchers have dealt with culture in curriculum design, one must begin with a definition of culture. Adler (1993) defines culture generally by stating that "...culture can be defined as any group of people who share a common history and a set of relatively common behaviors and/or communication patterns" (p. 40). In terms of the relationship between culture and education, Erickson (2003), in turn, maintains that "...everything in education is related to culture – to its acquisition, its transmission, and its invention" (p. 32). Erickson then urges educators to take cultural issues into account when designing a curriculum. The first definition provides an overall idea of how different peoples are defined by their cultures, whereas the second definition argues for the influence of culture in education. It is imperative to remark, however, that one of the most important manifestations of culture is language. Therefore, cultural knowledge is a key component in communicating effectively with language.

Adler touches upon the relationship between culture and communication, explaining that the relationship is so strong that one cannot exist without the other. Adler expands his view as follows:

...the meaning inherent in a message transmitted by intercultural communicants may be affected by the differences in social perceptions by either interlocutor, be they student or teacher. Misunderstandings can occur due to the difference in the communicants' socio-cultural backgrounds, which may lead to a different interpretation of the message intended by the encoder (p. 40).

Adler points out that people from different cultures interpret messages in different ways that may cause misunderstandings between the communicants. For this reason, learners

should be aware of instances in which they need to speak and behave formally or informally, interrupt and deal with an interruption, clarify and ask for clarification and so on. For example, I have learned that, in the African society, when someone is giving a presentation or simply talking, the audience is not allowed to interrupt and ask a question for it is considered rude. In Brazil, politely interrupting and asking a question shows engagement in the conversation. All of these aspects are illustrations of the nuances of cultural awareness.

Because of the vital connection between language and communication, culture must be emphasized in the language curriculum in order to equip learners with better understanding of the message being conveyed in a given interaction. Based on my own experience, I have realized that in some cultures students are not allowed to volunteer an answer in class; therefore, in a communication skills class, if the teacher does not address questions to a specific student, the student might not respond. In other cultures, students are never allowed to disagree with an older person or a person of authority, like a teacher. Therefore, in a debate-based lesson, one could assume it would be hard for these students to present arguments if they differ from the ones presented by the teacher and/or classmates.^{ix}

In conclusion, all of the aspects of communicative competence and its attention to linguistic competence and sociolinguistic competence are guiding principles for this study. In particular, the interaction between linguistic and socio-cultural competence became a primary feature of the foreign language classroom in the 1980s. The interplay between the two serves as the underlying principle for the model of foreign language instruction and the documents developed to support classroom methodology that form the

framework of this study. The National Standards for Foreign Language Education drafted by ACTFL, the ACTFL Performance Guidelines in 1996, and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, published in 2001 by the Council of Europe are important documents demonstrating the interplay between linguistic form and cultural awareness in the classroom. The movement away from grammar-based methods and a call for a stronger focus on communication motivated the production of these documents, which started to set benchmarks in terms of language proficiency and performance (National Standards, 1996, p. 7 & CEFRL, 2001, p. 5). In the same way, the National Standards, the ACTFL Performance Guidelines and the Common European Framework shaped this study with regard to curricular objectives, course expectations, and proficiency levels.

The National Standards, the ACTFL Performance Guidelines, and the Common European Framework

While the shifts in language teaching paradigms reveal approaches to answer why foreign languages are taught and how, the *National Standards for Foreign Language Education* play a significant role in defining content (or the “what”).^x Since 1996, when the document was first drafted, the National Standards have played an important role in the teaching of foreign languages in the United States and throughout the world because they advocate communication as the basis for language teaching and learning. The statement of philosophy in the revised *Standards*’ drafted in 1999 reads:

Language and communication are at the heart of the human experience. The United States must educate students who are linguistically and culturally equipped to communicate successfully in a pluralistic American society and abroad. This

imperative envisions a future in which ALL students will develop and maintain proficiency in English and at least one other language, modern or classical.

Children who come to school from non-English backgrounds should also have opportunities to develop further proficiencies in their first language (p. 7).

The philosophy of the National Standards serves as an ideal statement of student expectations for the *Getting Down to Business* curriculum because its focus is to equip learners with the linguistic tools for life in a globalized world. The student expectations listed in the National Standards are interdisciplinary by design and therefore also meet the needs of non-traditional learners taking language courses to prepare them for the workplace. In addition, as stated in the Standards document, regardless of one's profession – business person, poet, nurse, etc –, “one must be able to communicate [meaningfully]” (Standards, 1996, p. 11).

The five premises (the “5 C’s”) foremost to the *National Standards* are *Communication*, which indicates that learners should be involved in language interactions; *Cultures*, which designates that learners should be able to gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures; *Connections*, which specifies that learners should be able to make connections between the target language and other disciplines; *Comparisons*, which underscores that learners should be able to compare the target language and culture with their own; and, finally, *Communities*, which states that learners should be able to participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world. For the proposed model, four of these principles in particular play an important role. First, communication serves as the foundation of any world language course taught today, given that learners are acquiring the language in order to employ it during interactions

with others as part of their daily working and private lives. Second, because the business environment has its own peculiarities (formal versus informal, proper attire, etc), the concept of culture (i.e., the business culture) plays a crucial role in the program. Third, the *Comparisons* principle becomes an essential part of the model because the learners make comparisons between the language used in business with language structures used in everyday life both in the target culture and their own. They also compare cultural exchanges/interactions in the target culture and their own. Finally, through the implementation of the *Communities* standard, students take what they learn in the Business English courses and employ them immediately in their work transactions and hopefully continue to develop their English language skills as a lifelong process.

While the *National Standards* delineate the “what” in foreign language teaching and learning, the *ACTFL Performance Guidelines* depict “how well” learners should do the “what”, or, in other words, they “describe language outcomes for students who begin instruction at different entry points” (ACTFL website). The *Performance Guidelines* are organized around three modes of communication – interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational; three benchmark levels - novice, intermediate, and pre-advanced; and six domains of performance – comprehensibility, comprehension, language control, vocabulary usage, communication strategies, and cultural awareness. These *Guidelines* call for an integrated assessment instrument, the *Integrated Performance Assessment* (IPA), an assessment project initiated by ACTFL that involved educators and students throughout the United States.

The IPA evaluates student performance in each of the modes of communication and is therefore composed of three tasks (one per mode), which revolve around a single

theme or content area and that build upon one another based on teacher feedback. To make the most of teacher feedback, the IPA is administered in a three-part format. First, students are presented with the interpretive part of test for which they complete a task based on a reading or listening text. After the completion of this task, the instructor gives students feedback on their strengths and weaknesses. The second step is the interpersonal task, which involves two-way spontaneous interaction (i.e., a discussion, an interview, a phone call) based on the same theme presented in the interpretive segment. After students receive feedback from the instructor on their performance in the interpersonal segment, they proceed to the presentational part of the IPA, which encompasses one-way, prepared-language in written or spoken discourse (IPA description from ACTFL website). The IPA assessment instrument is designed to evaluate performance in terms of whether it meets expectations, exceeds expectations, or does not meet expectations for the task. Samples of IPAs from the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) at the University of Minnesota are provided in the table below. Further discussion of the IPAs and their role in the *Getting Down to Business* model will be presented in Chapter Four. ^{xi}

Table 1. Sample IPAs from CARLA.

IPA Mode IPA Level	Interpretive	Interpersonal	Presentational
Novice-high	Students read a story about an event in a neighborhood from a newspaper (or magazine). Then, they complete a worksheet to check their understanding.	Students work in pairs to draw a blueprint or map of their neighborhood using a large piece of paper. Using the target language, students will use their ideas from their assignment to negotiate and reach agreement on what should be in the neighborhood they are designing jointly, the location of the buildings, parks, transportation, streets and recreational places.	Students make a brochure advertising the neighborhood they constructed with your partner. Each student is asked to write two-paragraphs about the neighborhood for the brochure. In paragraph one, they describe the neighborhood they constructed and in the second paragraph, they will tell why they would like to live in the neighborhood.
Intermediate-low	Read descriptions of several people in a teen magazine from the target culture. Now, match the descriptions to the pictures of the people. After you complete the matching, decide which person you would like to meet and why. Prepare to give specific reasons for your choice.	Students will share their thoughts about why they were treated the same or differently in school. They will also discuss why they felt the way they did. Finally, they will discuss how clothing influences people's impressions of one another.	Write a three-paragraph essay: <i>Clothes Tell a Story</i> , reflecting on your experiences wearing a different style of clothing. In paragraph one, explain what you wore and why you chose this outfit. In paragraph two, summarize how people reacted to your new look. In paragraph three, discuss what you learned from the experience. Do clothes tell a story?
Intermediate-mid	Students read a legend from the target culture in class and fill out a worksheet. The worksheet could ask students to identify the main character, the main point of the story, and one or two supporting details by underlining, or numbering the appropriate words.	In groups of four, students will tell about their favorite stories and answer questions. The questions the students answered the previous night, gave them an opportunity to reflect on their favorite story. Making notes provided students with some "thinking time" to be better prepared to participate in the conversation.	Draw a sequence of five pictures depicting the main events of a legend or story. Provide a heading and dialogue for each frame.
Intermediate-high	Students read an article about smoking, stress, eating habits, fitness, driving habits or work and school schedules among young people in the target culture and fill out a worksheet.	In pairs, students discuss the article and ask their partner's opinion about the article. Students are to converse for at least 3 but no more than 4 minutes. Student's conversations are recorded.	Students write a letter to the editor of the [language] class newsletter expressing their opinion about the topic as it relates to young people's lives and what society can do to help students live healthier and better balanced lives.

The National Standards and the ACTFL Performance Guidelines support the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines*, which are widely recognized as a proficiency measurement tool in foreign language teaching and learning. The *Guidelines* are designed separately for each of the four skills – reading, writing, speaking, and listening. They

have been tested and retested, revised, and refined by several accredited educational institutions. The latest version of the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines for Speaking*, for instance, establish a descending order of performance achievement rather than an ascending one so that the focus of performance is the next level for which the learner strives instead of the level itself. This means that learners may be able to perform a task suitable to the level above their current level, but with some impediments (Refer to Appendix A for the complete ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines).

When learners achieve the **Superior** level, they are expected to communicate with accuracy and fluency, both in formal and informal settings, from both concrete and abstract perspectives. At the end of the **Advanced** level, learners are able to perform tasks with linguistic ease, confidence, and competence in all time frames. When learners achieve the **Intermediate** benchmark level, they are able to converse with ease and confidence in routine tasks for the intermediate level. Finally, when learners reach the **Novice** level, they are expected to handle communicative tasks at the Intermediate level, but are unable to sustain performance at that level.

In order to align language learning in Europe with trends in the United States, in 2001, the Council of Europe published the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFRL) in which a common set of standards for language teaching and learning across European countries was established. The document not only identifies common goals and principles for professionals working in the field of language teaching in Europe, but it also provides more transparency in the measurement of language proficiency levels. The CEFRL is organized around two main ability areas: (a) general

competences and (b) communicative language competences. The general competence includes the following:

- declarative knowledge – knowledge of the world, socio-cultural knowledge, and intercultural awareness;
- skills and know-how – practical skills and know-how and intercultural skills and know-how;
- ‘existential’ competence – attitudes, motivations, values, beliefs, cognitive styles, and personality factors;
- ability to learn – language and communication awareness, general phonetic awareness and skills, study skills, and heuristic skills.

The communicative language competences include the following:

- linguistic competences – lexical, grammatical, semantic, phonological, orthographic, and orthoepic competences;
- sociolinguistic competence – linguistic markers of social relations, politeness conventions, register differences, and dialect and accent;
- pragmatic competences – discourse and functional competences.

