

# A work-based approach for improving students' performance in the college general English class

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## ABSTRACT

Many university students in Taiwan have complained that the general English class is not very exciting nor useful for the workplace due to its exam-oriented and teacher-centered instruction focus. Such negative impressions often lead to a low motivation toward learning English and affect students' learning outcomes. This study aimed to establish an innovative work-based teaching approach and to explore whether it can help enhance students' motivation to learn English, positively impacting their overall performances. The work-based teaching approach included job-seeking activities involving self-introduction and resume writing, as well as product introduction tasks, fostering student participation, teacher-student interaction, and balanced summative-and-formative assessments. The study recruited 129 second-year university students in the general English class for an 18-week course where they were required to complete work-based tasks and assessments. A triangulation of research methods was employed to collect both qualitative and quantitative data from questionnaires, student formative and summative assessment, reflection journals, and student interviews. Three major findings arise from this study: 1) students' score gain on TOEIC pre- and post-tests was statistically significant; 2) students offered positive views on the diverse, interactive, and communicative teaching methods that enhanced their understanding and application of workplace English; and 3) performance assessment played a more important role in increasing students' learning interest and motivation than traditional paper-and-pencil tests. This study concludes with some pedagogical implications and suggestions for future research.



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## 1. Introduction

In response to the English graduation threshold set in Taiwan, many universities have implemented "General English Courses" that primarily focus on preparing students for the TOEIC exam (Test of English for International Communication). However, based on the researcher's teaching experience, students often expressed dissatisfaction with the uninteresting and impractical content of these classes, which primarily revolved around explaining and practicing TOEIC question types. Additionally, the traditional teaching model of "teacher lectures and students listen" contributes to low motivation among students when it comes to learning general English.

With over two-thirds of graduates entering the workforce, the demand for English proficiency in the business sector has been steadily increasing in Taiwan, emphasizing the importance of workplace

English skills (104 Job Bank, 2021, Chang, 2017). In light of these considerations, this study aimed to develop an English general education course that focuses on practical workplace skills. The course employed innovative task-based learning methods, encompassing listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities relevant to workplace English. A balanced summative-and-formative assessment approach was also incorporated, enabling students to gauge their learning outcomes through quantitative assessment methods and experience different learning activities while documenting their progress. The ultimate objective was to cultivate students' language skills required in the workplace and enhance their future competitiveness.

This study sought to construct an innovative teaching curriculum for workplace-oriented general English class by integrating a balanced summative-and-formative assessment approach, thereby enhancing motivation and effectiveness in English learning. The key areas of focus in workplace English are oral communication skills, English letter writing ability, and performance in English certifications (Lee & Schmidgall, 2020; Tu, 2015). Therefore, to address these workplace demands, the study outlined two main objectives:

**Objective 1:** Through various contextual task-based instructional activities such as oral presentations, group discussions, role-playing, presentation creation, letter writing practice, reading workplace-related English news, and English listening training, the aim was to familiarize students with real-world workplace English tasks. These tasks encompassed job-seeking activities involving self-introduction and resume writing, as well as product introduction tasks, fostering student participation, teacher-student interaction

**Objective 2:** By implementing a balanced formative assessment approach, which encompasses both formative and summative assessments, each accounting for 50% of the classroom assessment weight, the study aimed to focus on objective grading, learning processes, and independent learning evaluation, thereby improving students' linguistic competence and communicative competence (Whyte, 2019). Specifically, 50% of the formative assessment was derived from performing tasks such as self-introduction, business-product presentations, and English letter writing, providing teachers with qualitative feedback to evaluate students' practical application abilities and monitor their learning process development. This approach also trained students in independent learning and teamwork skills. The remaining 50% of the summative assessment was based on students' performance in simulated English certification exams, incorporating workplace-related vocabulary, phrases, or passages encountered during the instructional activities of different contextual tasks.

## 2. Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to investigate the development of an innovative teaching curriculum for workplace-oriented general English, incorporating a balanced approach that combines both summative and formative assessments. This literature review aims to provide relevant information pertaining to the aforementioned research objectives.

