Technical Writing Curricular Contents and Learners' Communication Skills Needs: A Congruency Study

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Abstract

This qualitative-quantitative study was conducted to determine if there is congruency between the existing technical writing contents as taught by English 8 teachers and learners' communication skills needs as perceived by the colleges served and by industries. As a focal point, congruency indicates whether or not the course - English 8 - as taught, is responsive and tailored to the learners' needs as perceived by the MSU colleges and the industries based in Iligan City.

The data were gathered through a self-made questionnaire distributed to the three groups of respondents drawn from the population by purposive sampling - - three (3) English 8 teachers who taught the course in AY 2006-2007, eighty-six (86) faculty representing the colleges which require English 8, and thirteen (13) industrial and educational employers in Iligan City. The results of this undertaking are hoped to provide useful information to guide the service department, the colleges, the administrators and the curriculum designers in strengthening their programs and linking these to the demands of the world outside.

Specifically, this study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the relevant personal datum or variable: the respondents categorized in terms of the faculty /employer/ length of service?

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2. What are the existing technical writing curricular contents taught by English 8 (Technical Writing) teachers to the served college-department students?

3. What are the communication skills needed by the students of the colleges served by employers of industries?

4. Is there a congruency between the existing technical writing curricular contents taught by the English 8 teachers (based on the syllabus) and the learners' communication skills needs as perceived by the departments served and the industrial employers?

5. What problems were encountered by the faculty-respondents in relation to the communication needs (listening, speaking, reading and writing) of their students inside and outside the classroom?

6. What are the implications of the results of this study to syllabus designers of English 8 and the service departments?

Introduction

One of the stated national educational goals is for the educational system to "respond effectively to changing needs and conditions of the nation through a system of educational planning and evaluation." Thoughtful planning grants people involved in the educational enterprise some measure of control over the future. Therefore, it is one dimension of the educational enterprise that needs to be continually strengthened.

The central task of schools is to provide educational services that will lead to the development of human potentials by providing relevant and adequate learning experiences for students. As the world hurtles into more interesting times such as Drucker's "age of discontinuities," the clamor for "better services," "better standards of learning" and "relevant, quality education" grows more persistent. Thus, curriculum making and planning must take account of the immediate needs of the target learners and prepare them by equipping them with skills demanded of them by the times. Curriculum designers must not only be *au courant*, that is, abreast of the times; they must also be ahead of the times.

The English Department is one of the vital service departments in any college or university. With the recognition of English as an international *lingua franca* the task of the English Department to provide

programs that develop the students' communication skills in English has become more pressing. As a service department, curriculum contents must be relevant. They must cater to the communication skills needs of students and their propective education/business employers.

However, there are various studies and researches about the many complaints from educational, business and industrial sectors that there are some graduates who have oral and written communication problems, and who lack the expected communication skills in their fields of specialization.

Monoy (2001) stipulated that people directly involved in the educative process share the common vision of producing graduates who are adequately competent in their own fields in such a way that they can be fairly responsive to the demands and needs of family, leadership, economy, business and other social institutions. Recognizing this goal, schools and their teachers keep themselves abreast with advances in education. Administrators subject their schools to accreditation and other instructional evaluations; teachers are sent to weeklong, sometimes month long, seminars and trainings in the hope that these would earn them the expected returns and dividends—i.e. bring changes and improvements in their curricular offerings.

However, despite these enrichment efforts, the quality of performance and human response to present realities seem to counter produce (Tenedero, 1996). The schools as agents of social change have had to contend with harsh criticisms, the most serious of which is producing half-baked, incompetent and ill-prepared graduates who have become liabilities to their employers.

From the researcher's firsthand experiences and personal observations, many MSU students, graduates, and some constituents of the university have low communicative competence in English. The studies conducted by the aforementioned researchers provide empirical evidence that support the existence of communication skills problems afflicting many learners today. These communication problems point up the urgent need to evaluate the syllabus contents of the existing technical writing course to provide future technical professionals comprehensive communication skills needs rather than isolated or atomistic language knowledge.

To find out if there is a match between the contents of a communications course (Eng 8) and the communication skills required by education, business and industry, this researcher undertook this study.

Theoretical Framework

The clamor for responsiveness of the curricula of various colleges served by the department suggests the relevance of the systems theory. As defined by Beauchamp and quoted by Saylor and Alexander (1974), the systems theory "is a set of related statements that gives meaning to a school's curriculum by pointing up the relationships among its elements and by directing its development, its use and its evaluations." (source?) This systems theory explains that the system is governed by sub-systems. If the system in the smaller scale does not function well or does not match with the goals and objectives of the world of work, the bigger system will be affected because there is no synchronization between the needs of the people and the normal scheme; the latter does not respond to the expected flow of the bigger scale. Obviously, this systems theory serves as a plausible account of the problems of the teachers, students, and administrators.

Furthermore, humans seek some way of ordering what they encounter to avoid being overloaded with information. They focus on small areas of knowledge rather than try to comprehend the whole (http://pespmc1.vub.ac.be/SYSTHEOR.html). Thus, the systems theory can be summed up as the harmonious and efficient functioning of all the sub-systems which must funchtion along with the bigger system.

In addition, this research draws concepts from the estab lished pedagogies of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Integrated Approach, and Content-Based instruction, which gives the learners classroom activities and materials that connect to or bear upon the survival of the learners in facing the real world of information and experience.

Conceptual Framework

The schematic diagram (Figure 1) of the Conceptual Framework shows the existing technical writing curricular contents taught by English 8 teachers and the learners' communication skills needs as perceived by serviced colleges, the industrial and educational institutions. Both would be analyzed to find out if there exists any congruency between them.

As shown in Figure 1, the systems theory of communication operates as the fundamental notion that the existing technical writing curricular contents taught by English 8 teachers must intersect with the learners' communication skills needs as perceived by the serviced

colleges and the industrial and academic institutions. English 8 (Technical Writing) is part of their curricula which serves as an umbrella in designing the course contents. The existing curricular contents taught by MSU-Main English 8 teachers were examined to find out if they fit the learners' immediate communication skills needs perceived by served college-departments in MSU-Marawi City and the employers of the schools and industries in Iligan City. The flow of the inquiry is outlined in the schematic diagram of the conceptual framework in the next page.