The CEFRL is organized according to three main levels of proficiency: A (Basic User), B (Independent User), and C (Proficient User), with each benchmark divided into two parts, one and two (i.e. A1 and A2). The CEFRL has the following ascending order of proficiency: A1, *Breakthrough* – the learner has limited comprehension and fluency, but is able to express him/herself in simple ways; A2, *Waystage* – the learner is able to communicate in simple terms about familiar topics; B1, *Threshold* – the learner can understand and describe topics familiar to him/her or of personal interest to him/her; B2,

Vantage – the learner can understand the main idea of more complex texts and communicate with a certain degree of spontaneity; C1, *Effective Operational Proficiency* – the learner is able to understand larger complex texts and express him/herself with fluency and not so apparent search for manner of expression; and finally C2, *Mastery* – the learner can understand everything read or spoken to him/her and is able to express him/herself spontaneously even in more complex situations.^{xii}

The *National Standards*, the *ACTFL Performance Guidelines*, and the *CEFR* all share common pedagogical foundations. One of the predominant beliefs common to the documents is language as the vehicle for communication, which presupposes the production of language in meaningful ways. Another similarity is the role of culture in the second/foreign language learning process and how culture affects second/foreign language learning. Moreover, the *National Standards*, the *ACTFL Guidelines*, and the *CERFL* aim at the learners' ultimate academic success and successful debut in the professional world. These philosophies provide the foundation for the three pillars of the *Getting Down to Business* model – contextualized communication, cultural awareness, and praxis-oriented learning.

Numerous researchers have utilized the National Standards as their curriculum theoretical rationale. Yamada & Moeller (2001) did an action research study in order to examine the perceptions and voices of students through a pen pal letter exchange project in a Japanese class. They used the National Standards for Foreign Language Education as the theoretical rationale for their curricular model in which culture was seen as a way to learn about the practices and perspectives of the Japanese culture. For instance, students were able to learn the hierarchical use of language which, in Japanese, changes

depending on the age of the recipient. The authors reported that the results were very positive and that the student participants were able to notice many differences and similarities between American and Japanese culture (p. 30). Projects like these help raise cultural awareness as well as help build skills in the learning of a foreign language. Learners need this kind of experience in order to be able to use language socially and professionally in appropriate ways.

Polansky (2004) utilized the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning to set up a community outreach program for Carnegie Mellon University (Pittsburgh, PA). The two major goals of her curricular model were to have students use the target language within and beyond the school setting and for personal enjoyment and enrichment (p. 368). The student participants engaged in activities with their respective assigned communities (e.g., French, German, and Japanese) that involved learning about the culture in order to increase language proficiency. One of their tasks was, for instance, to write and illustrate stories to others, and to perform for a school or community celebration. Polansky found the experience to be enriching for both students and the community. Being integrated into the culture of the foreign language of study is paramount in order for learners to gain “additional bodies of knowledge” and look “beyond customary borders” (Standards, 1996, p. 7). Thus, by motivating learners to use the target language with natives, Polansky’s model also positively impacts the learners’ fluency since they most likely will be faced with situations in which they have to negotiate meaning in order to convey a message. This type of learning scenario is common to all of the instructional units in the *Getting Down to Business* model. In each chapter, students perform tasks in class that may occur in the workplace, such as dealing

with the merger of their company to a foreign corporation. While the learners are paying attention to the particulars of the culture of their business partner, they are also becoming lifelong learners while using language outside of the classroom, building communities with native speakers and making connections to other areas of life and learning.

Calvin & Rider (2004) report on the Indiana State University (ISU) foreign language curricular model in which, based on the National Standards, a whole section of the program was dedicated to cultural awareness. The authors claim that the ISU foreign language requirement was implemented because of recent research supporting a more pragmatic use of foreign languages such as for professional, business, and private uses (p. 12). The Culture standard was incorporated into the curriculum by “inviting students to examine prejudice toward the target language and target culture and to develop a more accepting attitude about differences” through oral presentations, learning journals, and classroom discussions (pp. 13-15). After the program assessment, the authors considered the changes in the curriculum to be very positive because students’ grades kept improving consistently. The cultural awareness component of this project is particularly important because learners are able to compare the target languages and their own and thus learn about essential behaviors that can make a difference when interacting in real life. Students also discovered applications for their language and culture knowledge across a variety of disciplines in their academic studies.

During the 1990s, an exemplary curricular model, Languages Across the Curriculum (LAC), grew out of the initiatives taken by ACTFL and the documents that accompanied the changes. By focusing on the interdisciplinary nature of language

learning, the LAC curricular model responded to the needs of learners in a global world and emphasized the teaching of cross-cultural communication skills.

Languages Across the Curriculum

What does Languages Across the Curriculum (LAC) mean? According to its “Declaration of the Principles” LAC refers to “a practice through which the study and use of languages take place throughout the curriculum. Its purpose is to prepare students for the cross-cultural and multilingual demands and opportunities of a global society” (Kecht & von Hammerstein (2000, p. 279). The principles of LAC state that (a) the understanding of a culture and its documents and artifacts is greatly enhanced through a knowledge of its language; (b) a curriculum that includes materials in multiple languages provides access to a wider range of perspectives, encourages greater depth of exploration, and opens the door to greater understanding; (c) the use of materials in multiple languages significantly enhances any and all disciplinary inquiry; and (d) Languages Across the curriculum enhances cross-cultural competence and the ability of students to function in an increasingly multicultural society and a globalized economy (p. 280). In summary, the primary objective of LAC is to provide opportunities for language learning and cultural knowledge acquisition (Refer to Appendix C for the full Declaration of Principles of LAC).

Kecht & von Hammerstein (2000) talk about “global context” and point out that there is a lack of national boundaries when it comes to “... international connectivity on financial markets, patterns of migration, climate change, and threats of terrorism” (p. x). The authors conclude that knowledge of the “big picture” has become a basic requisite in today’s world. When considering curriculum design, Kecht & von Hammerstein propose

interdisciplinary connections, changes in language and culture learning, and a languages across the curriculum initiative. Caldwell (2007) urges "... a U.S. postsecondary educational system that is able to prepare students to enter a global society" (p. 463). Hoecherl-Alden (2000) and Oukada (2001) call for a combination of communicative and content-based instruction in order to attend to the needs of the global marketplace. Weigert (2003) depicts the unexplored world of academic skills in business language courses. In her study, she develops a theme and genre-based model for business German. Grandin (2000) claims that the response to this global marketplace is the establishment of a Languages Across the Curriculum (LAC) approach to teaching foreign languages. After a careful analysis of studies carried out by different international corporations, he concludes that "LAC has thus become the basis and inspiration for internationalizing the curriculum, and for establishing new educational partnerships appropriate to careers in the twenty-first century" (p. 7). Through the application of LAC in the foreign language curriculum, the teaching of foreign languages has contributed significantly to the creation of a global citizenry. A foreign language curriculum that is tailored to the communicative needs of learners in the current global market provides the necessary tools for effective international connectivity and for improving learner's knowledge of the big picture.

Weigert (2003) describes the redesign of the Business German program at Georgetown University in which genre and themes were used as the organizing principles for the new curriculum. The objective of the redesign was to create a curriculum oriented in discourse competence, which furthers, according to Weigert, students' cross-communication skills as well as their proficiency level. In order to achieve the new goals of the course, videos, newspaper articles, and magazines were introduced as a way in

which to bring culture into the classroom. This initiative is very important in the culturally-sensitive classroom because it incorporates authentic language use and tasks that are more likely to be replicated in the real world.

Based on its emphasis on the professional and globalized society of the twenty-first century, LAC adopts a content-based approach with a task-driven application, which allows students to be exposed to real-life use of a language (Kecht & von Hammerstein, p. xxi). Some examples of LAC applications include the incorporation of foreign words or short phrases as part of the content, the establishment of “full language immersion” programs, and the creation of fully integrated double majors (i.e., Engineering/German, Nursing and Allied Health/Spanish, etc). Nonetheless, researchers recognize that establishing these LAC programs is a complex process and that they should take into account various intricacies, from students’ proficiency levels to faculty cooperation toward the unified approach to teaching assorted disciplines (pp. xxii-xxiii). These applications can also be translated into the English context by, for example, making use of the target language even in the beginner levels and creating opportunities for extra-curricular “full language immersion” activities (especially because, in the proposed model, learners meet for a limited number of hours per week) in which the learners could have more chances to practice their English language skills per se.

LAC offers a tangible argument for the contextualized teaching of foreign languages; and therefore, it provides a basis for the current study, which proposes a communicative task-based instruction model of English as a foreign language with a focus on business. The main goal of LAC is to apply the learning of languages to different areas of expertise in order to hone students’ academic and professional skills for

the demands of the current market. Ultimately, this approach to the teaching of languages is what the *Getting Down to Business* model strives for in the Brazilian context. Working English skills are paramount for the typical Brazilian professional because the United States is now a major Brazilian trading partner. Grandin concludes:

...corporate leaders expect much more than simple expertise in a given area of specialization from their incoming personnel, and that ability to communicate sensitively and in an informed way with persons from other cultures has now become far more than desirable. Cross-cultural communication skills are an essential part of background required for leadership in business and technology today (p. 6).

The Brazilian educational system does not emphasize the teaching of English enough to prepare the students for the impositions of the job market. Therefore, the creation of a praxis-oriented ESP curricular model supported by LAC principles is crucial.

The *Getting Down to Business* model is informed by the National Standards, the ACTFL Guidelines, and the LAC model through their shared common core principle: cross-cultural multilingual communication that can be employed in a global world. The National Standards and the five “Cs” – Communication, Culture, Connections, Communities, and Comparisons – are represented in the *Getting Down to Business* model by tasks that help learners communicate appropriately in the business setting and allow learners to connect on however a basic level with the international business community. The ACTFL Guidelines lend precision to the *Getting Down to Business* learners’ proficiency levels and therefore to the choice of activities for the individual courses. Finally, the LAC model provides the rationale that the understanding and acquisition of

specific content such as the culture of the business setting has a deep association with language. It underscores the idea that a foreign language can be used in many different modalities and spheres of professional and private life beyond the foreign language classroom.

The Philosophy of the “Getting Down to Business” Course Curriculum

Based on shifts in the profession, the production of the ACTFL documents, and the resulting LAC model, the *Getting Down to Business* curriculum takes three primary aspects as its framework (a) the production of spontaneous contextualized communication in the target language; (b) the development of cultural awareness specific to the business arena; and (c) the applicability of praxis-oriented learning tailored to the workplace. The units of the individual courses in the curriculum reflect the culture of the business setting, such as arriving at the new workplace, making appointments, discussing branches of industry, etc. Because the learners’ goal is to acquire knowledge to be immediately used in work situations, the methodology of the model is praxis-oriented. This type of instruction revolves around meaningful activities and therefore provides learners the possibility of immediately replicating the tasks learned in class in their work setting.^{xiii}

It is important to note that along with socio-cultural competence, linguistic accuracy is an important component of the curriculum. It is important to provide learners with the necessary grammatical structures and lexis because they form the basis for successful learner interactions during the instructional tasks performed in class. It is essential, however, that the explanation, practice, and assessment of the grammatical features of language be done in a contextualized way. Contextualized communication is

imperative because the main goal of the program is to provide learners with the skills to do real-life tasks such as answering the phone, taking a message, ordering a meal, negotiating prices, all of which are meaningful only in context. Because there is a strong relationship between language and culture, familiarity with the business culture becomes one of the pillars of the *Getting Down to Business* curriculum model; it gives learners the context of where the language is spoken. For instance, social hierarchies, politeness, and gestures possess a significant role in business culture, and understanding and/or acting appropriately with international guests is essential. Finally, the praxis-oriented approach brings relevance to the curriculum when, for example, role-playing a restaurant situation in class can be replicated in real life when taking a visiting client for lunch.

While one might expect the CEFRL to serve as the guiding document for the proposed curriculum, based on the natural parallels between the goals of the *Getting Down to Business* curriculum discussed here and the objectives listed in the National Standards, the latter serves as a more valid framework for the model. The CERFL is intended to standardize language qualifications among the participating European countries and also to serve as a reflective document to practitioners and curriculum and materials developers. It does not, however, offer the same five principles (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities) that can be directly applied to and reflected in classroom instruction. Furthermore, the CERFL has not served as the impetus to subsequent developments in foreign language pedagogy such as the IPA and LAC.

Based on a systematic analysis of the manuscripts cited above, the *ACTFL Guidelines* emerge as the preferable document for shaping the *Getting Down to Business*

curriculum because of its foundation in the teaching and learning of foreign languages. Ultimately, the *Getting Down to Business* curriculum discussed here is a foreign language curriculum and therefore should be designed and evaluated that way. While the CEFRL is applicable to students who are faced with more international mobility and have more exposure to the target language, the *ACTFL Guidelines* are guided toward the student who is learning the target language in a classroom environment, and with the hope of employing it in the real world. In addition, the *modes of communication* (to be discussed in Chapter Four), by which the *ACTFL Guidelines* abide, fulfill best the needs of the learners described in this study and, thus, are more easily adaptable to an ESP curriculum.

