

Hotel English Course Review for Adult Learners in Industry - Planning Process, Delivery, And Assessment

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Abstract

Recently, hospitality industry has been getting into internationalization and globalization. Also, it extends that international tourist hotels have gradually replaced tourist hotels. With the developing perspective, English proficiency can be a key success benchmark for national competitiveness for professional talents development in hotel industry of Taiwan. To appeal and probe the importance of specific English of hotel industry for adult learners/students, this study mainly aims at integrating hotel English course review for adult learners/students via planning process, delivery, and assessment. Finally, it is anticipated that the statements and analysis could be useful reference for hospitality educators in Taiwan.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes, Hotel English, Hospitality Industry

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I. Introduction

In recent years, Taiwan has moved into a position of advancing in the travel and tourism industry. With the trend of globalization, Taiwan is getting insight of an increasing demand for the cultivation of professionals specializing in hospitality for which the educational sector should be responsible. Accordingly, WTO's *Tourism 2020 Vision* forecasts that 397 million tourists will choose a destination in Asia-Pacific by the year 2020 (World Tourism Organization¹, 2000). The Asia-Pacific region should prepare for an onslaught in the travel industry. Therefore, international tourist hotels have gradually replaced tourist hotels in Taiwan (Lin, 2003) and its tourism market will boom again. Based on the perspective, English proficiency has become a key benchmark for national competitiveness (Cheng, Chiu, & Lin, 2010) and it is critical to develop foreign language powers for adult learners/students in hospitality industry as well. Although the market for the traditional college-aged adult always be there, the higher education classroom of the 1990's and beyond is older (26-29 years old), with many more life experiences and a much larger degree of self-directedness, and self-motivation (Brookfield, 1990, 1991, 1995). To reinforce its national competitive edge and accelerate its progress with internationalization, Taiwan has made a great deal of effort to improve its English education as well as to upgrade English proficiency among its nationals (Cheng, Chiu, and Lin, 2010). Therefore, it is important for hospitality higher education faculty to understand and adopt adult education practices. Accordingly, applying the beliefs and utilizing the applications are critical and essential to be discussed in this study.

II. What Is Adult Learner?

¹ World Tourism Organization. (July, 2000). *Long-Term Forecast Tourism 2020 Vision* Retrieved March 28, 2001 from <http://www.world-tourism.org>

A. The characteristics of adult learners

Knox(1977) specified that the adult educator should possess three specific areas of knowledge: knowledge of content, knowledge of learners, and knowledge of methods. Moreover, Knowles identified (1980) the characteristics of adult learners as follows:

- (A) Adults are autonomous and self-directed.
- (B) The experience that an adult has is a resource in the learning environment.
- (C) Adults are goal-oriented.
- (D) Adults are relevancy-oriented.
- (E) Adults seek immediate application of the knowledge they gain.
- (F) As do all learners, adults need to be show respect.

In terms of the characteristics of adult learners, there seems to be at least two characteristics that have an impact on learning efficiency for adult learners: experiences and the self-directedness of the learner. The emphasis on experience as a defining feature of adult learning is expressed in Lindeman's aphorism that "experience is the adult learner's living textbook"(1926, p.7). Individual experience can be a valuable resource to new learning or to the learning group (Maehel, 1999).

B. Active learning

Active learning can help to intensify the adult student's experience (Leslie & Fretwell, 1996). Hence, teachers must actively involve adult participants in the learning process and serve as "facilitators" for students rather than the source of knowledge imparted to them. In the classroom, students are not passive recipients of knowledge, but are engaged learners. Learning is measured by self-evaluation as well as group and/or learner/teacher feedback (Conti, 1985). The learners are expected to assume the primary responsibility for their own learning (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1985; Knowles, 1975; Tough, 1979;). Hence, learners must read, write, discuss, or engage in solving problems. Most important, to be actively involved, learners must engage in higher-order thinking tasks such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The strategy

promoting active learning is involving learners in doing things and thinking about what they are doing(Bonwell & Eison, 1991).