### 2.1. Current Condition of English Teaching in Taiwan Universities

In recent years, there have been notable reforms in the English curriculum planning of many universities in Taiwan. English has been incorporated as a core course in general education. However, the establishment of English graduation thresholds has led to an increased emphasis on test-oriented English courses (Chen & Li, 2015). This focus on test preparation is also observed in the "English for Sophomore Students" and "Advanced English for Sophomore Students" courses offered in the technical and vocational education system of universities. Educators in Taiwan, according to Liu and Liu (2022), have emphasized the importance of vocational education by recommending that curriculum planning should prioritize practicality and industry relevance. They argue that incorporating real-world applications and aligning the curriculum with current industry standards and demands will better prepare students for the workforce. This approach ensures that students acquire the necessary skills and knowledge that are directly applicable to their future careers, thus enhancing their employability and the overall effectiveness of vocational education programs.

### 2.2. General English vs. Workplace English

Scholars argue that linking English graduation requirements and proficiency tests with the effectiveness of university English instruction limits the recognition of global competitiveness and narrows the scope of university English education. Consequently, it is suggested that English

education in Taiwan should gradually transition from traditional English for General Purposes (EGP) to English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Research has highlighted English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) as a viable approach for vocational English education (Chang et al., 2013; Zou et al., 2016).

ESP is divided into two main categories: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). EAP focuses on academic English skills needed for professional disciplines, such as note-taking, literature review, classroom discussion, presentation skills, academic writing, and scholarly communication. In contrast, EOP concentrates on teaching language skills specific to certain fields, using real-life scenarios or workplace materials to provide students with simulated real-world language environments, including technical English, workplace English, business English, and English for presentations. This specialized training equips students with the English proficiency required for various professional domains and aligns with international job market needs. For the purposes of this study, EOP will be utilized to address workplace English.

However, the promotion of EOP courses has been hindered by several challenges. Firstly, there is a scarcity of English teachers with professional backgrounds and expertise in the workplace. Secondly, students often lack proficiency in professional English vocabulary (Lai, 2005). To address these limitations, an alternative approach is to narrow the focus to workplace English, which centers on practical communication skills relevant to general workplace contexts. This approach can be considered when designing the curriculum for general English courses (English Career, 2012). Considering the insufficient professional English vocabulary proficiency among students in our university's technical and vocational education system, this research project aims to transform the previous "Advanced English for Sophomore Students" course, which predominantly focused on test preparation and followed a teacher-centered instructional approach, into a student-centered "workplace-oriented general English" course that adopts a practical and applied approach.

### 2.3. Task-Based Instruction

A number of studies (Alisoy, 2024; Dolidze et al., 2022; Xie, 2022) propose that task-based teaching methods are effective for teaching workplace English within professional contexts. This approach emphasizes learner-centered completion of specific English learning tasks in relevant contexts. In this research project, we aim to combine the task-based instructional models proposed by Willis (1996) and Wang Shuyi (2006) as the core framework for our workplace-oriented general English innovative teaching curriculum.

Willis (1996) suggested three stages for task-based instruction: (1) Pre-task stage, where teachers introduce vocabulary and syntax related to the task to help students prepare; (2) Task cycle stage, where students work individually or in groups to complete oral or written reports; and (3) Language focus stage, where teachers and students jointly analyze language-related issues that arise during the task stage, such as vocabulary, phrases, or sentence structures, to enhance students' language proficiency. However, studies have shown that explicit, direct, and systematic instruction can greatly benefit students in the language learning process. Wang (2006) modified Willis's model by moving the language focus stage to the second stage and introducing a fourth stage, resulting in the following stages: (1) Task preparation stage, (2) Language enhancement stage, (3) Task execution stage, and (4) Teacher feedback and language reinforcement stage.

However, neither Willis (1996) nor Wang (2006) explicitly addressed the assessment or feedback mechanisms in their task execution stages, and they primarily focused on the learning process rather than the learning product. Therefore, in this research, we integrate Willis's and Wang's models and make modifications to include the following stages: (1) Task preparation stage, (2) Language enhancement stage, (3) Task implementation stage, and (4) Balanced summative-and-formative assessment and feedback stage. Through various contextual task-based instructional activities and a balanced formative assessment approach, our aim is not only to help students understand their learning outcomes through quantitative assessment methods but also to provide them with feedback and reinforcement during the learning process. This approach will enhance students' motivation, engagement, and overall learning outcomes.

### 2.4. Balanced Summative-and-Formative Assessment Model

Classroom assessment serves two main purposes: summative assessment and formative assessment. Summative assessment involves traditional objective paper-and-pencil tests to evaluate

students' learning outcomes. This type of assessment prioritizes transparency, fairness, and quantification, providing evidence for decision-making processes, such as grading, admission criteria, or graduation thresholds. School-based exams and national entrance exams are examples of summative assessment (McMillan, 2013; Ishaq et al., 2020).