What's new about the Getting Down to Business model?

The *Getting Down to Business* model strives for “communicative competence”, to use Hymes’ term, and chooses two aspects of the model of communicative competence proposed by Canale and Swain over two decades ago: linguistic competence and socio-cultural competence. The model swings the pendulum once again to a heavier emphasis on linguistic accuracy, but does not exclude the cultural aspects embedded in a language. Given the fact that the National Standards, the ACTFL Guidelines, and the LAC principles facilitate communication, these documents help shape the philosophy of the current model and provide basis for the development of the *Getting Down to Business* curriculum. In addition, on account of the model’s target audience, business English learners, the curriculum revolves around useful and contextualized activities that give the learners the opportunity to practice work-related tasks in the target language.

Given that the *Getting Down to Business* model pulls its theoretical foundations from these three distinctive documents, it is unprecedented in the field of ESL/EFL/TESOL pedagogy and therefore unique. In addition, while these manuscripts were created for the teaching of foreign languages, the *Getting Down to Business* model employs them in the teaching of English for specific purposes in a foreign setting. Another distinctive aspect of this model is the implementation of the IPAs as assessment instruments, which corroborates the praxis-oriented learning model's methodology. The curriculum is steeped in practical application and therefore extremely relevant to learners. Finally, the proposed materials for the *Getting Down to Business* model are another distinguishing factor. The model recommends the use of digital media aligned with a grammatical supplemental text in an effort to get away from traditional English teaching materials.

CHAPTER 4

The Getting Down to Business Curriculum

We have thus far identified multiple factors to be considered when designing an interdisciplinary ESP curriculum, which include the needs of learners, and the demands placed on learners by instructors, institutions, and global society. Based on these factors, the *Getting Down to Business* curriculum strives for communicative competence and, therefore, takes as its organizing principles the three main points highlighted at the end of Chapter Three: (a) the production of spontaneous contextualized communication in the target language; (b) the development of cultural competence specific to the business arena; and (c) the applicability of praxis-oriented learning to the workplace. With these three critical points serving as a framework, Chapter Four provides a model curriculum that can serve as a guide for teachers interested in teaching a Business English course in a foreign setting. As stated in Chapter Three, the *Getting Down to Business* model adopts an innovative approach by pulling its rationale from documents traditionally used for foreign language instruction and shaping it into an ESP curriculum in an English as a foreign language scenario. Another unique characteristic of the model is its assessment system, which utilizes the IPA as its main instrument. In addition, the model also implements a praxis-oriented approach to language teaching and learning which provides tasks that can be immediately employed in real-life job situations. The model moves away from the use of traditional materials only and incorporates digital media to make the course more authentic, up-to-date, and relevant to the learner. What follows is a brief overview of the curriculum in narrative and tabular form with descriptions of individual units that may be used by instructors in the foreign setting when designing their own ESP

curricula. The model also includes an illustration of how the three organizing principles of the model can be translated into course content. A curriculum overview in which the details of the four-semester curriculum will be presented including the match of each level to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines as well as the assessment instruments for the course. Following the assessment discussion, an individual course description with accompanying assessment plans and the ramifications of the curriculum will be explored.

The Three Pillars

The first guiding principle of the *Getting Down to Business* curriculum is contextualized communication, which is understood here as the ability to use linguistic as well as social-cultural features of language to produce utterances in the process of communication. It also encompasses the use of strategies to overcome communication problems. Based on this understanding of contextualized communication, the *Getting Down to Business* model is organized around tasks that put learners' communication skills to the test; in other words, it means that students not only understand grammatical structures and make use of strategies to surmount difficulties in communication (i.e., rephrasing, recycling), but that they also connect this knowledge to the intricacies of the culture of the business setting e.g., ordering a meal from a menu when learning about the social part of business, describing work activities when interviewing for a job position, apologizing for being late for work, etc. When it comes to linguistic competence, the *Getting Down to Business* course units contain contextualized grammar sections that supply students with the tools necessary for the completion of the communicative tasks.

The second organizing principle of the *Getting Down to Business* curriculum is cultural awareness in the business setting. This means that learners need to be aware that

culture plays a role in communication and that misunderstandings may occur; which may be solved by a simple request for clarification or a restatement. The model addresses cultural awareness in terms of the particulars of international business relations and overlaps with the first guiding principle because the interactions take a different shape in the business environment. For example, students discuss social hierarchies within the business structure (i.e., president, CEO, CFO, etc), understand how introductions are made, identify and discuss gender (in)equality in the work place, and demonstrate the understanding of cultural perspectives relating to workplace topics such as punctuality and working styles.

The third principle, praxis-oriented learning, means that the *Getting Down to Business* curriculum is organized around purposeful tasks. Contextualized communication and cultural awareness are joined in the students' engagement in purposeful interactions with an eye to the culture of business. For example, learners learn how to meet and greet someone at the airport and make professional small talk, which includes understanding appropriate conversation topics and strategies based on what they have learned in the cultural awareness unit component. In addition, they learn the steps involved in dealing with customer complaints and initiating conflict resolution, which also provides them with the knowledge of how customer service is perceived in the international business setting. Another example of contextualized communication is the understanding of the steps involved in apologizing for a mistake or for being late to work, which include apologizing, making a promise, and, for example, making amends by offering to do overtime or extra work. The following diagram (Figure 1) illustrates best the underlying philosophy of the proposed model and how the three pillars exemplified

above are interwoven to achieve the ultimate objective of the course – communicative competence. It is imperative to note here that the organizing principles or pillars of the *Getting Down to Business* curriculum are expected to be interdependent so that communicative competence may be achieved.

Figure 1. Communicative competence in the Getting Down to Business curriculum

Curriculum Overview

The *Getting Down to Business* model consists of four courses taught over four academic semesters. Each academic semester consists of sixteen weeks with a total of forty-eight hours of instruction. Each class meets twice a week for an hour and a half, and all classes are taught in the target language, making use of audio-visual techniques to facilitate comprehension regardless of the level of instruction. Each course covers four units, each taught over four weeks, and includes communicative functions ranging from introducing oneself and others to waging complaints about a product or service. As follows, a brief overview of the individual courses is provided; more details, in narrative and tabular form, on the structure of the courses will be given later in this chapter. Refer to Appendix B for a complete level-by-level description of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines.

The first class in the series is an introductory course called *Introduction to Business English*. This introductory course is aimed at the novice-low learner who has had no or very little English language instruction. By the end of this introductory course, which includes four units, the conscientious and highly motivated learner should have mastered the fundamental communicative goals of the course and be able to demonstrate novice-mid proficiency. For example, students will be able to (a) introduce themselves on the first day of the job and talk about interests; (b) describe their job activities and what they do in their leisure time; (c) reply to a friendly e-mail from a colleague, to name a few tasks.

The second course in the series is called *Business English for the Advanced Beginner* and assumes a novice-mid learner level. By the end of this course, the

conscientious and highly motivated learner is expected to have achieved a proficiency level of novice-high. Students will be able to (a) explain their functions in the company; (b) ask colleagues for favors; (c) indicate agreement or disagreement among other tasks.

Business English for the Intermediate Learner is the third course in the series and assumes that learners will be at a novice-high level upon entering the course. At the end of this level, the conscientious and highly motivated learner is expected to be able to handle tasks pertaining to the intermediate-low level with some impediments. In this course, students will be able to (a) place an order for a product over the phone or via e-mail; (b) give directions to a colleague having to do a new job; and (c) take messages over the phone for a colleague that is away from his/her desk for a moment, etc.

This course is followed by *Business English II for the Intermediate Learner* and assumes that the conscientious and highly motivated learner will enter this course with an intermediate-low proficiency level and exit it with an intermediate-mid proficiency level. During this course, students will be able to complete tasks such as (a) formulating opinions about a company issue; (b) persuading colleagues into accepting a work plan; and (c) expressing feelings toward ads produced by the company. Also in this course, students will also be able to produce indirect speech when planning and executing a merger with a larger corporation..

Materials

In the market of ESP with a focus on business, there are several titles for teaching texts that have been well accepted by ESP professionals. Some examples are *Market Leader* (Cotton, Falvey, & Kent, 2005), by Pearson Longman Inc. – elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate, and upper-intermediate; *Business Objectives* (Hollet, 2001),

by Oxford University Press; and *Best Practice – Business English in Context* (Mascull, 2005), by Thomson Learning. However, these materials can be supplemented by authentic materials, which are, as Galloway (1998) states, “made by native speakers for a native speaker audience,” and easily found in the mainstream media – i.e., newspapers, magazines, videos, radio broadcasts, etc. It is paramount that the materials used in class be authentic and in the target language. Authentic materials provide more opportunities to view language as a vehicle of communication, to learn the intricacies of diverse cultures, to make comparisons between different means of communication (i.e. verbal, written, formal, informal, etc), and to create a sense of belonging to a global community. Authentic texts also improve learner motivation because students are able to work on real-life tasks that stem from authentic texts, which ultimately better prepares learners for proficient communication in the target culture (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p.170). The main source for these authentic materials is the Internet where one can find websites for major business media.^{xiv} Other good sources of authentic materials are scientific magazines, newspapers, newsletters, brochures, etc. While the author of this study currently advocates supplementing a standard text with authentic materials, the ultimate goal is to create a classroom text based on authentic materials and digital media that evolves on a daily basis to maintain pace with the current business developments.

Individual Course Descriptions

Each of the four courses in the curriculum is, in turn, organized around four major unit themes. The description of each unit includes a list of communicative objectives, a list of skills, suggested materials, and assessment (IPA). The three aspects of the curriculum introduced in Chapter Three – (a) the production of spontaneous

contextualized communication in the target language; (b) the development of cultural competence specific for the business arena; and (c) the applicability of praxis-oriented learning to the workplace – serve as guiding principle in the makeup of the individual units in each of the courses.

Contextualized communication.

The themes in the *Getting Down to Business* curriculum contextualize linguistic accuracy within the communicative objectives the students need to achieve, for example, in Unit One of the *Introduction to Business English* course, *Arriving at the New Workplace*, they will learn how to introduce themselves properly to their colleagues, explain their schedules, and describing what they do in their leisure time to represent the socialization at the workplace. In Unit Three of the *Business English for the Advanced Beginner* course, *Company Profile*, students will learn how to ask colleagues for a favor when, for example, they need a photocopy made or something to be filed. In Unit Three of the *Business English for the Intermediate Learner* course, *Communicating*, students will learn how to answer the phone professionally and take a message for a colleague who is out of his/her office. In Unit One of the *Business English II for the Intermediate Learner* course, *Business and Environment*, students will learn how to formulate their opinions about a “going green” company task force. Thus, the communicative functions of introducing oneself and others, asking for a favor, answering the phone, and expressing an opinion are embedded in a business context.

Cultural awareness in the business context

In Unit One of the *Introduction to Business English* course, for example, introducing oneself in the business setting serves as the focal point – i.e., it is customary

to say your name and your position in the company. Unit 4, *Company Product*, of the *Business English for Advanced Beginner*, deals with proper ways to express agreement and disagreement in meetings or work-related discussions. Unit Three, *Communicating*, of the *Business English for the Intermediate Learner* course, touches upon the peculiarities of writing a memo. Unit Three, *A World of Cultures*, of the *Business English II for the Intermediate Learner* course deals with issues that business people have to pay attention to when visiting a foreign country or when receiving a foreign guest. For example, when toasting in a business function in China, the locals always put their glasses under the visitor's as a sign of respect and appreciation for the visit. In addition, the visitor to that country should wait to be seated in the banquet room; Chinese people make the guest sit in the center so that all attention can be directed at him/her (W. Riley, personal communication, February 18, 2010). These are important cultural aspects central to the learner's ability to communicate effectively in the target business culture.

Contextualized praxis-oriented learning tasks

Many of the tasks in the course units can be directly applied to learners' workplace context. In Unit One of the *Introduction to Business English* course, for example, introducing oneself at a conference or a tradeshow and making small talk, paying attention to appropriate use of gesture and rules of professional interaction represents a common task that learners face in their jobs. In Unit Two, *Branches of Industry*, of the *Business English for the Advanced Beginner* course, students equip themselves with the necessary skills for a job interview at a multinational corporation by describing their professions and abilities. In Unit Three of the *Business English for the Intermediate Learner* course, *Communicating*, students will learn how to take effective

notes when taking a message for a friend (i.e., who called, day, time and message). In Unit One of the *Business English II for the Intermediate Learner* course, *Business and Environment*, students will create an educational brochure in order to construct a more sustainable business and better environment.

