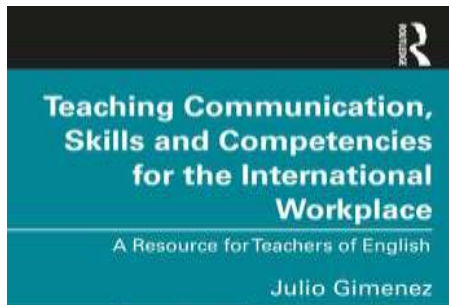


BOOK REVIEW



RETHINKING LANGUAGE TEACHING FOR AN INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH- SPEAKING WORKPLACE

Julio Gimenez. TEACHING COMMUNICATION, SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES FOR THE INTERNATIONAL WORKPLACE: A RESOURCE FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH (2023), London/New York: Routledge. 315 pp., ISBN 978-1-032-25495-1 (HBK); ISBN 978-1-032-22359-9 (PBK); ISBN 978-1-003-28315-5 (EBK).

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Teaching communication, skills and competencies for the international workplace, written by Julio Gimenez, is a versatile resource book designed for new and experienced teachers of English for specific purposes. It includes an introductory unit followed by eight core units, each covering a topic related to English for the international workplace. The units are grouped into four parts: Part I *Getting ready* includes the introductory unit; Part II *Preliminaries* includes units one to three; Part III *The new job* covers units four to six; and Part IV *Appraisal and promotion* includes units seven and eight.

The book starts with a helpful section titled *A roadmap for using the book*, with suggestions and observations on which unit to use depending on the experience of the teacher, the experience of students in the job market, and the length of the course they will be engaged in. For example, the author suggests the new teacher should start with the introductory unit, which provides an overview of teaching and learning principles in general, and of English in the workplace specifically.

The *introductory unit* is primarily aimed at new teachers and it provides a review of the key principles of teaching and learning, including learning theories, with a section dedicated to second language learning, lesson design, selection of teaching materials and assessment. The teaching and learning cycle, which consists of four stages (reflecting on principles; designing lessons; selecting materials; assessing) is introduced in this unit, and the new teacher is encouraged to apply the

cycle to their practice. Each unit succeeding the introductory unit is structured around the teaching and learning cycle, and aims to support the teacher in designing lessons on specific aspects of English for the workplace.

Unit 1 *Teaching skills and competencies for job hunting* focuses on the skills and competencies needed for job hunting. It begins acknowledging the complexity of finding a job on the international market, and it provides advice and strategies to support the teaching of job-hunting skills. The unit covers different aspects of job hunting including looking for ads, reading ads critically, understanding job requirements. A helpful clarification of the terms *skills* and *competencies* is also included in this unit.

Unit 2 *Teaching skills and competencies for job applications* starts by highlighting the importance of writing effective job applications to be competitive in an increasingly global job market. It focuses on the skills and competencies needed to write CVs and cover letters, which include identifying the key elements of application documents, identifying the requirements of effective application documents, and drafting CVs, cover letters and resumes for specific jobs.

Unit 3 *Teaching skills and competencies for job interviews* begins with an overview of the types of interviews and interview tasks students might need to prepare for, and it identifies the key skills and competencies for job interviews, such as identifying types of interviews, interview questions and tasks, asking for clarification, replying to questions and completing tasks successfully.

Unit 4 *Teaching skills and competencies for interpersonal communication* focuses on the skills and competencies needed for successful communication in the workplace. It includes an introduction on the importance of interpersonal skills to build relationships in the workplace including making introductions, managing small talk, building positive relationships and using appropriate language to speak about oneself and one's company.

Unit 5 *Teaching skills and competencies for written communication* starts with an overview of the different types of written communication in the workplace. The unit has been designed to support the teacher in developing their learners' key skills and competencies for internal written communication, such as recognising and managing practices for internal communication, understanding company values and mission statements, and producing documents for internal communication.

Similarly, unit 6 *Teaching skills and competencies for spoken communication* also focuses on internal communication, but spoken. The unit clarifies the distinction between linguistic and paralinguistic features, and provides an overview of the purpose of spoken communication in the workplace, which can include persuading, sharing ideas, creating positive relationships and increasing productivity. The unit covers the skills and competencies needed to communicate effectively using linguistic and paralinguistic features in meetings and when delivering presentations.

Unit 7 *Teaching skills and competencies for performance appraisals* begins by introducing the types of appraisals students might experience in the international workplace, and it supports the teacher to prepare lessons on the key skills and

competencies to navigate appraisals including self-assessing performance, evaluating the performance of others, identifying future goals, and dealing with negative feedback.

The final unit of the book *Teaching skills and competencies for applying for promotion* explores the skills and competencies needed to apply for promotion, and it focuses on the promotion request letter. It highlights some key skills and competencies to be able to request a promotion successfully and they include being aware of one's own strengths and weaknesses, being able to negotiate and to write an effective promotion request letter.