C. Six principles for facilitating adult learning

Brookfield(1986) defines the six principles underlying the most effective practices for facilitating adult learning:

- (A) Participation is voluntary; adults engage in learning as a result of their own will.
- (B) Effective practice is characterized by a respect among participants for each other's self-worth.
- (C) Facilitation is collaborative.
- (D) Facilitation aims is to foster a spirit of critical reflection in adults.
- (E)The aim of facilitation is the nurturing of self-directed, empowered adults
- (F)Learners and facilitators are involved in a continual process of activity.

Therefore, an educationally effective hotel English course ought to take some important elements into consideration:

- (A) Clearly stated missions: Because adult learners are goal and relevancy oriented, the hotel English course must show learners how this program will help them attain their goals.
- (B) A positive environment for learning: An environment of mutual respect, collaboration, trust, support, openness and acceptance should be created for learning. Personal contact by staff, faculty and administrators with individual students before entry, during orientation and throughout their course and program. Staff or faculty can introduce participants to the courses or programs, help them design study plans, and provides ongoing encouragement through the whole learning process. On the other hand, institution can learn about their students, and help to make learning experience more student-centered.
- (A) Assessing the needs and interests of learners: Adult learners seek immediate application of the knowledge they gain. As a result, it is necessary to assess the needs

and interests of learners; what the students want should be incorporated into the curriculum design.

(B) Fostering cooperative/collaborative-learning climate: To fostering cooperative/collaborative-learning climate, faculty needs to be the role models by collaborating with learners/students and with other faculty. The faculty should promote teamwork with their learners/students by involving them via English usage in practical workplace of hospitality industry.

III. The Planning Process in Developing Hotel English Course

In designing a course, educators are facing at least three important decisions: what to teach, how to teach, and how to ensure that students are learning what is being taught. Today's English for specifics in hospitality education generally develop must-be professional competence for any level managers. As a result, it is important to design a specified and appropriate English course that is meeting the needs of the hospitality industry and learners.

Westmeyer (1981) has presented a curriculum design and its processes that include eight phases. The initial phase, "statement of psychological basis for curriculum", emphasizes that the development of a curriculum should build on a solid psychological base. When planning a curriculum, planning team must consider both the ages of the prospective students and the different models of psychological growth that related to the students. Briefly speaking, it is extremely critical for Taiwanese learners to facilitate learners to transform and adapt English usage well in hospitality industry.

The second phase is the analysis of needs of clientele. To determine what is needed in curriculum information has to be collected from industry professional and students. The information can be gathered through a survey, or a questionnaire. After collecting and organizing hotel English information by hospitality workplace, the

findings need to be compared with what now actually exists in the curriculum. The difference will be helpful in determining what is needed in industry.

The third phase is to decide what program/course should accomplish. The goals of curriculum must reflect both the realistic present and future conditions, as well as with a consideration about available resources(Vandament, 1989). It implies that how represents the practical usage and authenticity of hotel English would be main basis in the real world of hospitality workplace. The fourth phase is to outline the objectives that indicate the expected outcomes of instruction(Westmeyer, 1981). The objectives can help curriculum designers in selecting appropriate instructional materials and teaching strategies (Kirby, 1996). The procedure used to establish objectives includes (1)identifying objectives; (2)selecting ideas; (3)arranging ideas according to significance; (4) constructing activities in order of value and selecting the activities of highest value; and (5)gathering illustration for use in appropriate instructional modes(Wulf & Schave, 1984).

The fifth phase of “descriptions of instructional procedures” specifies four areas: course content, teaching activities, learner activities and selection of media(Wulf & Schave, 1984). The planning meeting should define what might be important for students to know. Too much detail and too many topics can confuse students(Beard and Hartley, 1984). Content can be selected after researching the literature in the field, acquiring the opinions of experts in the content area, and evaluating a need assessment (Wulf & Schave, 1984). The sixth phase of “sequencing procedures” emphasizes making media decisions aimed at ensuring learning effectiveness. However, it needs to consider feasibility, availability, and costs (Westmeyer, 1981).