The “Getting Down to Business” Course

Introduction to Business English

Due to their inexperience with the target language, at the beginning of the course students may be unintelligible at times and not fully prepared to carry on a spontaneous conversation in the target language. At the end of the *Introduction to Business English* course, with some impediment in comprehension and comprehensibility, students will be able to introduce themselves and others to a new colleague, describe daily routines at the workplace, and handle simple commands when making an appointment and when traveling abroad for business. As follows, I provide a thorough description of one of the course units including how it connects with the three pillars of the curriculum and how it ties into the categories in the syllabi (communicative objectives, language skills, materials, and assessment). Given the limitations on the learners’ language proficiency at this point of the curriculum, many of the language skills will be taught as formulaic speech, which should be revisited and recycled as students develop further up in the course segments. Pienemann & Johnston (1987) maintain that during the first developmental stages of second language acquisition learners are expected to learn language chunks or formulae, without breaking them down into constituents. For instance, the formula “I don’t know,” which can be used to mean “I can’t” or “I don’t

understand” can be taught as a fixed expression (p. 75). Appendix D contains a list of suggested formulaic speech examples for the *Introduction to Business English* course.

Unit One, *Arriving at the New Workplace*, ties into the three pillars of the curriculum because (a) learners will potentially encounter a similar situation in real life; therefore, its context is not only clear but also highly motivating; (b) it brings up cultural issues specific to the business milieu such as proper introductions (i.e., name followed by job position) and greetings; and (c) the tasks presented in the unit are common in the workplace and will be useful if learners visit a different company or a client, or if they attend an international conference. The theme of the unit serves as contextualization for the communicative objectives proposed: introducing oneself, describing one’s job, telling age, naming cities and countries, asking about other people’s nationalities, and exchanging and replying to e-mails. All these general objectives are part of the workplace daily routine. The skills necessary to master these goals are the verb “be” and its question formation in the present simple, names of jobs, possessive adjectives, countries and nationalities, and “Wh- questions” in the simple present. In terms of materials, the social networks online are excellent sources for maintaining contact with other professionals in the field. “Linkedin,” for instance, is a website on which someone can post a profile and search for jobs, recommend someone for a job, etc. It is used strictly for professional purposes. Students will be assessed in the presentational mode by writing a friendly e-mail to a foreigner colleague and welcoming him/her to the company. They will be able to display the knowledge they have acquired in a contextualized way, according to the cultural specifics of their setting, and in a task that, when completed, can be used for real life purposes.

Table 2. Introduction to Business English

INTRODUCTION TO BUSINESS ENGLISH					
Themes	Content	Communicative Objectives	Language Skills	Materials	Assessment
	1. Arriving at the new workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introducing yourself - Describing your job - Telling your age - Naming countries and cities - Asking about other people's nationalities or cities - Exchanging e-mails - Replying to a friendly e-mail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Verb "be" - Asking yes/no questions - Names of jobs - A/an - Possessive adjectives - Countries and nationalities - Wh- questions with "be" - Simple present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LinkedIn user profile (authentic interpretive text) - Facebook (authentic interpretive text) - Business cards (prompt of an interpersonal activity) 	<p>- IPA: Writing a friendly e-mail to colleague</p> <p>Interpretive: reading an authentic e-mail welcoming student as new employee and answering questions based on personal details/information</p> <p>Interpersonal: introduction of self and others, discussion with a colleague about position, free-time activities, personal information in company cafeteria</p> <p>Presentational: writing an e-mail to a colleague introducing oneself</p>
	2. A day at the office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Describing business clothing - Describing work activities - Describing leisure activities - Describing routines - Initiating a "small talk" - Expressing likes and dislikes about jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formal versus informal clothes - Activities of the workplace - Leisure activities - Holidays - Present Continuous - Do/Don't - Adverbs of frequency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Newspaper entertainment section - Bus schedule 	<p>- IPA: Planning a carpool with co-workers</p> <p>Interpretive: reading a colleague's schedule and answering questions</p> <p>Interpersonal: arranging a ride to work in a phone conversation with a colleague</p> <p>Presentational: leaving a phone message to a colleague about pick-up time</p>
	3. Making appointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Requesting an appointment - Apologizing - Declining an offer - Telling time - Exchanging phone numbers - Spelling names - Going out to eat with a colleague from abroad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Days of the week, months - "Would like" for polite requests - Auxiliary verb "does" - Numbers - Subject pronouns - "But" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Calendar - Phonebook - Restaurant menus 	<p>- IPA: Writing an apology note to your supervisor</p> <p>Interpretive: reading an professional apology note and answering questions</p> <p>Interpersonal: conversing and declining an invitation for lunch from a colleague</p> <p>Presentational: writing an apology note for a supervisor</p>
	4. In the city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Making a hotel reservation online - Checking-in the airport and hotel - Taking public transportation - Asking for prices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Telephone language - Means of transportation - Addresses - Food items - Prepositions of place - Asking for and telling prices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kayak.com - Travel brochures - Tour guides - Restaurant menus - City maps 	<p>- IPA: Organizing a trip to a conference abroad</p> <p>Interpretive: reading about hotel accommodations, prices, etc and answering questions</p> <p>Interpersonal: discussing details of a hotel reservation with hotel personnel</p> <p>Presentational: sending an e-mail with details about the trip to your supervisor</p>

Business English for the advanced beginner

With some impediment in comprehension and comprehensibility, the audience in this level will be able to give and receive simple commands in the target language, introduce themselves, briefly describe their jobs and interests, tell time, etc. At the end of this level, students will be able to, with pauses, explain their functions in the company, navigate from past to present events, narrate events, and indicate agreement or disagreement. All of these may be done with repetitions and recycling.

Unit Two, *Company Visit*, ties in the three main aspects of the curriculum philosophy because learners will often be faced with a situation (i.e., perhaps a presentation at a tradeshow) in which they have to talk about the history of the company. In order to deliver messages effectively, they will have to learn techniques for professional presentations, which are part of the business culture (i.e., establishing eye contact with the whole audience, offering interesting facts, etc). Finally, students will prepare a company profile, which can eventually be used in a job fair or tradeshow. In order for learners to be able to perform all of these above, the following communicative functions are addressed: asking about the history of the company (i.e., a senior employee, a manager, etc), narrating events and sharing information within a timeframe, and asking for favors. Students will be able to narrate events in the past using the regular and irregular past form of verbs (they had learned the past form of the regular verbs in the previous course) and ask for favors using modals (i.e., can/can't, would you, could you, etc). The internet will be a major source of materials in this unit. Students can research the history of the desired company since its establishment. Assessments associated with

the company profile will be used to test students' ability to demonstrate the skills they learned in the lessons and communicate with other professionals in a real life situation.

Table 3. Business English for the Advanced Beginner

BUSINESS ENGLISH FOR THE ADVANCED BEGINNER					
Themes	Content	Communicative Objectives	Language Skills	Materials	Assessment
	1. Organizing a Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Calling about a hotel reservation - Giving an itinerary to conference attendees - Discussing entertainment and dining options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How many/much - Present Continuous with future idea - “Would like” for requests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - http://adminsecret.monster.com/training/articles/1673-organizing-a-conference-tips-templates 	<p>- IPA: Preparing a travel packet for the conference attendees</p> <p>Interpretive: reading about entertainment options in a city, transportation from/to airport and answering questions</p> <p>Interpersonal: discussing an itemized budget for the trip with your supervisor</p> <p>Presentational: writing a travel packet with flight info, hotel reservations, entertainment options, transportation, etc.</p>
	2. Company Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explaining what you do in your department - Giving a guided company tour for an international visitor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vocabulary: departments in a company - There is/are - Ordinal numbers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Company brochures - Maps - Job descriptions 	<p>- IPA: Preparing a short presentation about your functions in your company</p> <p>Interpretive: reading about a position and answering questions</p> <p>Interpersonal: engaging in a conversation with a colleague about the position</p> <p>Presentational: writing a progress report about what you do in your new position</p>
	3. Branches of Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Talking with the competitors - Explaining the business market in Brazil - Talking about Brazil's biggest business partners - Talking about revenues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comparatives and Superlatives - Major industries in Brazil - Names of products - Negative forms in the simple present - Numbers: thousands, millions, billions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brazil's Ministry of Development Outlook for International Commerce 	<p>- IPA: Preparing a comparative report about your competitor</p> <p>Interpretive: reading about the competitor and answering questions</p> <p>Interpersonal: discussing your company's biggest competitors with colleagues</p> <p>Presentational: writing a comparative report on the company's and competitor's attributes and flaws</p>
	4. Company Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explaining what each department does in the company - Checking information about the structure of the company - Giving directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inc., LLC, etc; - Company departments and their functions - Words of direction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hierarchy charts - The bylaws of an organization 	<p>- IPA: Preparing an organizational chart for your company</p> <p>Interpretive: reading about departments in a company and answering questions</p> <p>Interpersonal: interviewing colleagues about their jobs</p> <p>Presentational: presenting an organizational chart to your colleagues</p>

Business English for the intermediate learner

The audience at this level will be able to handle tasks pertaining to the intermediate level with some hesitation and limited vocabulary. Their pronunciation is intelligible with some occasional lapses. At the end of this level, students will be able to negotiate orders, take messages and make complaints over the phone. Learners may have to follow formulaic questions and responses, with a possibility of some expansion on the topics mentioned above.

Unit Three, *Taking and Receiving Orders*, is connected with the three pillars of the curriculum because (a) placing orders is an activity common in the work environment that involves negotiation of prices, deadlines, concessions, etc, it could be a simple order of supplies for the office or a ton of polished marble from Italy; (b) it involves a business protocol to perform the task (i.e., making promises and commitments about delivery or payment); and (c) the tasks done in class will help students in real life. The communicative objectives traced for this unit, overall, are discussing orders via phone or e-mail (i.e., specifying quantity, quality, and price) and making commitments in regards to a placed order. In order to do that, the unit presents the following skills: the future tense (i.e., We will send the money via Western Union.) and the transfer of money. The use of realia such as company catalogs and the Western Union Finance Services makes the activities closer to the real world. As a form of assessment, students will have a telephone interaction in which they negotiate the purchase of a product. This evaluation instrument can be immediately transferred to their work realities when, for example, calling to order equipment from an international supplier.

Table 4. Business English for the Intermediate Learner

BUSINESS ENGLISH FOR THE INTERMEDIATE LEARNER					
Themes	Content	Communicative Objectives	Language Skills	Materials	Assessment
	1. Company Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Asking about the history of your company - Making requests - Sharing information - Narrating events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simple past of regular and irregular verbs - Question forms in the past - Negatives in the past - Modals can/can't, could you/ would you, would /do you mind 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The internet: Yahoo Finance, nytimes.com. 	<p>- IPA: Preparing a company profile to be presented at an international trade fair</p> <p>Interpretive: reading about the history of the company and answering questions about it</p> <p>Interpersonal: interviewing the supervisor to get more details about the company</p> <p>Presentational: writing a summary of the company profile</p>
	2. Company Product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presenting a product - Describing product strong points and functions - Indicating agreement or disagreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Descriptive adjectives - Dimensions - Because 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - www.morebusiness.com/templates_worksheets/checklists/d1007943858.brc 	<p>- IPA: Representing your company in an international trade fair</p> <p>Interpretive: reading about trade fairs and answering questions about them</p> <p>Interpersonal: discussing with colleagues what points to stress in the fair</p> <p>Presentational: giving a short product demonstration</p>
	3. Taking and Receiving Orders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussing an order over the phone or via e-mail - Dealing with problems in orders - Making promises and commitments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modals: should/shouldn't; - Future tense: will - Transferring money abroad - Gerunds and infinitives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Catalogs - Western Union 	<p>- IPA: Confirming an order that has been phone in</p> <p>Interpretive: reading a memo about an order and answering questions about it</p> <p>Interpersonal: talk with manager about the details of the order</p> <p>Presentational: leaving a voice message to the client confirming the order</p>
	4. Customer Interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Answering the phone and taking messages - Complaining about a service and returning items - Offering solutions - Recommending action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public speaking - Formal versus informal written communications - Clarifications - Note-taking - Ask and tell - Future: be + going to + verb and present continuous w/ future idea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Press releases - Customer Care Centers; - Memos - Newsletters 	<p>- IPA: Communicating a change in management</p> <p>Interpretive: reading a company memo about changes in the company and answering questions about the text</p> <p>Interpersonal: discussing what to address in the memo with a supervisor</p> <p>Presentational: write a memo about changes in the company</p>

Business English II for the intermediate learner

The audience of this level can handle a basic conversation over the phone well; they can describe things in some detail; and ask for clarification when unsure. Their pronunciation has a little bit of influence of their first language, but they can be easily understood by those accustomed with foreigners. At the end of this level, students will be able to express their opinions and thoughts about work-related issues with more confidence and depth.