On the other hand, formative assessment utilizes various methods, including recitation, reading aloud, teacher-student questioning, group exercises/discussions, assignments, oral presentations or demonstrations, role-playing, and portfolio assessment. Its primary goal is to understand students' ability levels and learning processes, enabling teachers to gather feedback for instructional adjustments, such as pacing or teaching methods (McMillan, 2013). Formative assessment also allows students to identify and improve their weaknesses based on teachers' feedback, ultimately supporting the learning process (Black & Wiliam, 2003; Hanna & Dettmer, 2004; Ismail et al., 2022). Moreover, formative assessment can incorporate self-assessment or peer assessment methods, promoting metacognitive skills development, such as reflection on one's own learning, and fostering independent learning habits or abilities (Black & Wiliam, 2003; Hanna & Dettmer, 2004; Fukuda et al., 2022).

Traditionally, assessment methods have heavily focused on summative assessment, emphasizing objective scores. However, in the past few decades, scholars such as Birenbaum, et al. (2015). Gipps and Cummings (2003), Earl (2003), Earl and Katz (2005), and Stiggins (2005), Jansson., & Löfgren (2022), have recognized the importance of diverse assessment purposes and have advocated for formative assessment as a core approach. They aim to gain a deeper understanding of students' learning processes and enhance teaching effectiveness through this type of assessment. However, in an education environment that places significant emphasis on grades in Taiwan, it is worth exploring whether an assessment mechanism primarily based on the concept of "formative assessment" can truly benefit students.

Therefore, this study proposed a concept of balanced summative-and-formative assessment, where formative assessment and summative assessment each account for 50% of the classroom assessment weight. The aim of this balanced model was to not only enable students to understand their learning outcomes through quantitative assessment methods but also provide qualitative assessment methods to facilitate different learning activities and enhance students' learning motivation. Ultimately, the goal was to improve overall learning outcomes.

### 3. Research Questions

To address the two objectives, here are the two research questions for this study.

1. To what extent, does a workplace-oriented general English innovative teaching course improve students' motivation to learn English?
2. To what extent, does a workplace-oriented general English innovative teaching course enhance students' English learning effectiveness?

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1. Research Design and Instruments

The purpose of this study was to investigate the construction of a workplace-oriented general English innovative teaching course, which includes diverse task-based learning methods, practical exercises in workplace-related listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, and a balanced summative-and-formative assessment approach. The aim was to explore the impact of this course on students' English learning willingness and effectiveness.

The study aimed to investigate the impact of an 18-week innovative general English teaching course designed specifically for workplace contexts. The course incorporated diverse task-based learning methods, practical exercises focusing on workplace-related listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills and a balanced summative-and-formative assessment approach.

To evaluate the effectiveness of this course, a mixed-methods approach was employed. Quantitative data were collected through pre- and post-course tests to measure improvements in students' language skills across the four key areas: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These tests included both standardized and custom-designed assessments tailored to the course content.

In addition to quantitative measures, qualitative data were gathered to provide deeper insights into students' experiences and attitudes. The following research instruments were used for data collection and analysis:

1) *Learning satisfaction survey*

This survey employed a five-point scale questionnaire designed by the researcher to assess the extent to which the "workplace-oriented general English innovative teaching course" enhances students' satisfaction and effectiveness in learning. The questionnaire

covers various aspects, including the design of instructional materials, teaching activities, task-based learning content, task outcome assessment methods, and summative assessment methods. Its purpose was to determine if these components meet students' learning needs, enhance their interest and motivation to learn English, and encourage their investment of time and effort in completing learning tasks, ultimately improving their learning effectiveness.

2) *Learning process reflection journal*

Through qualitative learning process records, students' opinions regarding English workplace-themed tasks and the summative TOEIC assessment were captured. These records explored the extent of language skill acquisition, learning difficulties encountered, the impact of individual and group tasks on learning, and the objectivity and fairness of assessment criteria.

3) *Workplace-themed task in quantitative and qualitative assessment forms*

The assessment of workplace-themed tasks involved both quantitative evaluation of assessment scores and qualitative feedback. The quantitative assessment provided scores based on predefined criteria, while the qualitative feedback offered additional insights and comments on students' performance.