The eight units follow a consistent format. Each unit starts with a set of learning outcomes, and ends with a summary covering the key points discussed and an annotated list of sources recommended for further reading. Each unit is based on the teaching and learning cycle (reflecting on principles; designing lessons; selecting materials; assessing) presented in the introductory unit. Looking through the content of the units, it is clear that the underpinning of the course is constructive alignment (Biggs, 2009), according to which assessment tasks are aligned with learning outcomes and in-class activities, making assessment coherent and fit-for-purpose (Hunt & Chalmers, 2012). This principle filters through the following content:

- suggestions for needs analysis activities, and identification of the key skills and competencies for each topic;
- suggestions for the best teaching approach for the skills and competencies suggested. For example, unit three suggests the use of role plays to practise interview skills, and unit four suggests constructivism and connectivism to teach interpersonal communication skills;
- suggestions for turning skills and competencies into Learning Outcomes (LOs);
- two lesson plans linked to two of the skills and competencies identified;
- suggestions for teaching materials and sample handouts for each lesson plan;
- suggestions for assessing learning with sample material for assessment.

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The lesson plans provided in each unit are connected to the teaching philosophy recommended for the topic. Each lesson plan outlines learning outcomes for the lesson, duration and description of each activity, and materials and learning strategy needed for each activity. They are a helpful resource for the teacher, who can adapt each lesson plan to their needs. For instance, teachers might adapt the timing allocated to some of the activities depending on the level of their students. A lesson plan template is also provided in the introductory unit.

Materials for some of the activities mentioned in the lesson plans are also provided. Examples of materials presented in easy-to-copy handouts include reading texts, sample target texts (e.g., sample CVs, cover letters, emails), questions, prompts for discussion, and activity sheets templates. The activities in this resource book encourage interaction, communication, active learning, and critical thinking, as students are asked to research, notice and compare features in the examples provided.

The *assessing learning* section in each unit includes suggestions for the assessment strategy to measure the learning outcomes outlined in the two lesson plans of the unit. The assessment tasks are designed to encourage self-assessment, for example the *can do statements* checklists; they are also varied, and include reading, speaking, writing, and listening tasks.

In addition, each unit includes a breadth of supplementary resources for the teacher, such as reflection activities, language corners, culture and technology notes, insights from research, and extension tasks.

The *reflection activities* vary from unit to unit, but they are similar in purpose: they encourage the teacher to reflect in more depth on certain approaches proposed in the book, or to evaluate certain tasks. For example, in unit two the reflection questions encourage the teacher to adapt needs analysis questions and LOs for their specific context. By asking the user of the book to compare approaches and tasks to previous experiences, or link them to their specific contexts, these reflective activities support the teacher's decision-making process when using or adapting the resources.

The *language corner* boxes include lexical items, collocations and grammatical structures students will need in order to develop the skills and competencies for a particular topic (e.g., language for job hunting in unit one). The teacher can use this resource to develop tasks to pre-teach or clarify these lexical items, and often the book suggests which activities in the unit use the language presented in the language corners.

The *culture and technology notes* offer some advice and key cultural and technological considerations for the teacher and their students. The themes discussed are relevant to the topic of the unit and encourage further exploration. For example, the cultural differences in spoken and written communication around the world are highlighted in units five and six, and the impact of technology for appraisals and promotions are outlined in unit seven.

Insights from research sections provide a useful summary of core research on the topic of each unit, and they can be used by the teacher to deepen their knowledge of that aspect, or they could be used with more advanced students as further reading material or discussion topics.

Extension tasks include short videos accompanied by a set of questions. They are tailored for teachers to explore a topic further, but they could easily be adapted as extension activities to use in class with students either as warm-up or follow-up activities. Each extension task comes with clickable links to access the *worldsofenglish.com* website, which the book is linked to. On the *worldsofenglish.com* website, extension activities can be accessed in the video, audio and transcript format, making the website inclusive. The website also offers downloadable worksheets for academic and professional writing, a blog and resources for multilingualism.

In summary, *Teaching communication, skills and competencies for the international workplace* is a comprehensive resource book showcasing many strengths. It can be used flexibly by practitioners with diverse teaching experiences, and working in different contexts. Its content and resources are adaptable, and they

offer the user of the book an opportunity to explore concepts, theories, approaches and teaching strategies either in-depth or more casually, depending on their needs.

Further strengths of this resource book include the regular recaps and previews, and its relaxed writing style addressing the reader directly (e.g., *your students, you can ask your students*), which make this resource accessible and easy-to-read. Moreover, the quantity and quality of the additional resources included are evidence of the thorough and extensive research behind each topic explored in the book.

The only difficulty I experienced using the book was due to the location of some of the resources in the units. For example, I found the positioning of the *culture and technology notes* and *insights from research* boxes slightly distracting, and perhaps they could have been better placed at the beginning or the end of a unit to be consulted when needed. While using the book, I also thought that the lesson plans and the corresponding materials for in-class activities and assessment tasks could have been grouped together for easier access.

On balance, *Teaching communication, skills and competencies for the international workplace* by Julio Gimenez is a great addition to the field of English for specific purposes. The author expertly achieves the purpose of the book in supporting the new and experienced teacher of English for the international workplace in the development of engaging lessons. In addition, this resource book has the potential to appeal to a practitioner not directly involved in the teaching of *English for the international workplace*. The adaptable features of this book might reach a wider audience that goes beyond the target reader it was intended for; its content can offer useful insights to student teachers, to teachers of English for academic purposes, and to teachers of academic literacies or professional communication in international settings using English as medium of instruction.

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