Unit Three, *Planning and Executing a Merger*, encompasses the three aspects of the curriculum philosophy in the choice of tasks students are expected to complete. Due to the internationalization/privatization of businesses, learners will often host a visiting international colleague, or they will receive foreign guests or pay visits to the company headquarters in a foreign country. Students will also focus on the intricacies of business relations e.g., formal introductions, toasting in a business luncheon, etc. All of the proposed activities are crucial to creating cultural competence in the business setting when dealing with foreign visitors. The communicative objectives for this unit are receiving and paying visits, changing subjects, and discussing possibilities. Idioms and the modals of necessity, obligation, and advice are the necessary skills to accomplish those communicative functions. The teacher can obtain authentic materials at Kayak.com (website for airfares and hotels) and the readings from Cultural Shock! (a culture guide for visitors to the United States, which can raise issues to be discussed when preparing the final task) are great tools for them to complete their final assessment, making arrangements for an international visitor.^{xv} The activity helps learners understand cultural issues that they should be aware of when dealing with an international guest.

Table 5. Business English II for the Intermediate Learner

BUSINESS ENGLISH II FOR THE INTERMEDIATE LEARNER					
Themes	Content	Communicative Objectives	Language Skills	Materials	Assessment
	1. Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussing an ad - Using persuasive language - Expressing feelings towards ads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adjectives to express complex feelings (i.e. fascinating versus fascinated) - “What if...?” - Marketing strategies and techniques - Should 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Magazines - TV commercials - Billboards - Youtube.com 	<p>- IPA: Designing a marketing campaign for your company.</p> <p>Interpretive: reading about different marketing techniques and answering questions about it</p> <p>Interpersonal: discussing in groups details of a marketing campaign for the company</p> <p>Presentational: making a “youtube” video and presenting it to the board of directors</p>
	2. Green Companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expressing concern about the company production and the environment - Arguing about a greener company policy - Formulating and supporting opinions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conditionals - Present Perfect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Internet: entrepreneur.com - sustainablog.org 	<p>- IPA: Debating environmentally friendly actions for a better work environment and preparing an informative company brochure.</p> <p>Interpretive: watching a video about a company’s “green” initiatives and answering questions about it</p> <p>Interpersonal: discussing in groups the “green” priorities for their company</p> <p>Presentational: designing a “green policies” brochure</p>
	3. Planning and Executing a Merger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Receiving visitors and paying visits to others - Changing the subject - Discussing possibilities - Reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Idioms - Indirect questions - Verbs for reported speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kayak.com - Cultural Shock! 	<p>- IPA: Making arrangements for an international merger.</p> <p>Interpretive: reading about company mergers and answering questions about it</p> <p>Interpersonal: talking with directors about the impacts of a company merger</p> <p>Presentational: presenting a merger plan to the board of directors</p>
	4. Emerging Economies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Making market predictions - Analyzing market possibilities - Exploring partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modals of advice, obligation, and necessity - Future perfect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Financial Times 	<p>- IPA: Preparing a report on the strengths and weaknesses of the BRIC nations (Brazil, Russia, India, and China).</p> <p>Interpretive: watching a video about these four countries and answering questions about it</p> <p>Interpersonal: discussing in groups the strengths and weaknesses of each of the countries</p> <p>Presentational: writing a report on the BRIC countries to be presented at a conference</p>

Assessment

Student ability is assessed at the end of each unit through a three-part Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) that is anchored in the real-life setting of the workplace. The IPA Project was developed by ACTFL and is composed of three theme-oriented interdependent tasks. Research has shown noteworthy results on the use of IPA to improve learner's language performance (Adair-Hauck et al, 2006 and Glisan, Uribe, & Adair-Hauck, 2007). Glisan, Uribe, & Adair-Hauck (2007) maintain that a paradigm shift from traditional, de-contextualized assessment to performance-based testing becomes necessary to attend to the demands of the global workforce. They state that the IPA has the potential to change the way assessment is conducted in the foreign language classroom (p. 54). In terms of assessment, the IPA meets the expectations of students and stakeholders based on their communicative nature. The group of tasks is orchestrated to mirror one of each of the modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational, and it provides the teacher with fine material for evaluation. The tasks are interdependent and revolve around a single theme because each task provides information for a subsequent task. After the completion of one task, the test-taker receives feedback from the examiner and then moves on to the following activity. Furthermore, the activities replicate real world tasks, which reinforce the authentic texts and real-life learning scenarios used in the classroom. First, the interpretive segment of the exercise evaluates learners' ability to make sense of excerpts of the target language. In the interpretive portion of the exam, students practice reading and listening comprehension. Second, the interpersonal portion of the activity assesses learners' ability to interact with other individuals to negotiate meaning in order to complete the task (also written or

spoken), giving them the opportunity to put their aural comprehension and oral comprehensibility skills to the test. Finally, the presentational part of the task evaluates learners' ability to produce "one-way" communication such as writing a résumé or an e-mail message, which gives them the chance to hone their writing and speaking skills (data available from ACTFL).

Because the curriculum is praxis-oriented and focuses on contextualized communication, the IPAs provide a seamless integration of assessment into the instructional model. The interactive activities and the formative assessment instruments will help learners be prepared to do the IPA. Quizzes and informal assessment instruments may also be implemented to round out grade distribution, but these evaluations should be strictly formative. Brown (2004) defines formative assessments as instruments that evaluate "students in the process of 'forming' their competencies and skills with the goal of helping them to continue that growth process" (p. 6). The teacher should use the information collected on those instruments to guide/inform instruction and provide feedback to the learner.

Each of the units in all of the courses will culminate in an IPA assessment to test student progress as well as instructional effectiveness. In the *Introduction to Business English* course, based on learners' practice with exchanging friendly welcome e-mails with colleagues (Unit One), students will be asked to replicate a similar task in the interpretive IPA. For the test, students will answer questions in their native language about the content of an authentic e-mail sent from one colleague to another.^{xvi} After they finish the interpretive portion, they will receive feedback from the instructor based on the interpretive part. Students obtain feedback before the next part so that they can address

any issues they might have (i.e., vocabulary, sentence structure, etc). For the interpersonal portion, students will role-play a discussion in the cafeteria with a classmate to ask each other where they live in order for them to figure out transportation to and from work. After the instructor provides them with feedback on the interpersonal part, they proceed to the presentation portion of the IPA. For the presentational portion, students will write a thank-you e-mail to a colleague for the kindness and patience during his/her first week in the company. For the interpretive part in the *Business for the Advanced Beginner* course, learners will receive an orientation packet in which a job position is described and they will answer questions about the text. After feedback from the instructor, students will engage in a casual conversation about the position with a colleague as the interpersonal portion of the IPA. For the presentational portion, students write a progress report on what they have accomplished during the first weeks and they will give a presentation about their tasks to the department. For the interpretive segment in Unit Three of the *Business English for the Intermediate Learner* course, learners will read an authentic memo about an order that has been phoned in and answer questions about it. Then, as the interpersonal part, students will talk with their manager about the details of the order such as pricing, quantity, delivery dates, and payment options. Finally, as their presentational portion of the IPA, students will leave a message to the customer and confirm the order and the details surrounding it. Ultimately, in the *Business English II for the Intermediate Learner* course, students will prepare a “going green” brochure with tips on making the business more sustainable (Unit Two). For the interpretive part, they will watch a video about a company with a green policy and take notes about its procedures. Then, for the interpersonal segment, they will discuss in

groups what initiatives should be a priority in their own company. Finally, they will produce a brochure with their tips on how to make businesses more self-sufficient.

One major summative assessment item is suggested at the end of each course – after sixteen weeks of instruction. As for summative assessment, Brown (2004) states that it “aims to measure, or summarize what a student has grasped, and typically occurs at the end of a course or unit of instruction” (p. 6). This could be a portfolio involving the content learned throughout the course and showcasing students’ masterpieces. For instance, in the *Business English II for the Intermediate Learner* course, students will prepare a marketing campaign for the company and apply the knowledge acquired in the previous units to their final project. Throughout the course, they will learn how to summarize and paraphrase information; persuade someone about a product, etc. They can use all these skills to, perhaps, design a campaign to showcase the environmentally-friendly company policy/attitude.

Assessment of learner proficiency at benchmarks

Students’ assessment is an essential part of course development. The first step when tracing an assessment plan is to decide on the criteria to use. Graves (2000) maintains that the criteria depend on the goals and objectives of the course (p. 210). Coombe et al (2007) state that there are eight cornerstones of language testing: (a) usefulness – what the test is intended for; (b) validity – if the test measures what it is supposed to measure; (c) reliability – if the test presents consistent results; (d) practicality – if the test is “teacher-friendly;” (e) wash back – if the test causes any effects on teaching and learning; (f) authenticity – if the test reflects real world tasks; (g) transparency – if the test and testing procedures are clear and available to students (and

teachers); (h) security – if the teachers and students feel secure about the test. This last one is more generally attributed to large-scale standardized test instruments and is a culmination of the other principles. Therefore, these eight principles should overlap to result in a successful assessment experience (pp. xxii-xxv). For the *Getting Down to Business* Curriculum, the assessment instruments validate the ultimate goal of the course – perform work tasks in the target language. The Integrated Performance Assessments (IPA) help achieve that goal due to their contextualized nature. In addition, they connect the three modes of communication (presentational, interpretive, and interpersonal) in a single-theme activity. In the *Introduction to Business English* course, Unit Two’s IPA is a “carpool plan”, so students can read a text about carpooling (interpretive mode), discuss days, times, strategic points for pick-up (interpersonal mode), and then present their final plan to the class (presentational mode). This kind of activity is useful to the students because they use it in their daily lives – they can potentially carpool to come to class if they do not work in the same company.

In addition to these formative (ongoing) assessments and summative (cumulative) assessments at the end of each course, the *Getting Down to Business* curriculum also includes a larger proficiency assessment at two benchmarks in the curriculum – at the end of the first semester and again at the end of the fourth. Evaluation at these points is imperative to tell whether the curriculum is successful or not. The ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) will be used as an external assessment instrument because it measures student performance more objectively, and it is better calibrated than individual unit and course assessments. Research has shown that, despite the critique on the conversational nature of the test and on the rating procedures, the OPI is a reliable

proficiency measure (See Johnson & Tyler, 1998; Johnson, 1999; and Ross, 2007). The more objective OPI instrument will measure communicative competence in all of its facets and an understanding of appropriate business language and professional behaviors, in other words, that cultural sensitivity as well as communicative competence were developed.

Assessment of the curriculum

Another important aspect of the assessment plan is the evaluation of curriculum efficacy. By the end of the four semesters, the conscientious and highly motivated students should have reached the intermediate-mid proficiency level – going from novice-low to intermediate-mid proficiency level on the ACTFL scale. If students meet the expectations of each course, by the end of the sequence they should successfully meet each of the novice-mid through intermediate-mid proficiency levels. In order to check their proficiency, both IPAs instituted at the end of each unit, in addition to a larger assessment at the end of the course will ensure that students are progressing toward the goals outlined in the curriculum. As mentioned above, at the end of the first semester and again at the end of the fourth, the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview becomes a legitimate tool to check the efficacy of student learning and instruction.

As mentioned elsewhere in this chapter, another valuable instrument to confirm the program's success is the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). This is a highly used examination, and it becomes useful for the curriculum assessment plan. The OPI is a conversation-based test in which the topics suit the interests and experiences of the learner, which, as a matter of fact, would be very appropriate for ESP (and, consequently, for the curriculum) because it deals with specific themes and communicative functions.