4) *Pre-test and post-test scores*

Pre-test and post-test assessments conducted in the first and eighteenth weeks, respectively, allowed for a comparison of scores. By analyzing the differences between the two sets of scores, the researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the learning effectiveness of the students throughout the course.

5) *Student semi-structured interviews*

Student semi-structured interviews were conducted with a total of 9 students, who were recruited based on their majors. For each of the three majors, three students were recruited, labeled S1-S9. The aim was to collect further explanations and examples that could help in better interpreting the findings.

## 4.2. Course Design & Participants

The course in this study was an advanced general English course for sophomores, a mandatory 2-credit course in the general education curriculum. The course content focuses on English learning and application in workplace-related topics. Following the school's curriculum schedule, the first week of the course introduces and conducts pre-tests, the final week includes post-tests, and the remaining sixteen weeks follow the research framework of this course (see [Figure 1](#)) to engage in workplace English-themed task-based teaching activities.

Students' English workplace-oriented practical works include: (1) video resumes, (2) group presentations for commercial promotions, and (3) business correspondence. By incorporating workplace applications into the design of general English courses through various innovative teaching methods, the teacher transforms students into users rather than passive learners. In addition, students were required to take online TOEIC quizzes every two weeks during the course.

Participants included 129 university students majoring in accounting, international trade, and business administration. Of these, 37 participants were male and 92 were female. Among them, 110 students completed both the pre- and post-tests, while the scores of 19 students were excluded due to missing either the pre-test or post-test.

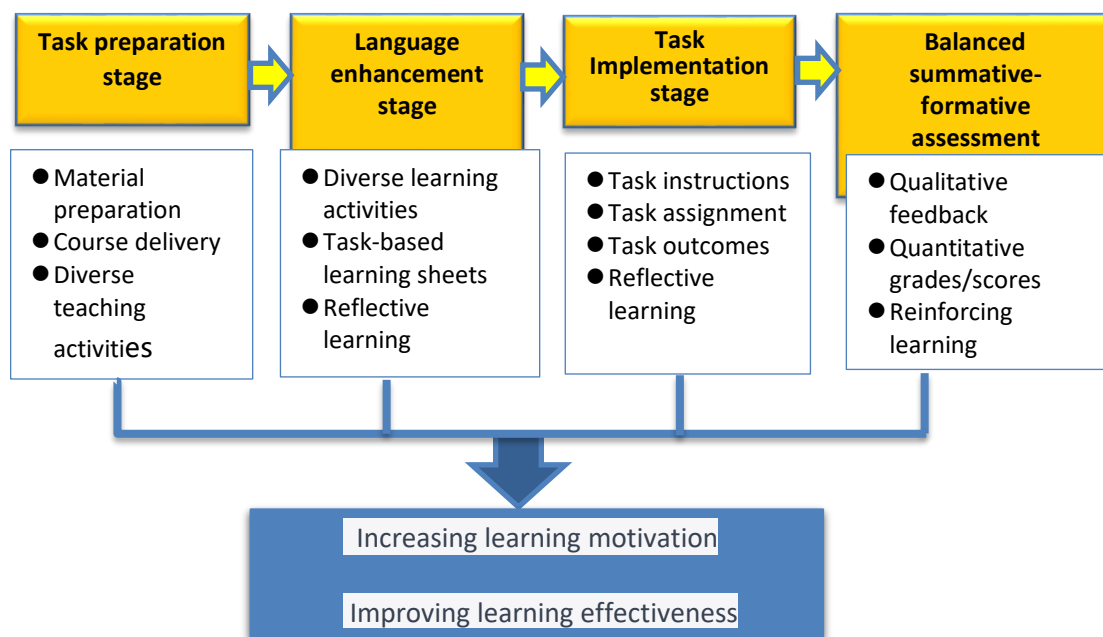


Fig. 1. An Innovative Work-Based Approach for the College General English Class

## 5. Finding and Discussions

The two research questions of this study mainly yielded the following findings:

### 5.1. To what extent, does the workplace-oriented general English innovative teaching course increase students' motivation to learn English?

