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SHAPING "SOFT SKILLS" IN THE FRAME OF TEACHING THE DISCIPLINE "BUSINESS ENGLISH" FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Soft skills have always been critical to career success, but their relevance in the world of work is ever evolving. These skills are now universally required no matter what industry you're working in. In a world where digital transformations are happening faster than ever, it's important to be able to make yourself stand out with the relevant soft skills that employers are looking for. According to *Deloitte Access Economics*, soft-skill intensive occupations are expected to account for two-thirds of all jobs by 2030 (Krasnozhon, 2022).

Soft skills define how well a person works with others. Regardless of how strong the technical skills are, if they are unpleasant to colleagues, unwilling to collaborate, fail to communicate, unable to solve problems and can't adapt to change, workers will find it difficult to do well at work. Soft skills play a big role in your career success, so future experts should prioritise developing them. When it comes to soft skills in the workplace, certain qualities, attributes and traits are valued above others (Lytvynska, 2022).

While there are countless examples of soft skills, such as conflict resolution, strong communication skills, and strong work ethic, based on our conversations with employers we know that the following seven important soft skills are the skills that employers want, such as follows: *teamwork; problem solving; communication; adaptability; critical thinking; time management and interpersonal skills*.

These are the soft skills employers want in their workplace, so upskill in these areas if required and prove your soft skills to a potential employer in an interview (fig. 1).
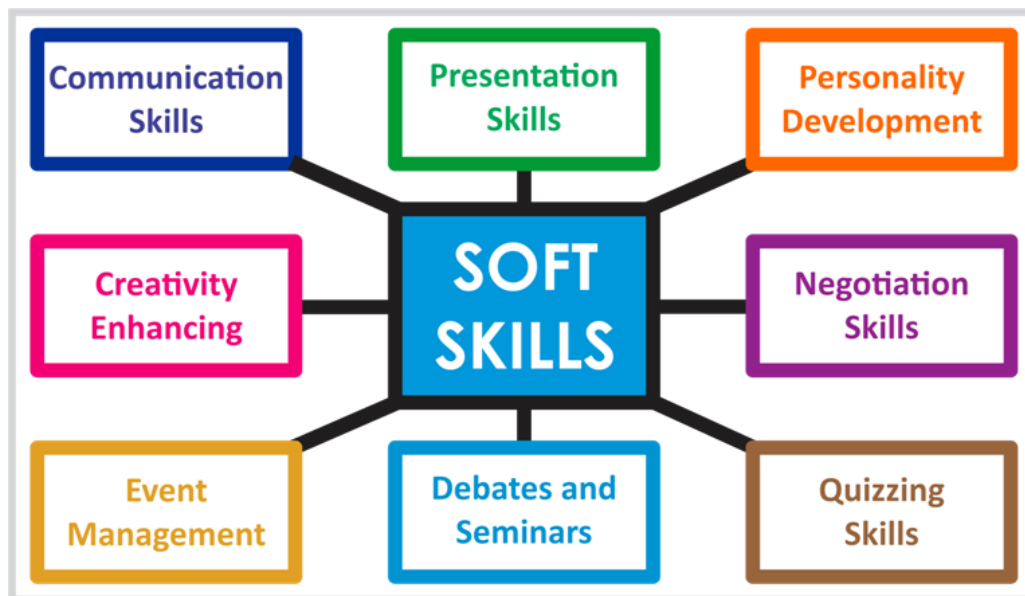

Figure 1. Types of Soft Skills

To add, the content taught in the scope of "Business English" is generally related to the business world. This could encompass how to speak with clients, marketing vocabulary, phone etiquette, building relationships with colleagues, or giving formal presentations. While most of these topics are applicable to any company, the created activities motivate the students to speak with the company stakeholders (Ferreira, 2022).

All in all, *the main aim of this paper* is to exemplify on the material of seven various activities how soft skills can be shaped during the university classes.