The OPI consists of four stages: (a) warm-up, whose objective is to put the examinee at ease; (b) level check, whose objective is to provide a primary floor for the examinee's grading; (c) probes, whose objective is to "find the ceiling" or, in other words, to discover the test-taker's highest level of proficiency; and finally, (d) wind-down, whose aim is to end the interview with in a positive manner (Johnson, 1999). With the results of this test instrument and the feedback from the learners, one will be able to make decisions – and, if necessary, curriculum adjustments – concerning issues such as course length, materials, and assessment instruments.

To be consistent with the claim supporting needs analysis as a powerful process in curriculum design, one should also incorporate student self-assessments to measure whether their expectations were met or not. Oscarsson (1997) claims that students should be involved in all phases of the learning process for effective learning to occur. Besides that, he maintains that self-assessment is a point of departure for 'restructuring' concepts – for both the learner, the teacher, and curriculum developers (p.175). With this in mind, the self-assessment survey will look at aspects such as (a) learner's perception of their own skill level; (b) learner's comfort using the language in a target-culture setting; and (c) learner's understanding of appropriate linguistic behaviors in the target culture. These facets of the self-assessment questionnaire will be interwoven with the three pillars of the curriculum model – contextualized communication, cultural awareness, and praxis-oriented learning. That said, each of the three pillars has two components. First, under contextualized communication there are (a) comprehension, which refers to one's ability to comprehend others in a given interaction and (b) language control, which refers to the correct use of grammatical forms, register, and tenses. Second, under cultural awareness

for the business setting, there are (a) cultural appropriateness, which relates to one's understanding of the culture of the business setting and (b) affective filter in the cultural context, which refers to one's ease of expression in the target language with interlocutors in the business setting. Finally, under praxis-oriented learning, there are (a) applications to the workplace, which refers to one's ability to complete work-related tasks after training and the applicability of the tasks in the workplace and (b) communication of ideas, which relates to one's adequacy of language and cultural knowledge to carry out tasks in the job (See Appendix E for full document). With this data available, one would be able to compare them to a) how successful they perceived the program to be and b) how well they performed according to general proficiency-measuring instruments.

As Hutchinson & Waters (1987) point out "the origins of ESP lie in satisfying needs," therefore, in the course assessment plan all of those who share the learning process should partake in the evaluation (p. 156). With the gathered data, course developers are able to learn if the needs created for such specific course have been addressed and make decisions about the curriculum. In order to give it a more standardized and organized character, the self-assessment survey should be given out at the end of the first and last semesters when the learners will be also taking the OPI. Brown (2006) calls these types of self-assessment instruments indirect assessment of [general] competence. The author claims that this type of self-evaluation is effective for larger portions of time (i.e., a module or a semester of course work) and it pinpoints general performance and curriculum design flaws rather than discrete points in the teaching and learning process (p. 271). Ultimately, this is going to be an important step in the learning process because it will make learners reflect upon their own learning process

and think about further needs for a successful foreign language learning experience. What is more, the results of this survey will also influence decisions about the curriculum and, eventually, one will be able to decide what has worked well and what has not worked very well as far as activities, teaching strategies, assessment instruments, and themes.

Ramifications of the curriculum

Ultimately, this is a curriculum that could easily be employed by English teachers in Brazil and other countries because of its foundation in (a) the production of spontaneous contextualized communication in the target language; (b) the development of cultural competence specific for the business arena; and (c) the applicability of praxis-oriented learning to the workplace. Also, it is not expected that a teacher be a member of the business world or that he/she understand the intricacies of finance or the economy to teach the courses. The curriculum focuses, rather, on basic survival tactics in the business world and serves as a roadmap that can be adapted to different teaching situations. For example, if teaching a class with a large group of executive secretaries or personal assistants (in loco or as a closed group in a private language institute), the instructor could focus on written skills due to the substantial amount of written work (i.e., memos, faxes, e-mails, newsletters, etc) these professionals handle. Another ramification of this curriculum would be the fact that the curriculum is cost-effective. Learners will enter the course with no or little knowledge of English and will exit within a reasonable amount of time (or hopefully continue) with an intermediate-mid proficiency level which will give them the opportunity to excel in their work settings. What is more, the classes' meeting times (twice a week for one hour and a half) are feasible for the students and/or

professionals. All of these implications make the *Getting Down to Business* curriculum a good choice for educators around the world.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

It is undeniable that English has become the language of international communication. For this reason, the workforce demands professionals with reasonable knowledge of the language to perform tasks in the workplace. In the introduction of this study, we examined the great need for an ESP curriculum that provides learners with the linguistic and cultural awareness skills necessary for facing the demands of the global business world. As discussed in Chapter 3, what in reality motivates this growing need for ESP language training, beyond the specific needs of a particular setting like Brazil, is the paradigm shift in foreign language teaching and learning. With the establishment of globalized communication and commerce and the changing needs of language learners, the pendulum of language teaching methodology swung once again. Classes that were once grammar-based, teacher-centered, and based on traditional textbooks have evolved into learner-focused arenas of interdisciplinary learning that focus not on competencies themselves, but on how to acquire them (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) and that incorporate the digital media which are central to communication in the twenty-first century. The global market seeks professionals who are capable of performing daily tasks in the workplace using a foreign language and who can address cultural differences. These professionals are able to make connections between other disciplines and their own language and culture, and draw comparisons between their native culture and the target one. These aspects together comprise true communicative competence in the contemporary global world.

As the review of the literature in Chapter Two revealed, there is a lack of materials and programs when it comes to an ESP curriculum for beginner learners. In ESP curriculum design, it is frequently expected that the learner that will have foreign language training prior to enrolling in an ESP course. The studies by Edwards (2000), Sifakis (2003), Esteban & Cañado (2004), and Aiguo (2007) corroborate this claim.

Ultimately, the key to successful course and curriculum design is determining the needs of the learners, their expectations of language study, and the motivations determining their desire to pursue the study of a foreign language in the first place. Graves (2000) advocates for the necessity of making needs analysis an organized part of curricular design; *problematizing* one's teaching situation prior to starting course design is an effective way to act on issues that have been taken for granted in the past, such as the teacher being the knowledge provider (p. 4). The *Getting Down to Business* curriculum has been informed by the general requirements of the globalized work market in terms of content, culture, and communicative functions. It is a representation of what is expected of the learner in the business scenario; therefore, it is meaningful and authentic. The *Getting Down to Business* model is original because first, its ESP philosophy is constructed from documents that were originally designed for foreign language teaching and learning; second, its state-of-the-art assessment system provides learners with the a true opportunity to prepare for the requirements of the work market that were much emphasized throughout this paper; and finally, the incorporation of mass media into the course materials make this model a new, exciting, and important one.

The principal strength of the *Getting Down to Business* curriculum is that it welcomes the novice learner with no business language and culture training. As discussed

in Chapter One, the regular educational system in Brazil fails to offer proper foreign language training and in addition, it does not emphasize the teaching of foreign language as much as the other disciplines such as Mathematics, Science, History, etc. Hence, students generally exit their high schools with a low foreign language proficiency level and soon enter the work force without any language and culture training. This lack of training creates the niche that the *Getting Down to Business* curriculum fills. Another strong point of the model is its contextualized communication, cultural awareness in the business setting, and praxis-oriented approach which facilitates learning and makes it more authentic and meaningful.

Given the diversity and complexity that foreign language education entails, one could best make sense of a foreign language if it is done under the umbrella of the pedagogical beliefs outlined in the National Standards. Thus, the ACTFL Standards become a supportive point of departure when contemplating the underlying philosophy of a foreign language course for specific purposes. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the unprecedented application of the foreign language documents (National Standards, ACTFL Guidelines, and LAC principles) to an EFL/ESP model is something to be acclaimed. As mentioned elsewhere in this thesis, these documents put forth a common belief which is one of cross-cultural multilingual communication to fulfill the globalized market requirements. The National Standards provide the rationale for the *Getting Down to Business* model when it presupposes that learners communicate appropriately in the business context and therefore connect themselves with the international business community. The ACTFL guidelines provide benchmarks for learners' proficiency levels as well as an idea of performance-based assessment based on the modes of

communication – interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational. Finally, the LAC principles provide the rationale for the association between the understanding and acquisition of specific content like the culture of the business setting and language.

The three pillars of the *Getting Down to Business* model collude the principles of the manuscripts cited above in various ways. Contextualized communication, spoken or written, matches the National Standards, the ACTFL Guidelines, and LAC pedagogy of language learning as being a way to reaching out to the pluralistic society we live in by providing learners with meaningful and authentic opportunities to be in contact with the target language (i.e., reading an excerpt of the “*Tratado de libre comercio de America del Norte*” and discussing international trading). Cultural awareness in the business setting supports the core principles of these documents because it reinforces the idea that there is a strong relationship between language and culture. By learning the particulars of the culture of the target language, one will be able to produce appropriate discourse such as, in the case of the business culture, when introducing a foreign visitor to the supervisor. Praxis-oriented learning encompasses the principles laid out in those documents when it gives learners opportunities to replicate what they learn in class in the real world, making the content more authentic and meaningful. The IPAs (the central assessment instrument of the model) also welcome the applicability of the tasks to real-world situations.

In addition to helping make decisions about the core pedagogy of a language course, assessment is a significant informative tool for course (re)design and, therefore, is an important component of the “cycle of course development” (Graves, 2000). Three aspects must be included in the assessment plan: (a) the learner; (b) individual courses; and (c) the entire curriculum. Hutchinson & Waters (1987) call attention to the need for

assessing students' performance at strategic points in the course, for instance, at the beginning and end of the semester/course/term. What is more, they argue, these assessments receive a greater emphasis because of the nature of ESP, which focuses on the ability to perform certain communicative tasks such as place an order on the phone or write an apology e-mail. A specific assessment type then needs to be implemented in a communication-based course to make sure that test items actually measure what students have learned. This is more difficult than a standard grammar test because it is harder to measure cultural awareness and strategic competence using a point system or a rubric. The authors also claim that course evaluation determines whether course objectives are being met or not. This kind of assessment helps to identify flaws in methodology, learners' initial competence, or even if the course objectives are too ambitious (pp. 144-145). These three components of the assessment plan were dealt with in Chapter Four – the culminating IPAs for formative learner assessment, the OPIs at the end of the first and fourth semesters, and the self-assessment survey also at the end of the first and fourth semester. Ultimately, whether the goals of the model have been adequately met must be assessed through a program evaluation after the first cadre of students completes its fourth semester. At that time, both a student assessment and a self-assessment of their own ability will provide feedback on the program's efficacy, particularly through the OPI and the self-assessment survey.

Applications in the Field

The objective of this study was to provide ESP/EFL practitioners with guidelines in developing an ESP curriculum with a focus on business. Using the National Standards and ACTFL Guidelines, teachers will have an idea of the underlying pedagogy of this

course and will be able to apply it to their realities. With the theoretical foundation provided in Chapter Three, and the individual course descriptions and the assessment plan in Chapter Four, teachers will be able to create a much more authentic setting in their classrooms with a focus on communication of which students can make practical use immediately. For example, when teaching a group of specific professionals (i.e., petroleum engineers, executive secretaries, etc), teachers will be able to use the model, but tailor it to their particular contexts by bringing in literature pertinent to their area, or giving more emphasis to a particular skill, if needed. For a group of executive secretaries, for instance, who deal with the communications within the company, the IPA in Unit Four of the Business English to the Intermediate Learner course fits right in their work realities. What is more, as far as materials are concerned, a grammar textbook could be used as supplemental material if the course instructor feels the need to do so. These texts are available on the market and could be concomitantly used with the content area materials mentioned above and the ones proposed in the individual course descriptions. It is my desire to develop an ESP media-based textbook that encompasses the three pillars of the *Getting Down to Business* model – contextualized communication, business cultural awareness, and praxis-oriented learning. The theoretical rationale laid out here may also serve as basis for specific purposes courses in various languages, for instance, Spanish for Business Purposes, Business German, etc.