Based on the findings presented in Tables 1 and 2, it is evident that the workplace-oriented general English innovative teaching course has several positive impacts on students' learning. The course content is considered to be of moderate difficulty and practicality, effectively enhancing students' understanding of future workplace English requirements and improving their relevant workplace English skills. The incorporation of diverse learning activities, including classroom Q&A, group exercises, resume writing, business presentations, and guest lectures by foreign teachers, contributes to enhancing students' interest and motivation in learning English. Additionally, specialized tasks such as resume writing and business English presentations serve as effective means to assess students' English proficiency, as indicated by the high agreement percentages (exceeding 90%) in items 1-8. Furthermore, through student feedback at the interviews, students acknowledged the diverse and interactive teaching methods of the course, find the classes lively and engaging, enhance their understanding and application of workplace English, and improve their English proficiency. For example, the interviewee labelled S1 indicated "I feel that the teacher is very dedicated in class and interacts with us. This creates an active atmosphere during class." Another example was expressed by another interviewee S2, "There is a lot of interaction in class, and English communication skills also improve. It is a good teaching method for the course.... I feel that by completing the assignments assigned by the teacher, I have gained an understanding of how English is used in the workplace." One more interviewee, S3 wrote, "it is different from the previous methods of learning English, more efficient, and yields greater results... Learning how to deliver presentations in English has provided me with an opportunity to enhance my skills." The interviewee, S4 indicated that resume writing improves my English skills. Similarly, the interviewee, S5 said, the skills about how to design and write the English resume have benefited me the most.

However, it is noteworthy that around one-third of the students express uncertainty or disagreement regarding the preparation for the online TOEIC listening and reading test, as well as related workplace vocabulary and phrase quizzes in a summative paper-based assessment, in terms of whether they can enhance their interest or motivation in learning. For example, one interviewee, S8, frowned that "I

don't have much motivation to actively learn English because I haven't seen much improvement. Maybe I have learned a few more words, but shortly after taking the exam, I forget them." Another interviewee, S9, revealed, "I believe that exams do not necessarily reflect a person's true English abilities because I feel that I may be weaker in vocabulary but stronger in speaking skills." The researcher's classroom observations suggested that this hesitation may stem from the extensive scope of the TOEIC written test, where the immediate effectiveness of preparation efforts may not be apparent, thereby diminishing students' interest in learning. Additionally, the predominant teacher-centered instruction and exam-oriented English learning approach in the Taiwanese educational system pose challenges in sparking students' enthusiasm for learning. Therefore, English educators should further explore the application of scenario-based summative paper-based assessments to address these concerns and more effectively engage students. Nevertheless, there are suggestions from the students for improvement, such as enhancing the operation and review mechanism of the TOEIC online testing system used for summative assessments and reducing the frequency of quizzes.

The study shows that the workplace-oriented general English innovative teaching course significantly increases students' motivation to learn English and improves their practical English skills for the workplace. The course content, which includes diverse and interactive methods like classroom Q&A, group exercises, resume writing, business presentations, and guest lectures, is considered moderately challenging and practical. These activities effectively enhance students' understanding of workplace English and keep them engaged. High levels of agreement in the survey responses support these positive impacts.

Student feedback further emphasizes the course's success. For example, students appreciated the interactive and engaging teaching methods, with many noting improvements in their English communication skills and practical abilities, such as delivering presentations and writing resumes. However, some students expressed concerns about the effectiveness of preparing for the TOEIC test and related quizzes, which they felt did not enhance their interest or motivation. This hesitation may stem from the traditional teacher-centered and exam-oriented approach prevalent in Taiwan's educational system.

To address these concerns, it is recommended that educators explore scenario-based assessments that are more engaging and reflective of real-world applications. Additionally, improving the TOEIC online testing system and reducing quiz frequency could help maintain student interest. Overall, while the course has successfully increased students' interest in learning and improved their business English skills, future assessments should focus on meaningful and practical learning experiences to sustain motivation.

Table 1. Learning satisfaction survey for an innovative work-based approach

Question Items(N=129)	Mean	SD	Agree & Strongly Agree	Not sure	Disagree & Strongly Disagree
This course helps enhance my relevant workplace English skills, such as understanding English resume writing, English business presentations, English oral communication, and workplace English vocabulary.	4.6	0.498	100%	0%	0%
The overall design of this workplace-oriented advanced English course is appropriate.	4.5	0.560	96.9%	3.1%	0%
The workplace English teaching materials in this course are practical and help me understand the future demands of workplace English.	4.5	0.586	95.3%	4.7%	0%
The diverse task-based English learning activities in this course contribute to improving my workplace English proficiency.	4.4	0.558	96.9%	3.1%	0%
The diverse task-based learning activities (classroom Q&A, group exercises, resume writing, business presentations, lectures by foreign teachers) enhance my interest and motivation in learning English.	4.5	0.586	95.3%	4.7%	0.9%