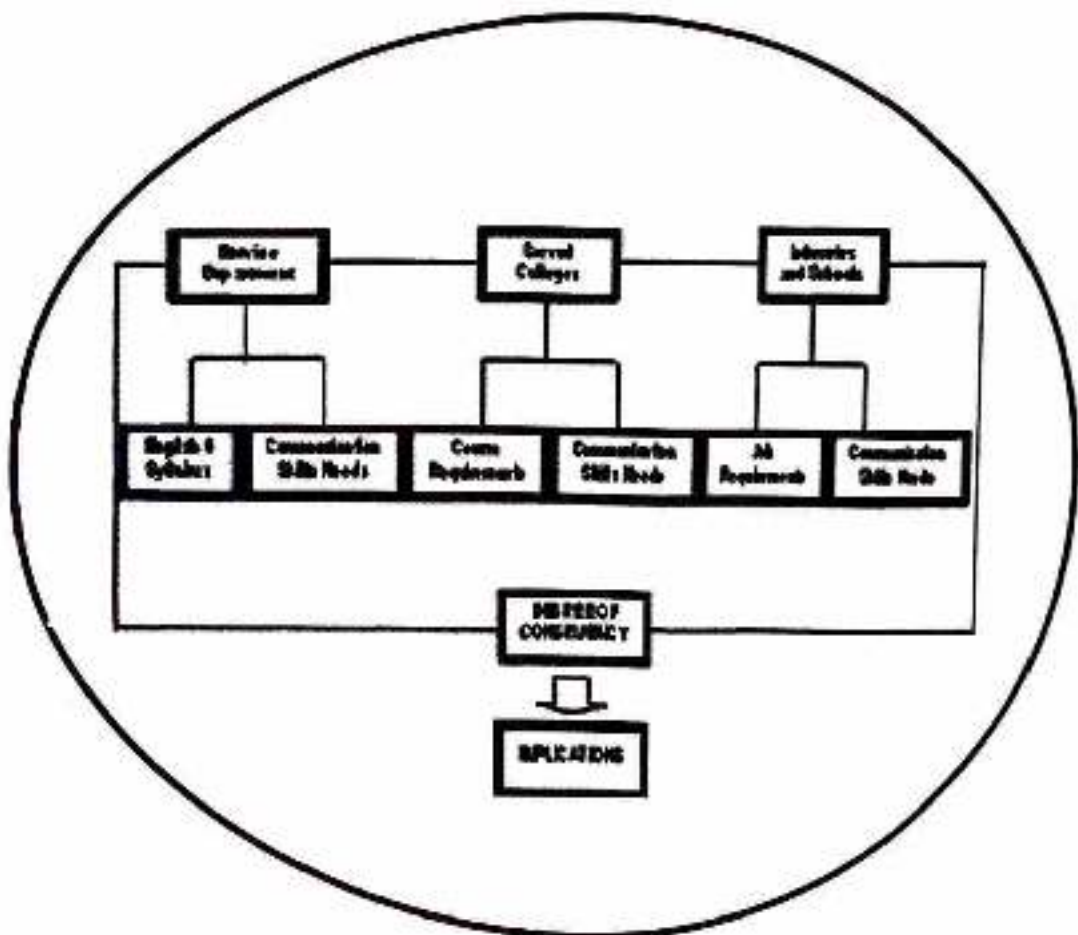## SYSTEMS THEORY OF COMMUNICATION

Figure 1. Schematic Diagram of the Conceptual Framework

Methodology

This study used the qualitative-quantitative research paradigm (1) to probe the relationship between the contents of English 8 syllabus as taught and the communication skills needs in demand in the world of work, as perceived by employers, and (2) to determine if there is any congruency between the existing curricular contents of English 8 and the perceptions of the colleges served and employers of selected schools and industries.

The researcher personally distributed and administered the self-made sets of questionnaire to the three (3) English 8 teachers handling the said course, the eighty six (86) MSU faculty members of the colleges served, the eight (8) industrial employers and the five (5) school employers who comprise the sample of this study. The data collected from the three groups of respondents were then analyzed to find out if the three groups of respondents' perceptions match with one another.

Furthermore, the researcher used the non-probability purposive sampling method in choosing the 102 respondents. This means that the researcher used his good judgment in selecting the respondents who best meet the purposes of his study. Such judgment was also based on the given criterion—the respondent has served the company/school for at least three (3) or more years.

The tabulated score sheets were categorized according to the individual responses of the overall average perceived communication skills needs of the MSU served colleges, and then the overall means of the two groups of respondents (served colleges and industries versus the serviced department). The data were used in determining the perceived responses of the service, served and employer-respondents in line with the communication skills needs of the learners and the course or the job-market requirements and the problems encountered by the faculty respondents in relation to the communication skills needs of the learners inside and outside the classroom.

The researcher tallied all responses of the individual English 8 teachers, the served colleges and the employers of some major industries and established schools. Their corresponding responses found on the filled out questionnaire were divided according to the four (4) macro-language skills such as listening which has five (5) questions; speaking which has eleven (11) questions; reading which has twelve (12) questions and writing which has nine (9) questions and the twenty-two (22) course or job-market requirements. Each of the questions has a uniform and

equivalent numerical value or descriptive remark for the perceived needs; for "Very Important" the numerical value is "4" or "excellent", for "Important" the numerical value is "3" or "very good", for "Moderately Important" the numerical value is "2" or "Satisfactory" and for "Not Important" the numerical value is "1". After getting the overall perceived communication skills needs, the results were then ranked from highest to lowest. In getting the congruency, the overall means were computed based on the overall means of the faculty respondents and then subtracted from the overall means of the industries in order to get the level of difference. The researcher then indicated the equivalent level of congruency or descriptive remark: for "congruent" the level of congruency is from "0-0.5," for "moderately incongruent" the level of congruency is from "0.6-1.0," for "incongruent" the level of congruency is from "1.1-1.5," and for "very incongruent" the level of congruency is from "1.6-3.0."

After the data were tabulated, ranked and graphed, the results of the research study were used by the researcher to determine if there is any congruency between the existing technical writing curricular contents taught by the English 8 teachers and the perceived communication skills needs of the served college-departments and industries in Iligan City, and implications were then drawn.

Statistical Tools

To arrive at an accurate interpretation of the computed data, the research study used the following formula in analyzing the percentage and the mean of the data:

Percentage

$$\% = \frac{f}{N} \text{ X } 100\%$$

Where,

p (%)	-	percentage
f	-	frequency of responses in a category
N	-	number of respondents
100	-	constant

This formula was used for demographic profiling of the respondents in terms of their population distribution and the length of service of the English 8 teacher-respondents, the Iligan City industrial and school employer-respondents and the MSU faculty-respondents.

Mean

Mean Rank = Sum of the ranking given by the respondents
              Total number of respondents

The formula was used to compare congruency between curricular contents taught by the English 8 teachers, on one hand, and the communication skills needs and the job requirements as perceived by the served colleges and the industrial and academic employers to prepare the students for their jobs, on the other hand.

In getting the level of congruency of the communication skills needs and the course or job-market requirements of the MSU served colleges, the industries and the served department, the researcher got the average mean of the served colleges/industries and subtracted from the average mean of the served department to get the result that would serve as the level of difference between the existing technical writing curricular contents taught by the English 8 teachers and the communication skills needed as perceived by the served colleges and industries. The level of difference ranges from (0-0.5: congruent), and (0.6-1.0: moderately incongruent) to (1.1-1.5: incongruent) and (1.6-3.0: very incongruent). Therefore, congruency or matching between the technical writing curricular contents taught by the English 8 teachers and the learners' communication skill(s) needs as perceived by served colleges, industries and educational institutions exists if the percentage of needs is less than or equal (e") to percentage of contents taught by English 8 teachers.

Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation of Data

This section is divided into five (5) parts. Part I presents the distribution of the respondents in terms of the length of service of the faculty/employer, in tabular form. Part II outlines the existing technical curricular contents taught by the English 8 teachers to the served college-departments. Part III lists the technical writing curricular contents and the communication skills needed by the served colleges of various

department units and employers of industries. Part IV provides an answer to the question - whether there is any congruency between the existing technical writing curricular contents taught by the English 8 teachers and the learners' communication skills needs as perceived by the served departments and the industrial employers. Parts IV and V are clustered according to the communication skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. The data that correspond to the skill are presented in tables and corresponding discussions are given. After thorough discussion of each table, the researcher presented graphs to give an overall picture of the discussions. Part V presents the problems faculty-respondents encountered in relation to the communication skills needs of their students inside and outside the classroom to inform the readers and future scholars about the implications this study reveals to curriculum planners of English 8 and the service departments.

PART I. Relevant Personal Data: The Respondents Categorized

This part of the study considers and interprets the data on the characteristics of the English 8 teachers, MSU served college and industrial respondents in Iligan City. The characteristics singled out for examination are population distribution of the three groups of respondents and length of service. The breakdown is intended to show the distribution and background of the respondents. Tables 1 and 2 provide the summary of the distribution.

Table 1. Population Distribution of the English 8 Teachers, the Industrial and School Employers in Iligan City and the MSU-Marawi Faculty-Respondents

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
MSU English 8 Teachers	3	2.94
Industrial and School Employers	13	12.75
MSU Served College-Department Faculty	86	84.31
Total	102	100

Table 1 presents the data on the population distribution of the English 8 teachers, the industrial and school employers in Iligan City and the MSU-Marawi faculty-respondents. It reveals that of the total 102 respondents, only three (3) or 2.94% MSU-English 8 teachers out of five (5) teachers handling the English 8 (Technical Writing) in the second semester of academic year 2005-2006 formed part of the sample. The remaining two (2) English 8 teachers were members of the researcher's Oral defense panel, hence, they inhibited themselves. Thirteen (13) or 12.75% of the employer-respondents were from Iligan City industries and schools. The researcher included only the major actively operating industrial companies for business and the established and well-known schools in the said city. There were eighty six (86) or 84.31% faculty respondents of MSU-Main Campus from various served college-departments. The researcher included only those faculty members who taught basic or advanced courses in the baccalaureate levels, and who met the given set of criteria, and made themselves available for the interview.

Table 2. Length of Service of the Respondents

Respondents	3 to 6 years	7 years and above	Total
MSU English 8 Teachers	1 (4.54)	2 (2.5)	3
Industrial and School Employers MSU Served College-	3 (13.64)	10 (12.5)	13
Department Faculty	18 (81.82)	68 (85)	86
Total	22 (21.57)	80 (78.43)	100

The data presented in Table 2 shows the length of service of the 102 respondents. Twenty two (22) or 21.57% of the respondents of the study have worked from three (3) to six (6) years in the aforestated companies while eighty (80) or 78.43% of them have served these firms for seven (7) or more years. It can be safely assumed that majority of the respondents have knowledge and experience in their field of endeavor and that they are fully conversant with the communication skills requirements of the job-market. The respondents also know the methods and subject matter essential in preparing students in the fields of engineering, medicine, social sciences, agriculture, fisheries, information

technology, forestry and environmental science studies, hotel and restaurant management, business courses and other undergraduate courses with respect to their English skills.

The significantly greater number of respondents who have to their credit seven (7) or more years of teaching experience may be assumed to bring to the service broader understanding, sense of security and self-possession, insights, and perspectives that come only with time.

PART II What are the existing technical writing curricular contents taught by English 8 (Technical Writing) teachers to the served college-department students?

Technical writing is one of the forms of invisible technical labor that people hardly pay attention to, but which plays an important role in mediating between technologies and users, and structuring the way people think about products. Thus, English 8 is a specialized course that equips students with essential knowledge and skills in their field of expertise.

The existing English 8 syllabus covers the mechanics of writing and the production of special reports, proposals and inter-office correspondence. It also includes the planning, gathering, interpreting and writing of technical papers and articles. It aims to teach the students how to communicate facts with graphics (visuals) to inform, entertain, or persuade.

The Technical Writing course is divided into three different units. The first unit of the course enables the students to define technical writing; identify the characteristics and elements of technical writing; distinguish what people in technical professions are required to write; identify the tasks of the technical writers and be acquainted with the five basic principles of good technical writing.

The second unit of the course helps the students to identify the special techniques used in technical writing; present correctly the numbers, equations, symbols and mathematical equations used in technical writing and apply the techniques of presenting linear graphic data specifications. It also suggests some reinforcement activities like collecting paragraphs containing the special techniques in technical writing from magazines and books and oral reporting.

The last unit of the course engages the students in the preparation of various forms of technical outputs, outlines; write business messages/

reports; the application of communication principles to writing a report, letter, proposal, and differentiation of the parts and the use of long and short reports.

PART III   **What are communication skills needs as perceived by the served colleges of various department units and by employers of industries?**

Table 3. Overall Average on the Perceived Communication Skills Needs in Relation to Listening of the MSU Served Colleges and Industries in Iligan City

Perceived Communication Skills Needs	English 8 Faculty	MSU Faculty of the Served Colleges	Industries and Other Schools	Overall Average	Level of Importance	Rank
1. Listening to instructions given by the supervisors and client	3.67	3.73	4	3.76	VI	2
2. Listening to recorded tapes conducted during lectures and demonstration series	2.667	3.45	2.85	3.35	VI	4
3. *Listening to sound drills in word forms, phraseology forms, sentence forms, paragraph forms, and others*	2.67	3.31	2.54	3.19	I	5
4. Listening to dictations for note taking	3.67	3.6	3.69	3.61	VI	3
5. **Listening for comprehension**	4	3.97	4	3.97	VI	1
6. Listening to instructions given by supervisors and client	3.67	3.73	4	3.76	VI	2

Descriptive Remarks			
	1.0 - 1.74	Not Important	(NI)
	1.75 - 2.24	Moderately Important	(MI)
	2.25 – 3.24	Important	(I)
	3.25 - 4.0	Very Important	(VI)

Table 3 reveals the overall average on the perceived communication skills needs, specifically, listening skills of the MSU served colleges and industries in Iligan City. Among the five (5) possible perceived communication skills needs, listening for comprehension ranked first with the overall average of 3.97. This means that respondents considered this particular choice a very important skill. Students' comprehension ability should be trained and honed for them to be able to respond to what is being read, watched and listened to in the working local or global community. Careful listening is a condition for the students to fully perform in different situations that they will meet in their respective work places.

Commands, orders, requests and other functions of language in the world outside require deliberate, active listening to be properly carried out or executed. Action or execution of a task required of one at the workplace must be preceded by comprehension or reception, and comprehension comes with listening. Lack of comprehension could easily foul up instructions. Words lose their illocutionary force and no perlocutionary force is realized.