Implications for Future Research and Final Considerations

The implications of this study are threefold and include (a) the use of the fundamental theory, the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and the course structure proposed in this document as a road map to develop higher proficiency levels of Business

English; (b) the creation of materials for the units suggested here as well as individual lesson plans; and (c) the incorporation of materials pertinent to learners' requests, for instance, sending faxes, writing a memorandum, etc, depending upon the needs analysis done at the beginning of the course. Another aspect that could be looked at more in depth is the inclusion of a practical component in the courses by, for example, having students shadow someone in the workplace or develop a real task in the workplace and then present it to the class. Additionally, the design of assessment rubrics for each skill (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) in each proficiency level would also benefit the program by giving it a more standardized trait. In Appendix F, I suggest a sample rubric for a speaking task in the first course, *Introduction to Business English*.

In conclusion, in this era of instant communication, I believe that we need to provide our students with the tools of the future: communication skills, connections to cultures and a sense of belonging to multi-communities, and the ability to apply their knowledge in real world tasks. When it comes to language teaching and learning, these competencies can be achieved by teaching philosophies like the one proposed in this manuscript. The *Getting Down to Business* model offers this dependability by (a) providing authentic tasks; (b) providing tests based on real communicative tasks; and (c) reaching beyond the classroom to shadowing in the workplace. Freire (2008) argues that teaching is not merely transferring knowledge, but creating opportunities for the production or for the construction of knowledge. As members of the educational community, teachers must be committed to fostering and supporting the development of a more enriched learning environment; therefore, they must equip learners to adapt and react to the demands of the globalized world.

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Appendix A
National Standards for Foreign Language Education

Communication: Communicate in Languages Other Than English

Standard 1.1: Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.

Standard 1.2: Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics.

Standard 1.3: Students present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.

Cultures: Gain Knowledge and Understanding of Other Cultures

Standard 2.1: Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied.

Standard 2.2: Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied.

Connections: Connect with Other Disciplines and Acquire Information

Standard 3.1: Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language.

Standard 3.2: Students acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the foreign language and its cultures.

Comparisons: Develop Insight into the Nature of Language and Culture

Standard 4.1: Students demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.

Standard 4.2: Students demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.

Communities: Participate in Multilingual Communities at Home & Around the World

Standard 5.1: Students use the language both within and beyond the school setting.

Standard 5.2: Students show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment.

Appendix B

ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines

SUPERIOR

Speakers at the Superior level are able to communicate in the language with accuracy and fluency in order to participate fully and effectively in conversations on a variety of topics in formal and informal settings from both concrete and abstract perspectives. They discuss their interests and special fields of competence, explain complex matters in detail, and provide lengthy and coherent narrations, all with ease, fluency, and accuracy. They explain their opinions on a number of topics of importance to them, such as social and political issues, and provide structured argument to support their opinions. They are able to construct and develop hypotheses to explore alternative possibilities. When appropriate, they use extended discourse without unnaturally lengthy hesitation to make their point, even when engaged in abstract elaborations. Such discourse, while coherent, may still be influenced by the Superior speakers own language patterns, rather than those of the target language. Superior speakers command a variety of interactive and discourse strategies, such as turn-taking and separating main ideas from supporting information through the use of syntactic and lexical devices, as well as intonation features such as pitch, stress and tone. They demonstrate virtually no pattern of error in the use of basic structures. However, they may make sporadic errors, particularly in low-frequency structures and in some complex high-frequency structures more common to formal speech and writing. Such errors, if they do occur, do not distract the native interlocutor or interfere with communication.

ADVANCED HIGH

Speakers at the Advanced-High level perform all Advanced-level tasks with linguistic ease, confidence and competence. They are able to consistently explain in detail and narrate fully and accurately in all time frames. In addition, Advanced-High speakers handle the tasks pertaining to the Superior level but cannot sustain performance at that level across a variety of topics. They can provide a structured argument to support their opinions, and they may construct hypotheses, but patterns of error appear. They can discuss some topics abstractly, especially those relating to their particular interests and special fields of expertise, but in general, they are more comfortable discussing a variety of topics concretely. Advanced-High speakers may demonstrate a well-developed ability to compensate for an imperfect grasp of some forms or for limitations in vocabulary by the confident use of communicative strategies, such as paraphrasing, circumlocution, and illustration. They use precise vocabulary and intonation to express meaning and often show great fluency and ease of speech. However, when called on to perform the complex tasks associated with the Superior level over a variety of topics, their language will at times break down or prove inadequate, or they may avoid the task altogether, for example, by resorting to simplification through the use of description or narration in place of argument or hypothesis.

ADVANCED MID

Speakers at the Advanced-Mid level are able to handle with ease and confidence a large number of communicative tasks. They participate actively in most informal and some formal exchanges on a variety of concrete topics relating to work, school, home, and leisure activities, as well as to events of current, public, and personal interest or individual relevance. Advanced-Mid speakers demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe in all major time frames (past, present, and future) by providing a full account, with good control of aspect, as they adapt flexibly to the demands of the conversation. Narration and description tend to be combined and interwoven to relate relevant and supporting facts in connected, paragraph-length discourse. Advanced-Mid speakers can handle successfully and with relative ease the linguistic challenges presented by a complication or unexpected turn of events that occurs within the context of a routine situation or communicative task with which they are otherwise familiar. Communicative strategies such as circumlocution or rephrasing are often employed for this purpose. The speech of Advanced-Mid speakers performing Advanced-level tasks is marked by substantial flow. Their vocabulary is fairly extensive although primarily generic in nature, except in the case of a particular area of specialization or interest. Dominant language discourse structures tend to recede, although discourse may still reflect the oral paragraph structure of their own language rather than that of the target language. Advanced-Mid speakers contribute to conversations on a variety of familiar topics, dealt with concretely, with much accuracy, clarity and precision, and they convey their intended message without misrepresentation or confusion. They are readily understood by native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives. When called on to perform functions or handle topics associated with the Superior level, the quality and/or quantity of their speech will generally decline. Advanced-Mid speakers are often able to state an opinion or cite conditions; however, they lack the ability to consistently provide a structured argument in extended discourse. Advanced-Mid speakers may use a number of delaying strategies, resort to narration, description, explanation or anecdote, or simply attempt to avoid the linguistic demands of Superior-level tasks.

ADVANCED LOW

Speakers at the Advanced-Low level are able to handle a variety of communicative tasks, although somewhat haltingly at times. They participate actively in most informal and a limited number of formal conversations on activities related to school, home, and leisure activities and, to a lesser degree, those related to events of work, current, public, and personal interest or individual relevance. Advanced-Low speakers demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe in all major time frames (past, present and future) in paragraph length discourse, but control of aspect may be lacking at times. They can handle appropriately the linguistic challenges presented by a complication or unexpected turn of events that occurs within the context of a routine situation or communicative task with which they are otherwise familiar, though at times their discourse may be minimal for the level and strained. Communicative strategies such as rephrasing and circumlocution may be employed in such instances. In their narrations and descriptions, they combine and link sentences into connected discourse of paragraph length. When pressed for a fuller account, they tend to grope and rely on minimal discourse. Their utterances are typically not longer than a single paragraph. Structure of the dominant language is still evident in

the use of false cognates, literal translations, or the oral paragraph structure of the speaker's own language rather than that of the target language. While the language of Advanced-Low speakers may be marked by substantial, albeit irregular flow, it is typically somewhat strained and tentative, with noticeable self-correction and a certain grammatical roughness. The vocabulary of Advanced-Low speakers is primarily generic in nature. Advanced-Low speakers contribute to the conversation with sufficient accuracy, clarity, and precision to convey their intended message without misrepresentation or confusion, and it can be understood by native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives, even though this may be achieved through repetition and restatement. When attempting to perform functions or handle topics associated with the Superior level, the linguistic quality and quantity of their speech will deteriorate significantly.

INTERMEDIATE HIGH

Intermediate-High speakers are able to converse with ease and confidence when dealing with most routine tasks and social situations of the Intermediate level. They are able to handle successfully many uncomplicated tasks and social situations requiring an exchange of basic information related to work, school, recreation, particular interests and areas of competence, though hesitation and errors may be evident. Intermediate-High speakers handle the tasks pertaining to the Advanced level, but they are unable to sustain performance at that level over a variety of topics. With some consistency, speakers at the Intermediate High level narrate and describe in major time frames using connected discourse of paragraph length. However, their performance of these Advanced-level tasks will exhibit one or more features of breakdown, such as the failure to maintain the narration or description semantically or syntactically in the appropriate major time frame, the disintegration of connected discourse, the misuse of cohesive devices, a reduction in breadth and appropriateness of vocabulary, the failure to successfully circumlocute, or a significant amount of hesitation. Intermediate-High speakers can generally be understood by native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives, although the dominant language is still evident (e.g. use of code-switching, false cognates, literal translations, etc.), and gaps in communication may occur.

INTERMEDIATE MID

Speakers at the Intermediate-Mid level are able to handle successfully a variety of uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations. Conversation is generally limited to those predictable and concrete exchanges necessary for survival in the target culture; these include personal information covering self, family, home, daily activities, interests and personal preferences, as well as physical and social needs, such as food, shopping, travel and lodging. Intermediate-Mid speakers tend to function reactively, for example, by responding to direct questions or requests for information. However, they are capable of asking a variety of questions when necessary to obtain simple information to satisfy basic needs, such as directions, prices and services. When called on to perform functions or handle topics at the Advanced level, they provide some information but have difficulty linking ideas, manipulating time and aspect, and using communicative strategies, such as circumlocution. Intermediate-Mid speakers are able to express personal meaning by creating with the language, in part by combining and

recombining known elements and conversational input to make utterances of sentence length and some strings of sentences. Their speech may contain pauses, reformulations and self-corrections as they search for adequate vocabulary and appropriate language forms to express themselves. Because of inaccuracies in their vocabulary and/or pronunciation and/or grammar and/or syntax, misunderstandings can occur, but Intermediate-Mid speakers are generally understood by sympathetic interlocutors accustomed to dealing with non-natives.

INTERMEDIATE LOW

Speakers at the Intermediate-Low level are able to handle successfully a limited number of uncomplicated communicative tasks by creating with the language in straightforward social situations. Conversation is restricted to some of the concrete exchanges and predictable topics necessary for survival in the target language culture. These topics relate to basic personal information covering, for example, self and family, some daily activities and personal preferences, as well as to some immediate needs, such as ordering food and making simple purchases. At the Intermediate-Low level, speakers are primarily reactive and struggle to answer direct questions or requests for information, but they are also able to ask a few appropriate questions. Intermediate-Low speakers express personal meaning by combining and recombining into short statements what they know and what they hear from their interlocutors. Their utterances are often filled with hesitancy and inaccuracies as they search for appropriate linguistic forms and vocabulary while attempting to give form to the message. Their speech is characterized by frequent pauses, ineffective reformulations and self-corrections. Their pronunciation, vocabulary and syntax are strongly influenced by their first language but, in spite of frequent misunderstandings that require repetition or rephrasing, Intermediate-Low speakers can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors, particularly by those accustomed to dealing with non-natives.

NOVICE HIGH

Speakers at the Novice-High level are able to handle a variety of tasks pertaining to the Intermediate level, but are unable to sustain performance at that level. They are able to manage successfully a number of uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations. Conversation is restricted to a few of the predictable topics necessary for survival in the target language culture, such as basic personal information, basic objects and a limited number of activities, preferences and immediate needs. Novice-High speakers respond to simple, direct questions or requests for information; they are able to ask only a very few formulaic questions when asked to do so. Novice-High speakers are able to express personal meaning by relying heavily on learned phrases or recombinations of these and what they hear from their interlocutor. Their utterances, which consist mostly of short and sometimes incomplete sentences in the present, may be hesitant or inaccurate. On the other hand, since these utterances are frequently only expansions of learned material and stock phrases, they may sometimes appear surprisingly fluent and accurate. These speakers' first language may strongly influence their pronunciation, as well as their vocabulary and syntax when they attempt to personalize their utterances. Frequent misunderstandings may arise but, with repetition or rephrasing, Novice-High speakers can generally be understood by sympathetic

interlocutors used to non-natives. When called on to handle simply a variety of topics and perform functions pertaining to the Intermediate level, a Novice-High speaker can sometimes respond in intelligible sentences, but will not be able to sustain sentence level discourse.