Question Items(N=129)	Mean	SD	Agree & Strongly Agree	Not sure	Disagree & Strongly Disagree
I believe that I have actively participated in this course.	4.4	0.597	94.6%	5.4%	0%
The difficulty level of the workplace English teaching materials in this course is moderate.	4.4	0.640	91.5%	8.5%	0.9%
The course's assignments (such as resume writing, business presentations) can assess my English proficiency.	4.3	0.639	90.7%	9.3%	0%
The written exam in this course can assess my English proficiency.	4.0	0.815	77.6%	19.3%	3.1%
Preparing for listening and reading exams enhances my English abilities.	4.1	0.723	82.2%	17%	0.8%
Preparing for listening and reading exams enhances my interest and motivation in learning English.	3.9	0.826	72.1%	24%	3.9%

Table 2. Student feedback from the open-ended questions in the learning satisfaction survey

Teaching methods & contents 32%	There is a lot of interaction and communication in English learning activities, making it enjoyable and not boring. (9)	12%
	The course is diverse and innovative. (3)	4%
	Resume writing improves English skills. (3)	4%
	Vocabulary learning courses are interesting, lively, and rich. (2)	3%
	The course pace is somewhat fast, and some students may need time to adapt and catch up. (2)	3%
	The project assignments spark students' interest and enhance their abilities. (2)	3%
	The business presentations are unique. (1)	1%
Enhancement of language skills for the workplace 32%	The group discussion time is too short. (1)	1%
	Feedback from the foreign teacher in English improves listening skills. (1)	1%
	Enhancing business English skills (13)	18%
	Improving vocabulary, speaking, and grammar abilities.(10)	14%
Assessment methods 18%	Frequent issues with the TOEIC system. (3)	4%
	TOEIC design does not align with human nature, such as the inability to clarify one's own incorrect questions, skipping questions, and mandatory answers. (3)	4%
	Vocabulary quizzes encourage students to memorize words. (2)	3%
	Excessive exams that hinder long-term retention. (2)	3%
	Reduced pressure in presentations, but uneven distribution of individual work and unfair grading. (2)	3%
Miscellaneous 15%	Abundance of assignments. (1)	1%
	Serious and dedicated teaching. (4)	5%
	Personal factors, such as individuals being unable to participate in the complete course, difficulties in memorizing English vocabulary, and lack of seriousness in class.(4)	5%
	Desiring course content that includes daily conversations and TOEIC practice questions.(3)	4%
Enhancement of motivation and interest 3%	Hoping to gain knowledge in advanced workplace English, for example, exhibition English.(1)	1%
	Increasing enthusiasm for learning English. (2)	3%



**5.2. To what extent, does the workplace-oriented general English innovative teaching course improve students' English learning effectiveness?**

According to Table 3, the average scores of students who participated in the pre-test and post-test for the TOEIC listening section were 158.23 and 178.05, respectively. For the reading section, the average scores were 117.64 and 148.05, respectively. The average scores for the overall test were 275.86 before the course and 326.09 after the course. The "significance (two-tailed)" values were all  $p < 0.05$ , indicating significant improvements in listening, reading, and overall scores.

Furthermore, the average score for the completion of video resume writing, business presentations for commercial products, and email correspondence in the course was 79.47 out of 100, as shown in Table 4.

Students' feedback from their reflection journals could be categorized into three parts: 1) the enhancement of English proficiency, 2) business-related knowledge, and 3) the enhancement of confidence. Table 5 details the examples for the three parts. These scores and students' aforementioned feedback demonstrate that the course has improved English learning effectiveness. However, it is worth noting that according to the "TOEIC Score and English Proficiency Conversion Table" provided on the official TOEIC website, a total average score of 326.09 only corresponds to the ability to engage in simple general daily conversations and is insufficient for continuous discussions or English-based work. Therefore, prior to the business workplace project tasks, this project familiarizes students with vocabulary and phrases related to the tasks through reading or listening activities. It also strengthens vocabulary practice and grammar analysis to enhance students' language skills for task application, which contributes to improving their performance in resume writing and business presentations (average score = 79.47 as shown in Table 4). For example, students reflected in their learning reflections, "For the part of making PowerPoint slides and writing text documents, the teacher provided templates and informed us of areas that needed revision and

modification in each class," "The teacher also gave us templates to follow; otherwise, we wouldn't know where to start. The teacher also helps us correct mistakes in wording and grammar," "The teacher allocates time for us to discuss and helps us with revisions," "Before the presentation, the teacher lets us practice and corrects our pronunciation errors and appropriate intonation." In addition, Table 5 shows students' feedback on formative assessment tasks, indicating their enhancement of English proficiency, professional knowledge and confidence through the process of completing the three formative assessment tasks.