The last two phases are to focus on learning assessment of students such as preparation of students’ achievement evaluation materials and writing and producing materials. Assessment includes discussions about what should be assessed and how information will be used, not just testing of students(Marchese, 1987). Information

from assessment can be useful in the planning of students advising, curricular change, and faculty instructional development activities (Ratcliff, 1992). However, faculty should involve in process of specific English test development. Faculty involvement in the process of hotel English test development could result in the following actions aimed at improvement: (1) faculty are more agreed on hotel English learning outcomes for students than they are prior to assessment; (2) newly developed hotel English learning outcomes are used in planning curricula and in assessing students; (3) Lower- and upper-division hotel English courses in the disciplines are more effectively integrated (referred to Banta, 1996).

IV. The Delivery Process of Delivering Hotel English Course to Adult Learners

The teaching and learning activities can be divided into three categories: (1) presentation is making orally by the instructor or by guest or a learner peer; (2) the learner engages in independent study, and make progress through meeting between instructor and learner, as well as through programmed materials such as books, audio and video tapes, films and computer programs; and (3) instructor and learner engage in activities that involve interactions between them or interactions among learners in a group setting (Westmeyer, 1981).

Therefore, the delivery process could be used to deliver hotel English courses to hotel English to adult learners/students as follows:

(A) Course readings in English: Learners/Students will be required to study the text of hospitality workplace and hotel industry prior to each class meeting and share thoughts in English.

(B) Lecture in English practice: A focus lecture from instructors will help learners/students understand basic concepts. The lecture will cover reading, other

relevant articles, issues and professional experiences regarding industrial workplace. Among usages, the holistic English teaching may be mainly considered and utilized in class.

(C) Videotapes: Following the focus lecture with full English teaching, videotape will present the main points that learn from class lecture. Learners/Students learn how principles are applied in practice of hospitality industry.

(D) Case Study/Collaborative Learning Group: A brief case study in English will be used to illustrate one idea or to introduce a specific topic by contexts of hotel business and hospitality industry. The purpose of case study is to build learning around a life-like situation. Designing exercises that place learners/students in real-life experiential learning situations and require them to apply theory to actual industry circumstances and issues (Ball, 1995). Learners/Students will be asked to reflect on the reading, videotape, class lecture and case study, as well as share their experiences, viewpoints and knowledge from class discussion and collaborative learning group.

(E) Guest speaker: Inviting experienced and outstanding hospitality industry professionals or experts into the classroom to share their foreign language utilization experiences in the class.

(F) Hotel visitation: International tourist hotel or chained international hotel will be arranged. Learners/Students will have opportunities to see the operation of hotel, and talk to department managers and staff member. Meanwhile, practitioners or managers of hotel can infuse industrial terminologies into the visiting program, and deliver related usages of workplace to learners/students in English.

(G) Laboratory: Laboratories, which can be taken as simulated facilitator, provide an environment for practical learning. Laboratory sessions can offer learners/students with an environment in which they can put those concepts and theories into practical use (Fitzgerald & Collins, 1991). Learners/Students are anticipated to prepare for potentially problematic or communicative situations that they arise via conducting

role-plays with practical English expressions in simulated workplace situations for hotel business.

(H) Team project: Learners/Students will be divided into teams to work on a project in holistic English practice that builds on the foundation of communicative and analytical skills that learners/students have learned for hospitality workplace.

V. The Assessment Process Determined Effectively for Hotel English Course

A. Important elements in conducting assessment in hotel English course

Effective assessment is central to successful hotel English course, assessment needs stringent quality assurance process. Some important elements ought to take consideration during assessment.

(A) Valid: The assessment process should measure only what it aims to measure. It should take place in a suitable context. For example, it would not be appropriate to assess the competency “Case Study in Hotel Industry” solely by means of a written assignment.

(B) Reliable: The assessment process should provide consistency and accuracy, whoever administers the assessment or whenever it is conducted.

(C) Flexible: Assessment instruments and processes should maintain flexibility to meet the needs of different individuals.

(D) Fair: The assessment should not discriminate against particular individuals or groups

(E) Convenient: The assessment process should be convenient for all concerned.

B. The assessment process used in hotel English course/program

However, an effective program assessment must be rooted in the course and the classroom. Therefore, it is necessary to determine the lessons effectiveness before

determine the effectiveness of hotel English course and program. The following assessment process that could be used both in the courses and programs is being developed within the context of four steps:

(A) Setting objectives for student learning: Assessable objectives prepare faculty for outcomes assessment at the program of study and for assessment in their individual courses. While establishing objectives, constituent groups such as enrolled students, other faculty who also teach the students, students services personnel, graduates of the program, industry practitioners, and administrators of the program should be involved (Banta, 1996).