Ranking second is listening to instructions given with the overall average of 3.76, which actually is closely related to listening for comprehension. This result agrees with the observation of Flores and Lopez (1998): listening for comprehension provides students the opportunities to hear English differing patterns spoken by people in a variety of real situations, develops listening comprehension skills that they can apply to other situations, makes them feel more comfortable about listening to news in English and increases their knowledge and understanding of the Philippines and the world through the radio and television.

In the same table, listening to sound drills in word forms, phraseology forms, sentence forms, paragraph forms, and others ranked last with the overall average of 3.19. The respondents' answer indicates that this skill is moderately important. They must believe that the students are expected to fully decipher the messages whether via oral or written not by paying attention to units or language broken into pieces, but by hearing language whole and by developing some useful listening strategies (Brown, 1994) such as picking out key words, using contextual clues in predicting a speaker's meaning, and listening for the gist, to mention some.

Of all the possible choices, listening to sound drills in word form, phraseology form, sentence form, paragraph form and others is the least

relevant or practical; it more properly belongs to the classroom and smacks of overlearning. It is obvious that placed beside other skills like listening to dictations (ranked third with the overall average of 3.61) and listening to tapes of lectures and demonstration series (ranked fourth with the overall average of 3.35), it has lesser significance.

Table 4. Overall Average on the Perceived Communication Skills Needs in Relation to Speaking of the MSU Served Colleges and Industries in Iligan City

Perceived Communication Skills Needs	English & Faculty	MSU Faculty of the Served Colleges	Industries and Other Schools	Overall Average	Level of Importance	Rank
1. Speaking good and grammatically correct English sentence structures	3	3.58	3.54	3.50	VI	2
2. Giving oral instructions, directions, guideposts, and others.	3.67	3.55	3.54	3.50	VI	2
3. Pronouncing/enunciating words correctly and with the appropriate pause, intonation, stress, and others	3	3.4	3.08	3.29	VI	7
4. Delivering oral reports in class	3.33	3.64	3.15	3.48	VI	3
5. Engaging in communication exchanges – e.g., prepared dialogues and others	3	3.42	3.54	3.36	VI	5
6. Demonstrating speaking ability through debates, declamations, orations, and others	3	3.13	2.92	3.04	I	9
7. Describing objects or processes orally	3	3.52	3.39	3.41	VI	4
8. Responding in job interviews	3	3.74	3.85	3.72	VI	1
9. Demonstrating language and language use awareness – e.g., appropriate register, style and variety	3	3.44	3.39	3.35	VI	6
10. Learning the rules or conventions of discourse – e.g., topics to introduce, turn-taking, etc.	3	3.39	3.31	3.29	VI	7
11. Applying strategic competence – e.g., conversation repairs, error corrections, and others.	3	3.38	3.15	3.25	VI	8

Descriptive Remarks			
1.0 - 1.74	Not Important	(NI)
1.75 - 2.24	Moderately Important	(MI)
2.25 - 3.24	Important	(I)
3.25 - 4.0	Very Important	(VI)

Table 4 shows the overall average on the perceived communication skills needs of the MSU served colleges and industries in Iligan City in relation to speaking. Communication skills needs number eight (8) i.e., responding in job interviews—ranked first with the overall average of 3.72. This implies the great importance assigned to this particular skill by the respondents. The job interview is a kind of rite of passage, for any one looking for a job; hence, a critical speaking event for which students prepare for. Flores and Lopez's (1998) study gains support from the above finding. Responding in job interviews is followed by "giving out instructions, directions, guideposts, and others" and "speaking good and grammatically correct sentence structures" which are both ranked second with the overall average of 3.50. Items numbers 8 and 2 are commonly used functions of language. These are included in the lists drawn up by Wilkins (1976), Alexander and Ek (1975 cited in Brown, 1994). These lists are mentioned in discussions on the Notional-Functional Syllabus. Accuracy is given special stress here, as implied by Item Number 1 being ranked second. This suggests that accuracy or the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences is generally valued as a competency, an asset that is not only desirable but also necessary for job applicants.

The close ranking of other communicative functions or purposes - i.e., delivering oral reportage in class (ranked third with the overall average of 3.48); describing objects or processes orally (ranked fourth with the overall average of 3.41); and engaging in communicative exchanges (ranked fifth with the overall average of 3.36) - suggests the notional-functional syllabus (NFS) which is cited as an immediate ancestor of the communicative approach. The distinguishing characteristics of the NFS were its focus on functions as the organizing elements of the curriculum and its departure from the structural syllabus in which sequenced grammatical structures served as the organizers. Unlike other methods that attended too strongly to the grammatical form, NFS focused on the pragmatic purposes to which language is used.

Immediately apparent is the connection between NFS and task-based teaching. The so-called target tasks are not unlike the functions of language that are listed in NFS; the former, however, are much more specific and more explicitly related to classroom instruction. For example, "giving personal information," "a communicative function for language," can be made into a more specific target task - "giving personal information in a job interview."

English, the present most important language of wider communication, was reported in the 1980 census as being spoken by at least 64.5% of the population (according to the 1986 census). This represents an increase of over 19% from the last decennial census (1970). Again, this percentage of growth is understated, as the 1970 census listed 16,409,133 speakers of English or 44.7% of the total population. In spite of this increase in numbers and in percentage, however, there has been fear expressed that the quality of English language competence in the country is "deteriorating" (Gonzales, 1985 as quoted by Bautista, 1996). Awareness of this language situation in the Philippines could account for Item Number 1 speaking good and grammatically correct English) being accorded special stress by the served colleges and industries in Iligan, as evidenced by its being ranked second only to Item Number 8 (responding to job interviews).

Item Numbers 4 and 7 (delivering oral reports in class and describing objects and processes orally) which were ranked third with the overall average of 3.48 and fourth with the overall average of 3.41, respectively, may be classified as among the cognitively demanding tasks connected with academic content. These make good examples of tasks requiring cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). Cummins (1989; 1981) suggests that many classroom tasks are cognitively demanding and often have to be solved independently by the learner without support from the context. Context-reduced communication relies heavily on linguistic cues and involves abstract thinking.

Demonstrating speaking ability by in debates, declamations, orations, and others was ranked last or viewed as the least important skill or 3.04 for the students to showcase their communication ability as perceived by the respondents (See Table 4). This could be explained by Gonzales (1980) as quoted by Bautista (1996). Such artistic or aesthetic use of language is recognized by MSU served colleges and industries as belonging in another domain, not in a workplace. Besides, verbal performance requires some natural endowment and training, and gifted individuals like Cicero and Demosthenes do not grow on trees. This means that the respondents do expect the learners to exhibit their knowledge and communication skills through literary activities. The real demands of the world of job are measured through interpersonal and intrapersonal communication. The language users eventually display their skills in business and academic situations which are required for them to be competent and deliver what their work demands of them.