So, in the process of teaching the discipline "Business English" we propose to organize the following activities aimed at shaping soft skills in future university students of international relations specialty.

Sample Activity #1: *Look at the short dialogues involving Richard, director of a leadership training organization, in which he uses different trust building strategies with customers and internal colleagues. Match the trust building strategies (1–6) with the dialogues (a–f).*

Sample Activity #2: *Match the beginnings with the endings to make sentences which can be used to make a personal introduction to a new team.*

Sample Activity #3: Choose the correct option in italics to complete the blog.

"*1 Ever / Have / You thought about working in another country? Then why not take 2 benefit / opportunity / advantage of our new work exchange programme? The company is 3 offering / proposing / recommending stathe opportunity to work for six months in one of its subsidiaries on another continent. 4 Full / Great / Large salary will be paid in your home country and all accommodation and board will be covered by the company while you are away. This scheme gives you the 5luck / chance / likelihood to meet people from the subsidiaries and learn more about the global business. The HR department can address any 6troubles / matters / concerns you may have by giving advice, answering all your questions and 7 preparing / placing / launching a structured re-entry process for return to your usual job in your home country. If you 8 demand / wish / indicate to participate, then act now! Don't 9 pause / stop / hesitate to contact us or click on the link below to find out more about this exciting programme.*".

Sample Activity #4: *"Look at the following dialogue which comes from a team meeting discussing ideas on how to handle a customer complaint. Complete the sentences using the expressions: if I can add to that; if we do that; then I think the best option here; so, shall we try; what's the best way to".*

Sample Activity #5: *Think about something you would like to change where you work / at your place of study. Discuss some ideas on how this change could be introduced.*

Sample Activity #6: *Look at the pieces of bad news, which are followed by both a positive (con dent and optimistic) and a more negative (realistic and cautious) response. Complete the responses using the phrases in the box: I don't understand why we're getting this reaction; if we don't change something immediately; I'm very happy with the progress we've made; I think the schedule is totally unrealistic; I*

think we need to find a new approach; I think we should continue; this is extremely worrying; we'll catch up; we need to give things a little more time; we're still doing better''.

Sample Activity #7: *Choose the response to these statements that is more open and collaborative.*

1. *You need to unlock my emails in the evenings.*

 a *Firstly, tell me about your reasoning behind this request.*

 b *No way. We can't break company policy. It's simply not possible.*

2. *You have to understand that the company policy is for everyone.*

 a *I understand that, but it's so restrictive.*

 b *Yes, but can't we think of a flexible approach which will work for everyone.*

3. *I have to be able to access my emails in the evenings.*

 a *I really don't want you working at night. That's my final word on this issue.*

 b *I see the challenge you're facing. I think I have a suggestion that might work for you.*

4. *This change has to happen if you still want me to manage our customers.*

 a *Let me make sure I fully understand your perspective.*

 b *You have managed without it all this time.*

5. *I want flexibility to work when I want as long as I meet my targets and do my job.*

 a *That sounds reasonable.*

 b *But you can't just do what you want and when you want to. Sorry, but no.*

6. *I need access to our virtual meeting software from home in the evenings.*

 a *I don't think I can do that. You need to be inside the company firewall.*

 b *I'm not sure. (Jonathas Da Costa Lima, 2022) (fig. 2).*

Figure 2. Shaping Business English Skills

In conclusion, teaching "Business English" differs in many ways from other teaching positions. Keeping stakeholders' and students' goals in mind and incorporating relevant activities into the lessons can help to succeed in this rewarding EFL niche. These are just a few tips and techniques for teaching Business English for work to university learners. It's especially important for these students to start simple, recycle language often and build their confidence in their language learning abilities. So, Business English teaching can be very interesting and rewarding. Although teaching in-company employees requires a variety of skills and techniques, it mostly boils down to good preparation and a professional approach, for instance teachers should: *get a clear idea about the contexts in which learners use english; be businesslike but keep energy levels high; choose the materials wisely and be flexible and try to anticipate problems.*

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