Table 3. Students' scores on summative assessment

Major			Gender		Pre-Posttest (N=110)	Mean	SD	T	df	Sig.
1	2	3	1	2	Pre-listening	158.23	59.987	-4.312	109	.000
35	30	40	29	81	Post-listening	178.05	57.955			
					Pre-reading	117.64	71.117	-4.823	109	.000
					Post-reading	148.05	64.439			
					Pre-total score	275.86	117.943	-5.865	109	.000
					Post-total score	326.09	112.546			

<sup>a</sup>. Major: 1=International trade, 2= Business Administration, 3=Accounting

<sup>b</sup>. Gender: 1=male, 2=female

Table 4. Students' scores on formative assessment (1 video resume, 1 group presentation, 1 business email)

Major			Gender		Assessment (N=129)	Mean	SD
1	2	3	1	2			
45	44	40	37	92	Performance	79.473	6.628

<sup>c</sup>. Major: 1=International trade, 2= Business Administration, 3=Accounting

<sup>d</sup>. Gender: 1=male, 2=female

Table 5. Students' feedback from reflection journals on three formative assessment tasks

Enhancement of English proficiency	<p><b>Increased vocabulary in English</b> It feels like I have taken a step closer to English, getting to know more unfamiliar English words and understanding how to use them. In this assignment, I learned how to write a correct address in English and also gained knowledge of many workplace-related English words and specialized terms.</p> <p><b>Improved speaking skills</b> The teacher required us to introduce ourselves and record it, which made me practice it many, many times. Through this, I learned where to pause, where to emphasize intonation to make it engaging, and how to pronounce certain words. By mastering English grammar, I had the opportunity to practice the pronunciation of English words. I also learned how to communicate with classmates and teachers and how to seek appropriate help and listen to others' advice when facing difficulties.</p> <p><b>Improved understanding of English grammar concepts.</b> I learned how to create a simple English resume, use precise English vocabulary, and handle verb tenses in English word grammar. Through this, I learned many grammar aspects that are useful when writing a resume. The additional explanations provided by the teacher were also very beneficial to me.</p> <p><b>Familiar with content organization and writing</b> Although it takes more time to translate language from my familiar native language into English, and initially there were many words I didn't know how to pronounce, after practicing multiple times, it didn't seem as difficult anymore. I also learned how to create an English resume. While working on the assignment, I found it challenging but not impossible. It just required me to spend more time researching and translating than others. Upon completion, I felt a small sense of accomplishment.</p>
Enhancement of work-place knowledge	<p><b>Enhanced overall English proficiency</b> Through researching numerous unfamiliar industry terms and different resume formats, I not only worked with written documents but also incorporated speaking practice. I practiced introducing myself and describing my work experience multiple times, which made my speaking ability more fluent. I learned how to handle situations in English, both advancing and withdrawing gracefully. This will help me remain composed during future job interviews.</p> <p><b>Enhanced business knowledge through resume writing</b> This assignment allowed me to present a more accurate representation and reduce the occurrence of colloquial sentences. It provided an opportunity for students before entering the workforce to create a complete English resume. I learned how to effectively showcase my strengths in a formatted manner on a resume, making it easy for others to understand at a glance.</p> <p><b>Understood if my experience aligns with the requirements of the workplace</b> While writing my English job application resume, I discovered whether my experiences were sufficient and if they would be beneficial for my future career development. It made me realize the areas I need to strengthen in the future so that my resume doesn't appear empty or lacking.</p>
Enhancement of confidence	<p><b>Established future career direction</b> I gained a general understanding of the questions interviewers might ask, and I can now prepare answers in advance to face any future interviews. Through the process of completing this assignment, I pondered this question more seriously, which helped me determine my career goals for the future. Additionally, I aspire to achieve more than just becoming an accountant or bookkeeper in my learning journey.</p> <p><b>Boosted self-confidence.</b> Speaking in English is a significant challenge, but overcoming this challenge can greatly boost my self-confidence. Describing how my unique qualities and experiences make me competent for the job and showcasing my versatility can help build my self-confidence.</p>