Table 5. Overall Average on the Perceived Communication Skills Needs in Relation to Reading of the MSU Served Colleges and Industries in Iligan City

Perceived Communication Skills Needs	English 8 Faculty	MSU Faculty of the Served Colleges	Industries and Other Schools	Overall Average	Level of Importance	Rank
1. Reading technical reports, business reports, literary pieces and written instructions, guidelines, and others.	3.33	3.62	3.46	3.59	VI	4
2. Reading to understand the semantic content of the materials read	3.67	3.69	3.46	3.66	VI	1
3. Reading administrative instructions and designations of tasks	3	3.48	3.77	3.51	VI	6
4. Interpreting concepts, philosophies, mathematical problem-solving activities at both literal and figurative levels for better understanding	3.33	3.6	3.62	3.59	VI	4
5. *Reading stories for appreciation*	3	3.26	2.62	3.17	I	9
6. Reading selections for comprehension through context clues and vocabulary expansion	3.33	3.69	3.08	3.60	VI	3
7. Reading to evaluate the meaning and to make critical sound judgment on the selection or piece	3.33	3.66	3.15	3.59	VI	4
8. Reading for critiquing purposes (review)	3.33	3.57	3.31	3.53	VI	5
9. Reading to understand visual aids and non-textual materials	3.33	3.62	3.54	3.60	VI	3
10. Reading to summarize or prepare an abstract or just getting the gist	3.33	3.65	3.54	3.63	VI	2
11. Reading the articles through skimming	2.67	3.42	3.31	3.38	VI	8
12. Reading the articles through scanning	2.67	3.47	3.23	3.41	VI	7

Descriptive Remarks   1.0 - 1.74   Not Important   (NI)
    1.75 – 2.24   Moderately Important   (MI)
    2.25 – 3.24   Important   (I)
    3.25 – 4.0   Very Important   (VI)

Reading skills must be developed for a successful academic life. Table 5 is seen the overall average on the perceived communication skills needs in relation to reading of the MSU served colleges and industries in Iligan City. Reading to understand the semantic content of the materials read (Item Number 2) ranking first was identified by the respondents as a very important skill with the overall average of 3.66. This lends support to by Pangcatan's (1986) study in which she reiterated reading authorities' shared conviction that it is unthinkable that one can achieve success along any line without the ability to read.

As with uses or functions and tasks related to speaking skills, the reading skills were ranked according to what the respondents perceived as needed in the workplace. The result of the ranking supports Miguel's (1997) findings · i.e., language learning as functional and utilitarian. Summarizing or preparing abstracts or just getting the gist (ranked second with the overall average of 3.63), understanding visual aids and non-textual materials (ranked third or 3.60), reading selections for comprehension through context clues and vocabulary expansion (ranked third with the overall average of 3.60), and reading technical reports, business reports, literary pieces and written instructions, guidelines, and others and reading for critiquing purposes, to name a few, are uses of reading associated with the world outside the class.

As expected, Item Number 5 (reading for appreciation) was ranked last with the overall average of 3.17. This being more a personal indulgence and a form of leisure, it understandably does not have a place in the workplace. Respondents took cognizance only of patently job-related micro-uses or functions of reading. Moreover, meaningful contexts introduced to the learners in the language classes often make language learning more functional and utilitarian. Learners capitalized so much on the knowledge they have learned in the past and relate them with current information thereby deriving meanings to comprehend a text or a lecture (Miguel, 1997).

The respondents in the same considered reading for appreciation as an important skill and ranked it last with the overall average of 3.17. This calls attention to students' need to read for information and not for pleasure. Villamin's (1984) praise for reading — that it affords people the pleasure of knowing, feeling, acting and learning or of escaping from their own limited worlds · is related to background. This particular use does not have as much urgency for the respondents, as the other uses or functions.

Table 6. Overall Average on the Perceived Communication Skills Needs in Relation to Writing of the MSU Served Colleges and Industries in Iligan City

Perceived Communication Skills Needs	English 8 Faculty	MSU faculty of Served Colleges	Industries and Other Schools	Overall Average	Level of Importance	Rank
1. Employing the elements of writing essays, compositions and other forms of written discourse	3.33	3.80	3.39	3.73	VI	1
2. Writing effective communications such as reports, research analysis, laboratory work and activities, correspondence like recommendations, sales letters, personal letters, business letters	4	3.77	3.39	3.73	VI	1
3. Modeling pleasing and acceptable, standard structures and formats of a letter or report	3.67	3.58	3.39	3.56	VI	2
4. Making various technical writing reports	3.33	3.62	3.15	3.55	VI	3
5. Transcribing recorded tapes of proceedings during meetings and sessions conducted	3	3.19	3.15	3.18	I	7
6. Balancing written reports both taking into consideration the content and the intent	3.33	3.52	3.31	3.49	VI	4
7. Taking dictations	3	3.47	3.23	3.43	VI	5
8. Editing/redaction	3.33	3.19	2.85	3.15	I	8
9. Enough language and language use awareness – e.g., appropriate register, variety and style	3.33	3.34	3.08	3.31	VI	6

Descriptive Remarks
1.0 – 1.74N   Not Important (NI)
1.75 – 2.24   Moderately Important (MI)
2.25 – 3.24I   Important (I)
3.25 – 4.0   Very Important (VI)

Table 6 shows that the respondents' answers were more or less predictable. Employing the elements of writing essays, compositions and other forms of written discourse and writing effective communications such as reports, research analysis, laboratory work and activities, correspondence like recommendations, sales letters, personal letters, and business-related correspondence in question two (2) landed in the upper scale. Both items ranked first with the overall average of 3.73 as shown in the table above. This means that the respondents representing the MSU colleges served and industries in Iligan treated the two (2) items as very important skills for students are expected to be fluent in both speaking and writing.

Editing or redaction ranked last according to the respondents and they mentioned that this skill is important but must take a backseat to other skills already mentioned. This could mean that students are not expected to edit the grammar of the written message. Editing or redaction as specialized writing skills did not get a prominent place in the ranking of microfunctions probably because the population did not include establishments like publishing houses and research centers which require the services of editors, copyreaders, and proofreaders. This skill is already of a higher order, that is, outside of the province of Technical Writing. Students required to take English 8 are from different fields, and are not expected to take over areas in which English majors are more adept. Writing and editing are two different skills.