NOVICE MID

Speakers at the Novice-Mid level communicate minimally and with difficulty by using a number of isolated words and memorized phrases limited by the particular context in which the language has been learned. When responding to direct questions, they may utter only two or three words at a time or an occasional stock answer. They pause frequently as they search for simple vocabulary or attempt to recycle their own and their interlocutor's words. Because of hesitations, lack of vocabulary, inaccuracy, or failure to respond appropriately, Novice-Mid speakers may be understood with great difficulty even by sympathetic interlocutors accustomed to dealing with non-natives. When called on to handle topics by performing functions associated with the Intermediate level, they frequently resort to repetition, words from their native language, or silence.

NOVICE LOW

Speakers at the Novice-Low level have no real functional ability and, because of their pronunciation, they may be unintelligible. Given adequate time and familiar cues, they may be able to exchange greetings, give their identity, and name a number of familiar objects from their immediate environment. They are unable to perform functions or handle topics pertaining to the Intermediate level, and cannot therefore participate in a true conversational exchange.

Appendix C

Languages Across the Curriculum: A declaration of principles and practices

Languages Across the Curriculum refers to the practice through which the study and use of languages take place throughout the curriculum. Its purpose is to prepare students for the cross-cultural and multilingual demands and opportunities of a global society. LAC is appropriate at all levels of education.

Goals

The long-term goal of LAC is to integrate multiple languages into the teaching of all disciplines in order to enrich their intercultural and international content. The short-term goal is to enlist the support of faculty and administrators to expand opportunities for the content-specific acquisition and discipline-focused use of language and cultural knowledge by students, regardless of their chosen areas of expertise and inquiry. Cross-cultural and multilingual inquiry leads to a more complete learning experience and provides a basis for comparative understanding unavailable when students and faculty are limited to the use of resources in only one language. Learners develop a deeper and more precise understanding of a new language and culture by studying how that language and culture address precisely defined topics about which they have already established a certain familiarity in their native language.

Means

In some instances LAC involves non-language faculty working independently to enable students to use their language skills in the pursuit of knowledge and skills in other domains. In a social studies class, for example, students might read portions of the Tocqueville's *L'ancien régime et la révolution*. In an engineering course, students might study excerpts from Fachkunde *Kraftfahrzeugtechnik*. Students in international business in a school of management might read selections from *Tratado de libre comercio de America del Norte* in preparation for classroom discussion of the North American Free Trade Agreement. Health care and social work students might learn how to interview recent immigrants from various language backgrounds in a clinical setting.

In other instances LAC involves joint efforts by language and non-language faculty teaching cooperatively in any of their respective departments. The potential range for integrating learning resources in multiple languages across the curriculum has no limits. Materials can range from classic philosophical texts to popular media, including videos and websites from around the world. Finally, the student experience may be designed and led by individual faculty members, by interdisciplinary teams of faculty, or by qualified students.

Rationale

1. Understanding of a given culture and its documents and artifacts is greatly enhanced through a knowledge of its language.
2. A curriculum that includes materials in multiple languages provides access to a wider range of perspectives, encourages greater depth of exploration, and opens the door to greater understanding.

3. The use of materials in multiple languages significantly enhances any and all disciplinary inquiry.
4. Languages Across the Curriculum enhances cross-cultural competence and the ability of students to function in an increasingly multicultural society and a globalized economy.

Dimensions and Domains of LAC Programming

1. LAC encourages students and faculty to view their studies in a global context and to venture beyond their own cultural and linguistic borders in order to gain additional perspectives and additional knowledge.
2. LAC bridges existing curricular and disciplinary boundaries, creating a more integrated learning environment and energizing the disciplines in new ways.
3. By integrating the use of multiple languages into disciplines across the curriculum, LAC reinforces the centrality of language study at all levels of education.
4. LAC challenges faculty, students, and administrators to place a higher value on the language proficiency of bilingual students and faculty.
5. LAC expands the number of graduates who are able to carry out work in their major area of study in more than one language and has the potential to create a larger workforce of bilingual and multilingual professionals.

Appendix D

Examples of formulaic speech – *Introduction to Business English*

Unit One

Exchanging e-mails

How are you? How are you doing?

I am fine/OK/very well, thanks.

I am doing fine/very well, thanks.

Welcoming a colleague/Expressing appreciation

Welcome to the company!

We are happy to have you here.

Thanks for your e-mail. I am happy/glad to be here.

Unit Two

Starting small talk

It's a beautiful/hot/cold day today.

I like it/I don't like it.

Expressing likes and dislikes about the job

I like to/I don't like to _____ .

Unit Three

Requesting an appointment

I would like an appointment on ____ (date) ____ at ____ (time) ____, please.

Could we _____ ?

Apologizing/Declining an offer

I am sorry. I have to ____ (activity) ____.

Thank you very much, BUT I have to ____ (activity) ____.

Going out to eat

Would you like to have lunch at ____ (place) ____?

I would like to have ____ (name of food or drink of choice) ____, please.

Unit Four

Making a hotel reservation online

Check-in date – Check-out date

Standard/Luxury room

Smoking/Non-smoking

Confirmation/Reservation number

Checking in the airport

Here is my confirmation/reservation number.

Taking public transportation

Taking a cab: I'd like to go to ____ (address) ____, please.

Giving directions: The ____ (place) ____ is on/behind/next to ____ (place) ____.

Asking for prices

How much if (the) ____ (object/product) ____?

How much is the room per night? (in a hotel)

How much is it per bag? (in the airport)

Appendix E

Self-Assessment Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. It is part of the “*Getting Down to Business*” Assessment Plan. Please read the descriptors very carefully and mark that one that best describes your ability. This survey will not affect your grade in any way, so we encourage you to be honest.

CONTEXTUALIZED COMMUNICATION			
Comprehension Ability to comprehend others in a given interaction.	1. ____ I understand everything on familiar topics when I read and/or listen in English. I can also follow the main idea of an unfamiliar topic.	2. ____ I somewhat understand when I read and/or listen familiar topics in English. Sometimes I am able to follow the main idea of an unfamiliar topic.	3. ____ I understand very little when I read and/or listen in English. I am not able to follow the main idea of an unfamiliar topic.
Language Control Correct use of grammatical forms, register, and tense.	1. ____ I can communicate in oral and written form with others very easily.	2. ____ I can communicate in oral and written form with others very easily.	3. ____ I have difficulties communicating in English.
CULTURE COMPETENCE FOR THE BUSINESS SETTING			
Cultural Appropriateness Understanding of the culture of the business setting.	1. ____ I have good understanding of the culture of the business setting (i.e., gestures, formality vs. informality, etc). I can easily communicate with the larger business community and be inserted in the international business scenario.	2. ____ I have a fair understanding of the culture of the business setting (i.e., gestures, formality vs. informality, etc). I can communicate, with occasional language breakdowns, with the larger business community and have a feeling of belonging to the international business scenario.	3. ____ I have little understanding of the culture of the business setting (i.e., gestures, formality vs. informality, etc). I have many difficulties communicating with people outside my day-by-day workplace and do not have a feeling of belonging to the international business scenario.
Affective Filter in the Cultural Context Ease of expression in the target language with interlocutors in the business setting.	1. ____ I always feel comfortable communicating in English with interlocutors in the business setting.	2. ____ I often feel comfortable communicating in English with interlocutors in the business setting.	3. ____ I rarely feel comfortable communicating in English with interlocutors in the business setting.
PRAXIS-ORIENTED LEARNING			
Applications at the Workplace Ability to complete work-related tasks after training; applicability of the tasks in the workplace.	1. ____ I (or I think I will) feel comfortable completing tasks at work based on the training received in this course. I feel I can replicate most of the tasks of this course in my job.	2. ____ I (or I think I will) feel somewhat comfortable completing tasks at work based on the training received in this course. I can replicate some of the tasks of this course in my job.	3. ____ I (or I think I will) feel not so comfortable completing tasks at work based on the training received in this course. I feel I can replicate very few or none of the tasks of this course in my job.
Communication of Ideas Adequacy of language and cultural knowledge to carry out tasks in the job.	1. ____ I have excellent language ability and cultural knowledge to carry out workplace tasks.	2. ____ I have adequate language ability and cultural knowledge to carry out workplace tasks.	3. ____ I have limited language ability and cultural knowledge to carry out workplace tasks.

Appendix F

Speaking Task Scoring Rubric – *Introduction to Business English*

Student: _____

Evaluation	Does not meet expectations (55% - 74%)	Almost meets expectations (75% - 84%)	Meets expectations (85% - 94%)	Exceeds expectations (95% - 100%)
Descriptors				
Completion	Does not complete the task and presents frequent inadequate or incomplete responses.	Completes the task partially. Answers are mostly adequate, but need development.	Completes the task and answers are adequate.	Completes the task and answers are adequate and elaborated.
Comprehensibility	Speech very incomprehensible.	Answers are mostly comprehensible, but sometimes require an extra effort from the part of the listener.	Answers are comprehensible and require very little effort from the part of the listener.	Answers are comprehensible and require no effort from the part of the listener.
Fluency	Very reluctant, usually forced into silence due to language limitations.	Frequently disrupted by search for manner of expression.	Generally fluent, with occasional lapses due to speaker's search for manner of expression.	Occasional lapses, but generally fluent. Ideas interconnected in a logical sequence.
Pronunciation	Unintelligible most of the time. Frequently needs to repeat in order to be understood.	Needs efforts from the part of the listener to be understood.	Intelligible most of the time.	Always intelligible though a foreign accent can be slightly noticed.
Vocabulary	Very limited vocabulary and misuse of some words. Resorts to L1 to fill vocabulary gaps.	Misuse of some words leading to some misunderstandings.	Presents misuse of some words and needs rephrasing to convey a message.	Use adequate words though sometimes needs some rephrasing to convey a message.
Grammar	Errors make comprehension difficult. Does not follow grammar patterns.	Frequent errors in sentence structure and word order.	Grammar mistakes are present, but they do not obscure meaning.	Occasional mistakes that do not impede communication.

ⁱ These documents can be found at: ftp://ftp.fnnde.gov.br/web/siope_web/lei_n9394_20121996.pdf and <http://mecsrv04.mec.gov.br/sef/estrut2/pcn/pdf/estrangeira.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Translation by the author. The third cycle refers to fifth grade.

ⁱⁱⁱ Translation by the author.

^{iv} This document can be found at <http://portal.mec.gov.br/seb/arquivos/pdf/pcning.pdf>.

^v These courses will be targeted at the professional person for whom good English knowledge is essential but whose course costs will not be covered by a corporate sponsor.

^{vi} The author takes “integrated” approach to a different perspective: not only does he

consider the language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) but he also

includes subject knowledge and business practice in his model.

^{vii} Initially, the project received money from the federal government’s institutions as a form of professional development grant. However, this was not the only funding resource. The money also came from individual universities who joined the project. The British Council Overseas Development Administration Department (one of the investors as well) found it difficult to measure the government commitment to the Project. That is why they did not rush to get financial support from the Brazilian government. In addition, at the time the project started, Brazil was undergoing a series of political changes (Holmes & Celani, 2006).

^{viii} This refers to the study discussed above by Holmes & Celani.

^{ix} I have worked as an ESL teacher since 2006 and I have taught groups from various cultural and language backgrounds, which has given me the opportunity to learn about these peculiarities pertinent to different cultures.

^x An overview of this document can be found at <http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3392>

^{xi} Refer to ACTFL at <http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3565> for a full description of the IPA and to CARLA for more information on their assessment system and instruments at http://www.carla.umn.edu/assessment/vac/Modes/e_1.html

^{xii} The CEFRL can be found at

http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf

^{xiii} Researchers like Prabhu (1987) and Nunan (1989) refer to this type of methodology as “task-based instruction.” The organizing principle “praxis-oriented learning” in the *Getting Down to Business* model shares the theoretical foundation of task-based instruction, which takes tasks as the central element to the teaching pedagogy.

^{xiv} Here is a list of useful websites: www.ft.com (Financial Times), www.cnn.com (CNN), www.nbc.com (NBC News), www.finance.yahoo.com (Yahoo Finance), www.forbes.com (Forbes), www.entrepreneur.com (Entrepreneur), and www.nytimes.com (New York Times).

^{xv} Wanning, E. (2005). *Cultural Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*. Singapore: Marshal Cavendish International Private Ltd.

^{xvi} The IPA uses the native language as a way of isolating the skill being tested (i.e., reading comprehension) rather than spoken production. For an ESL context, this procedure must be adapted.