(B) Ensuring that objectives are taught within the curriculum: Faculty needs to ask, what experiences in the curriculum promote student achievement of the important knowledge and skills? A continuing dialogue between faculty should occur to help the faculty agree on some fundamental issues and concepts that students should learn from the courses or program (Banta, 1996).

(C) Assessing students learning: To obtaining sufficient evidence, assessment should use a mix of instruments rather than depending on one assessment instrument only. The individual course or program could use the following instruments for assessing students learning outcomes.

a. Written examination. Multiple-choice test can be used to measure both simple knowledge and complex concepts of hotel English in industry. Essay tests help teachers to judge students' abilities to organize, integrate, and express themselves in their own words.

b. Oral examinations. Students have been guided and assigned to implement dialogue/conversation patterns in pair work or individual-to-team practice . During the exam, the teacher probes students' level of understanding of the theory and principles.

c. Group project / Individual project: The purpose of group work is to develop the ability of learners/students to work as a team in English usage. Working together in

groups gives learners/students the opportunity for the interchange of ideas, theories and insights (Lewis, 1993).

d. Role-play. Especially in cases where students have to be prepared for potentially hazardous situations that they arise. Students can learn, practice and are assessed through conducting role-plays in simulated workplace situations

e. Practical skills assessment: A multiple-assessor approach could be used to evaluating students' experience in field work. The students evaluate their own performance using an instrument developed jointly by learners/students, faculty, graduates, and practitioners. Then faculty supervisors and industry practitioners who supervise field work use the same instrument in their evaluation (Banta cited Knight, Lumsden ,and Gallaro, 1999).

f. Portfolio assessment: Faculty in hotel English course ought to develop skills in portfolio assessment. The assessment based on the collections of students' course assignments, research papers, materials from group projects, self-reflective essays and taped presentation (Banta, 1996).

g. Using findings to improve instruction or course: The qualitative and quantitative information that must be interpreted and used to make substantive changes in hotel English course. The findings could be a tool for improvement of instruction and for accountability.

VI. Conclusion

Diversity and foreign culture are the current trends and development for Taiwan's hotel industry, it implies that the high degree of cultural and ethnic diversity is increasingly present in the workforce as well. Furthermore, foreign language education infusing into undergraduate hospitality management was born out of the needs of industry. This has led to the rapid growth and has been one of key successes to internationalization and globalization of hospitality higher education in Taiwan. The effective applications of English for Specific Purposes in Hotel English teaching should

integrate theory with practice through interdisciplinary, learner-centered learning as well as encourages learners to assume responsibility for their own learning and interacting with peers. It fosters a spirit of collaboration and teamwork and a self-reflective attitude. More important, the curriculum development should include industry representatives in its annual curriculum review for content relevancy and inclusion of industry trends. The careful definition of competencies in collaboration with experienced professionals from the field and the integration of content has been a program's strength.

Moreover, there has been ample justification for including hotel language and cross-cultural communication in hospitality programs. As lodge and accommodation become more regular commonplace across the globe and world, a greater need will arise for hospitality personnel with a thorough multi-dimensional language power of host-guest communication. There would be a place for some local patterns, emanating from the national or international cultures, to be infused into the global norm of hotel language, and this applies whether the language in use is English or foreign language. Hence, there will always be integrated with a multitude of languages used for hospitality purposes and a multitude of hotel English.

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旅館英語課程於成人學習者之檢視—以規劃、教學與評量 之觀點為探討

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摘要

近年來，台灣旅館業已進入國際化與全球化之狀態，且國際觀光旅館業已逐漸取代一般旅館業之競爭情勢；換言之，台灣旅館業從業人員之英語能力已儼然成為競爭優勢必備條件之一。有鑑於此，本研究旨在探討餐旅業成人學習者之旅館英語課程檢視，並輔以規劃、教學與評量觀點進行論述，希冀其研究結果能裨益於餐旅教育工作者之參考依據，並進而提升其教學成效。

關鍵詞：專業英語、旅館英語、餐旅業

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