Table 7. Overall Average on the Perceived Course or Job-Market Requirements of the MSU Served Colleges and Industries in Iligan City

Course or Job-Market Requirements	English 8 Faculty	MSU Faculty of Served Colleges	Industries and other Schools	Overall Average	Level of Importance	Rank
1. Abstracts/Summaries	3	3.33	3.15	3.30	VI	11
2. Articles	3	3.01	2.77	2.96	I	15
3. Book Reviews	2.33	2.72	2.39	2.69	I	19
4. Brochures	2	2.45	2.31	2.45	I	20
5. Business Letters	3.33	3.43	3.39	3.42	VI	8
6. Business Proposals	3.33	3.16	3.23	3.18	I	14
7. Catalogues	2	2.69	2.54	2.65	I	19
8. Critical Analyses	3	3.51	3	3.43	VI	7
9. Essays	2.67	3.58	2.62	3.43	VI	7
10. Feasibility Reports	3	3.26	3	3.22	I	13
11. Instruction Manuals	3	3.41	2.85	3.32	VI	10
12. Interviews	3	3.40	3.82	3.41	VI	9
13. Leaflets/promotional materials	2	2.85	2.69	2.80	I	17
14. Narrative Reports	3	3.57	3.23	3.51	VI	5
15. Oral reading such as reporting, use of mass media	3	3.54	3.39	3.50	VI	6
16. Oral reports using multi-media technologies like PowerPoint presentation	3	3.63	3.39	3.58	VI	3
17. Pamphlets	3	2.81	2.39	2.75	I	18
18. Progress Reports	2.33	3.24	3.15	3.23	I	12
19. Research Papers	3	3.64	3.15	3.56	VI	4
20. Specifications	3	2.91	2.39	2.84	I	16
21. Thesis Proposals	3	3.67	3.15	3.59	VI	2
22. Visual Materials such as graphs, charts, drawings and other non-textual supplements	3	3.64	3.46	3.62	VI	1

Descriptive Remarks

1.0 - 1.74	Not Important	(NI)
1.75 – 2.24	Moderately Important	(MI)
2.25 – 3.24	Important	(I)
3.25 – 4.0	Very Important	(VI)

As shown in Table 7 of the overall average on the perceived course or job-market requirements of the MSU served colleges and industries in Iligan City, the respondents placed visual materials such as graphs, charts, drawings and other non-textual supplements at the top of the list with the overall average of 3.62. The visual aids would suggest that the learners capture, absorb and retain new and difficult information by creating a picture in their minds, seeing words or reading about it first (Tenedero, 1998). Modern society is a visually-fixated society. Nearly everything, presentations especially, is executed with visual aids. This trend is observable in the academe, the industries, the corporate world, and others. Students who are skilled in this area have a competitive edge over others.

This would show that the learners should know how to use, interpret and analyze the visual materials. This result is also true of many countries which have begun to take advantage of the capacity of audio-visual devices to transcend geographical barriers. Audio-visual devices can expose students to experiences beyond the classroom, and they can disseminate instruction across large areas, making education accessible to more people.

As technology improves, educational capabilities increase correspondingly. The emergence of inexpensive computer technology and mass storage media, including optical videodiscs and compact discs, has given instructional technologists better tools with which to work.

Language learning and teaching, planning, preparation, and use of devices and materials involve sight, sound, or both, for educational purposes. Among the devices used are still and motion pictures, filmstrips, television, transparencies, audiotapes, records, teaching machines, computers, and videodiscs. This reflects developments in both technology and learning theory.

Preparation of thesis proposals (Item Number 21), oral reports using multi-media technologies like PowerPoint presentation (Item Number 16), research papers (Item Number 19), narrative reports (Item Number 14) and oral reading such as reporting, using mass media (Item Number 15) ranked second with the overall average of 3.59, third with the overall average of 3.58, fourth with the overall average of 3.56, fifth with the overall average of 3.51, and sixth with the overall average of 3.50, respectively. These choices are predictable; they are course requirements that are more or less common in English 8 classes, regardless of who is handling the course. Going further through and down the list or range of items - e.g., critical analyses (Item Number 8), essays (Item Number

9), business letters (Item Number 5), and others · one discerns an effort to integrate the macro-skills, particularly reading, writing, and speaking, or at the very least, two skills. For example, oral reports involve library research (reading), writing (organizing notes culled from various sources), and speaking (delivery or oral presentation, and even defense). Generally, the approach to teaching Technical Writing reveals an attempt at integrating the macro-skills.

Item Number 4—designing and lay outing of brochures—as a course in Table 7 ranked last with the overall average of 2.45. Brochures tell readers about a product or service. Some are designed to grab attention and raise interest; others are much more informative. Each is written differently. Designing and lay outing of brochures require high craftsmanship and creativity on the students' part. They use either a word processor or a desktop publishing program, ideally with a color printer; make a list of the factual information they might use; select from that information material that they can use to tell the customer what he or she wants to know, and not 'this is very important' what the manufacturer or service provider thinks they ought to know. The students visualize what the consumer wants and what the consumer hopes to gain by the purchase, and write with that in mind. Thus, writing brochure gives the students' insights into the world of professional copywriters.

Yet, many respondents do not seem to feel the immediate need to require students to make brochures. In the academe, for example, the service and the served departments intuit that the students do not have all the time and financial resources to design academic/business brochures. All the service and served departments can do is to teach the learners the possible techniques, criteria and technical specifications of the job or task · e.g., brochures made should be attention-grabbers and that their purpose is to make one sufficiently interested to ask for more information. Moreover, this task in real-life situations usually involves more than individual initiative. Acquainting students with the principles that inform brochure-making suffices.

PART IV Is there congruency between the existing technical curricular contents taught by the English 8 teachers and the learners' communication skills needs as perceived by the MSU served colleges and employers of industries and schools in Iligan City?

To find out if there is congruency or match between the technical writing curricular contents taught by the English 8 teachers and the perceived learners' communication skills needs of the MSU served colleges and the industries in Iligan City, the following data are needed, namely: the means of the two groups (MSU served colleges and industries) subtracted from the mean of the service department and the level of difference.

The following tables on the succeeding pages show the congruency of the technical writing curricular contents taught by the service department and the perceived learners' communication skills needs of the MSU served colleges and the industries in Iligan City. The congruency levels are presented according to the communications skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing and the course or job-market requirements as perceived by the served colleges and industries versus the service department. After the data results were presented in tabular form, the researcher then interpreted and analyzed them and later made graphs for every communication skills in order to give the readers an overall picture of the congruency discussions.

Table 8. Overall Level of Congruency on the Perceived Communication Skills Needs in Relation to Listening of the MSU Served Colleges and Industries in Iligan City

Micro-Skills	MSU Faculty of Served Colleges	Industries and Other Schools	Average Need	English 8 Faculty	Difference	Level of Congruency
1. Listening to instructions given by the supervisors and client	3.73	4	3.76	3.67	0.10	C
2. Listening to recorded tapes made of lectures and demonstration series	3.45	2.85	3.35	2.67	0.68	MI
3. Listening to sound drills in word forms, phraseology forms, sentence forms, paragraph forms, and others	3.31	2.54	3.19	2.67	0.52	C
4. Listening to dictations for note taking	3.60	3.69	3.61	3.67	-0.05	C
5. Listening for comprehension	3.97	4	3.97	4	-0.03	C

Descriptive Remarks:

0-0.5	Congruent	(C)
0.6-1.0	Moderately Incongruent	(MI)
1.1-1.5	Incongruent	(I)
1.6-3.0	Very Incongruent	(VI)

Table 8 presents the overall level of congruency on the perceived listening skills needs of the MSU served colleges and industries in Iligan City. This reveals that the average need of both the MSU and industries regarding Item Number 3 (with a difference of 0.52), Item Number 4 (with a difference of -0.05) and Item Number 5 (with a difference of -0.03) and the curricular contents taught by the service department are congruent or significant. The lines of agreement are more jagged or irregular for the rest of the item, particularly for Item Number 2 (with a difference of 0.68) and Item Number 3 (with a difference of 0.52).