This study revealed significant improvements in students' English skills through a comprehensive learning assignment. Students reported a notable increase in their vocabulary, allowing them to understand and use new words more effectively. Practical tasks, like writing correct addresses and learning workplace-related terms, bridged the gap between academic learning and real-world application. Additionally, repeated practice in recording self-introductions greatly enhanced their speaking skills, helping them master intonation, pauses, and pronunciation. This regular practice, combined with a better understanding of grammar, significantly boosted their verbal communication abilities. The assignment also deepened students' understanding of English grammar, especially in creating resumes. They learned to use precise vocabulary and handle verb tenses accurately, with the teacher's explanations being particularly beneficial. Translating from their native language to English and organizing content for resumes improved their writing skills, despite initial challenges. Over time, they became more comfortable with the process, achieving a sense of accomplishment through persistence. Researching industry terms and practicing resume writing further enhanced their overall English proficiency, making them more fluent in both written and spoken contexts. Beyond language skills, the assignment provided valuable business knowledge and boosted self-confidence. Students learned to present themselves accurately and professionally in resumes, avoiding colloquial language. This self-assessment helped them understand if their experiences aligned with workplace requirements and identify areas needing improvement. Reflecting on their career goals and preparing for interviews clarified their aspirations and set clear objectives. Overcoming the challenge of speaking in English significantly increased their confidence, enabling them to describe their strengths and experiences effectively. Overall, the assignment had a profound impact, preparing students for future career challenges and enhancing their language proficiency.

## 6. Pedagogical Implications and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to develop an English general education course that emphasizes practical workplace skills and examine its impact on students' learning motivation and effectiveness. The study involved 129 sophomore students enrolled at a university in the southern region of the country. Over the course of 18 weeks, the students were required to complete workplace-themed tasks and participate in summative assessments related to English in the workplace. The researcher, who also served as the English instructor, employed a variety of qualitative and quantitative research tools, including student questionnaires, formative and summative assessment scores, reflection journals, and student interviews. The findings revealed several significant outcomes:

**Improved TOEIC Scores:** There was a noticeable improvement in students' TOEIC scores before and after the course, indicating a positive impact on their overall English proficiency.

**Enhanced Teaching Methods:** Students acknowledged the course's diverse interactive teaching methods, which created a lively and engaging atmosphere. They reported enhanced understanding and application of workplace English, as well as improved English language skills.

**Effective Practical Assessments:** Practical assessments were found to be more effective in increasing students' learning interest and motivation compared to traditional paper-based tests.

Here are the pedagogical implications drawn from the aforementioned findings.

**Increased Learning Motivation and Interest:** The innovative work-based approach effectively increased students' interest and motivation in learning English. Diverse and interactive teaching methods, such as classroom Q&A, group exercises, resume writing, business presentations, and guest lectures, created a lively and engaging atmosphere. Specialized tasks like resume writing and business presentations were particularly effective in assessing students' English proficiency and practical application abilities.

**Balanced Assessment Approach:** The study demonstrated that a balanced summative-and-formative assessment approach can significantly improve students' learning outcomes. This approach not only provided quantitative assessment methods to gauge learning outcomes but also offered qualitative feedback to support different learning activities and enhance motivation.

**Need for Course Adjustments:** The study highlighted the need to address students' concerns about the preparation for online TOEIC listening and reading tests and related workplace vocabulary

quizzes. English educators should explore scenario-based summative assessments to make the learning process more engaging and relevant to students.

**Course Design Recommendations:** Future courses should consider reducing the number of students per class and increasing the learning hours to ensure efficient and high-quality completion of tasks. Integrating diverse English learning activities into summative assessments can further enhance students' learning interest and improve their English language learning outcomes.

Overall, the study highlights the positive impact of the innovative course on students' learning motivation and effectiveness in acquiring practical workplace English skills. The findings provide valuable insights for the design and implementation of similar courses in the future. This course has achieved its teaching goal of increasing students' interest in learning while also enhancing their English business skills through practical opportunities such as resume preparation and presentations. However, for future summative paper-based assessments, it is necessary to consider designing a mode that can enhance students' interest and motivation, avoiding the perception that preparing for English is solely for test performance without substantial gains. By implementing the recommendations from this study, future courses can continue to improve and adapt to better meet the needs of students, ultimately enhancing their English language proficiency and workplace readiness.

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