From the analysis and interpretation of the table above, it is evident that the MSU served colleges and industries, with reference to

listening skills needs as perceived by the said respondents enlightened the service department to also focus on or pay attention to listening to recorded tapes made of lectures and demonstration series. Considering that listening is the most underdeveloped skill among the four communication skills, it is crucial for students to be trained to listen more carefully and deliberately to such resources as taped speeches, deliberations, proceedings, and others. They may not be able to understand adequately and audibly via recorded tapes during lectures and demonstrations. This may be due to some listening interferences that obstruct listening e.g., physical (something may actually be wrong with the hearing mechanism or the electronic medium) or psychological (resulting from attitudes, feelings, lack of awareness or concentration) obstacles. This kind of training could come handy in jobs which require transcription, precision, constant verification or checking against sources, and the like.

Table 9. Overall Level of Congruency on the Perceived Communication Skills Needs in Relation to Speaking of the MSU Served Colleges and Industries in Iligan City

Micro-Skills	MSU	Industries	Average Need	English 8	Difference	Level of Congruency
1. Speaking good and grammatically correct English sentence structures	3.58	3.54	3.50	3	0.50	C
2. Giving oral instructions, directions, guideposts, and others.	3.55	3.54	3.50	3.67	-0.17	C
3. Pronouncing/ enunciating words correctly and with the appropriate pause, intonation, stress, and others	3.4	3.08	3.29	3	0.29	C
4. Delivering oral reports in class	3.64	3.15	3.48	3.33	0.14	C
5. Engaging in communication exchanges – e.g., prepared dialogues and others	3.42	3.54	3.36	3	0.36	C
6. Demonstrating speaking ability through debates, declamations, orations, and others	3.13	2.92	3.04	3	0.04	C
7. Describing objects or processes orally	3.52	3.39	3.41	3	0.41	C
8. Responding to job interviews	3.74	3.85	3.72	3	0.72	MI
9. Demonstrating language and language use awareness – e.g., appropriate register, style and variety	3.44	3.39	3.35	3	0.35	C
10. Learning the rules or conventions of discourse – e.g., topics to introduce, turn-taking, etc.	3.39	3.31	3.29	3	0.29	C
11. Applying strategic competence – e.g., conversation repairs, error corrections and others.	3.38	3.15	3.25	3	0.25	C

Descriptive Remarks:

0-0.5	Congruent	(C)
0.6-1.0	Moderately Incongruent	(MI)
1.1-1.5	Incongruent	(I)
1.6-3.0	Very Incongruent	(VI)

In Table 9, the data reveal that the average need of both the MSU and industries expressed through Item Number 8 (with a difference of 0.72) and the curricular contents taught by the service department are moderately incongruent while on the rest of the items that are congruent. The responses indicate that the respondents are aware of the importance of English proficiency in communicating or interacting with others in real-life situations, e.g., responding to job interviews, that is, to "get along" in the world outside the classroom. This assigning of importance to speaking, a productive skill, should also include classroom instruction. Thus, the service department should allot more time to speaking activities that would hone and enhance the students' speaking ability and learning styles. It showed them to meaningful contextual situations as industries require and expect their future employees to be fluent or articulate in expressing their ideas to different audiences in various speaking situations. Fluency or an acceptable level of proficiency is a standard requirement or recognized asset in the world of work.

Table 10. Overall Level of Congruency on the Perceived Communication Skills Needs in Relation to Reading of the MSU Served Colleges and Industries in Iligan City

Micro-Skills	MSU	Industries	Average Need	English 8	Difference	Level of Congruency
1. Reading technical reports, business reports, literary pieces and written instructions, guidelines, and others.	3.62	3.46	3.59	3.33	0.263	C
2. Reading to understand the semantic content of the materials read	3.69	3.46	3.66	3.67	-0.003	C
3. Reading administrative instructions and designations of tasks	3.48	3.77	3.51	3	0.51	C
4. Interpreting concepts, philosophies, mathematical problem-solving activities at both literal and figurative levels for a better understanding	3.6	3.62	3.59	3.33	0.26	C
5. Reading stories for appreciation	3.26	2.62	3.17	3	0.17	C
6. Reading selections for comprehension through context clues and vocabulary expansion	3.69	3.08	3.60	3.33	0.27	C
7. Reading to evaluate the meaning and to make critical sound judgment on the selection or piece	3.66	3.15	3.59	3.33	0.26	C
8. Reading for critiquing purposes (review)	3.57	3.31	3.53	3.33	0.20	C
9. Reading to understand visual aids and non-textual materials	3.62	3.54	3.60	3.33	0.27	C
10. Reading to summarize or prepare an abstract or just getting the gist	3.65	3.54	3.63	3.33	0.29	C
11. Reading the articles through skimming	3.42	3.31	3.38	2.67	0.72	MI
12. Reading the articles through scanning	3.47	3.23	3.41	2.67	0.75	MI

Descriptive Remarks:

0-0.5	Congruent	(C)
0.6-1.0	Moderately Incongruent	(MI)
1.1-1.5	Incongruent	(I)
1.6-3.0	Very Incongruent	(VD)

Item Number 11 (with a difference of 0.72) and Item Number 12 (with a difference of 0.75) are moderately incongruent. The rest of the items are significant and therefore congruent.

Reading as an important receptive skill should be cultivated by students to lead a successful academic and even a complete life. People these days spend only a few hours of their waking lives for reading and whatever reading they do is for the purpose of meeting definite needs and wants. Reading specialists agree that it is unthinkable for one to achieve success along any line without the ability to read. In fact, it is universally acknowledged that in order to lead a full and satisfying life, one must be able to read with understanding (Pangcatan, 1986). But how does a student read? As data on Table 10 reveal, the respondents affirmed the need of teaching the students how and what to read. This is done through skimming or scanning. This implies that students are given less time to know what information they need to read or that only few reading activities are required of them when they leave the classroom. This seems to contradict the service department's claim that there are students who do not read when they are given the assigned technical reading texts. This also suggests that students do not devote ample time to reading scientific materials. There appear problems with motivation to read the information or lack of access to book references at home. The former poses a challenge to teachers who could do much to make the students discover and understand the vital role of reading in their daily undertakings.

Table 11. Overall Level of Congruency on the Perceived Communication Skills Needs in Relation to Writing of the MSU Served Colleges and Industries in Iligan City

Micro-Skills	MSU	Industries	Average Need	English 8	Difference	Level of Congruency
1. Employing the elements of writing essays, compositions and other forms of written discourse	3.8	3.39	3.73	3.33	0.40	C
2. Writing effective communications such as reports, research analysis, laboratory work and activities, correspondence like recommendations, sales letters, personal letters, business letters	3.772	3.39	3.73	4	-0.28	C
3. Modeling pleasing and acceptable, standard structures and formats of a letter or report	3.58	3.15	3.56	3.67	-0.11	C
4. Devising various technical writing reports	3.62	3.15	3.55	3.33	0.22	C
5. Transcribing recorded tapes of proceedings during meetings and sessions conducted	3.19	3.31	3.18	3	0.18	C
6. Balancing written reports both taking into consideration the content and the intent	3.52	3.23	3.49	3.33	0.16	C
7. Taking dictation	3.47	2.85	3.43	3	0.43	C
8. Editing/redaction	3.19	3.08	3.15	3.33	-0.19	C
9. Enough language and language use awareness – e.g., appropriate register, variety and style	3.34	3.39	3.31	3.33	-0.03	C

Descriptive Remarks:

0-0.5	Congruent	(C)
0.6-1.0	Moderately Incongruent	(MI)
1.1-1.5	Incongruent	(I)
1.6-3.0	Very Incongruent	(VI)

Table 11 shows that needs in relation to writing of the perceived communication skills the MSU served colleges and industries in Iligan City. The data from the MSU served colleges and industries match or are congruent. In spite of numerous researches conducted on writing problems encountered by the served colleges and many industries and schools, it is evident that the service department can hardly be faulted with failure to respond to the needs of the students. This is proof of awareness of the English 8 teachers of the need to expose the students to the different writing activities expected of this course. Although some inadequacy or weakness shows on the part of the students, particularly

in grammar and standard conventions in writing, English 8 teachers work hard at remedying such weakness. Reinforcement and constant practice in writing and all other skills are necessary to help students master the writing styles.

Table 12. Overall Level of Congruency of the Perceived Course or Job-Market Requirements of the MSU Served Colleges and Industries in Iligan City

Course/Job-Market Requirements	MSU	Industries	Average Need	English 8	Difference	Level of Congruency
1. Abstracts/Summaries	3.33	3.15	3.30	3	0.30	C
2. Articles	3.01	2.77	2.98	3	-0.02	C
3. Book Reviews	2.72	2.39	2.69	2.33	0.36	C
4. Brochures	2.45	2.31	2.45	2	0.45	C
5. Business Letters	3.43	3.39	3.42	3.33	0.09	C
6. Business Proposals	3.16	3.23	3.18	3.33	-0.16	C
7. Catalogues	2.69	2.54	2.65	2	0.65	MI
8. Critical Analyses	3.51	3	3.43	3	0.43	C
9. Essays	3.58	2.62	3.43	2.67	0.77	MI
10. Feasibility Reports	3.26	3	3.22	3	0.22	C
11. Instruction Manuals	3.41	2.85	3.32	3	0.32	C
12. Interviews	3.40	3.62	3.41	3	0.41	C
13. Leaflets/promotional materials	2.85	2.69	2.80	2	0.80	MI
14. Narrative Reports	3.67	3.23	3.51	3	0.51	C
15. Oral reading such as reporting using mass media	3.53	3.39	3.5	3	0.5	C
16. Oral reports using multi-media technologies like PowerPoint presentation	3.63	3.39	3.58	3	0.58	MI
17. Pamphlets	2.81	2.39	2.75	3	-0.26	C
18. Progress Reports	3.24	3.15	3.23	2.33	0.89	MI
19. Research Papers	3.64	3.15	3.56	3	0.56	MI
20. Specifications	2.91	2.39	2.84	3	-0.16	C
21. Thesis Proposals	3.67	3.15	3.59	3	0.59	MI
22. Visual Materials such as graphs, charts, drawings and other non-textual supplements	3.64	3.46	3.62	3	0.62	MI

Descriptive Remarks:

0-0.5	Congruent	(C)
0.6-1.0	Moderately Incongruent	(MI)
1.1-1.5	Incongruent	(I)
1.6-3.0	Very Incongruent	(VI)

Based on Table 12, Item Numbers 7 (with a difference of 0.65), 9 (with a difference of 0.77), 13 (with a difference of 0.80), 16 (with the different of 0.58), 18 (with a difference of 0.89), 19 (with a difference of .56), 21 (with the difference 0.59) and 22 (with a difference of 0.62) are moderately incongruent. There are some courses or job-market requirements that the service department failed to comply or meet as important needs to prepare the students for the world of job-markets: catalogues, essays, leaflets/promotional materials, oral reports using multi-media technologies like power point presentation, progress reports, research papers, thesis proposals, and visual materials (e.g., graphics, charts, drawings and other non-textual supplements). The faculty-respondents also felt the importance of these course needs or job-market needs. Members of the service department that admitted that given the time and money entailed, the heterogeneous groups of students from different fields of specialization and other constraints, they could not fully provide and even introduce all the topics within the time frame. Many of the faculty-respondents only motivate and encourage, and assign topics for the students to research. Limited resources and access to information as well as the students' lack of resourcefulness are factors that account for some students not being acquainted with some topics assigned.

Part V   What problems were encountered by the faculty-respondents in relation to the communication needs (listening, speaking, reading and writing) of their students inside and outside the classroom?

The most important factor in the classroom situation is the teacher, be it at the primary, secondary or tertiary level. With his background, training and scholarship, the teacher can direct learning activities and motivate language learners to creative think creatively. But his influence and authority are necessarily restricted by his program schedules and by the number of students actually enrolled in the courses assigned him. Given harsh   actualities - - e.g., overload, bloated classes - it is inevitable that some students are left to fend for themselves. Individualized instruction remains an ideal.

Table 13. Problems Encountered by the Faculty in Relation to the Communication Needs (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) of their Students Inside and Outside the Classroom

Encountered Classroom Problems of the MSU Faculty	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1. Lack of fluency in English as a medium of transaction and instruction	10	11.24
2. Lack of concentration in listening	3	3.37
3. Low self-esteem	10	11.24
4. Weak foundation in grammar and spelling	25	28.1
5. Lack of motivation	6	6.74
6. Problem in all macro-skills	2	2.25
7. Use of code switching when expressing ideas, thoughts in both writing and oral discourse	4	4.49
8. Lack of content analysis and style in writing	2	2.25
9. Lack of organization of ideas as shown in submitted papers	1	1.12
10. Lack of balancing in format and proper documentation	5	5.62
11. Limited vocabulary	4	4.49
12. Poor communication skills	6	6.74
13. Low reading comprehension	6	6.74
14. Inability to detect errors	5	5.62
Total	89	100%

It can be inferred from the responses given by the faculty-respondents that majority of them have had to contend with similar communication skills problems either in the classroom or outside its four walls. An example of a grave problem concerns the students' difficulties in all the language macro-skills - listening, speaking, reading and writing. For instance, students do not listen well to the lectures and ideas discussed by the teacher and consequently do poorly in quizzes or assignments. They also said that students do not have a strong foundation in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Some cannot elaborate their ideas in problem-solving questions. Regarding oral reports about assigned topics, they agonize over expressing themselves in English. All too frequently, the students resort to code switching (use of English and Filipino) if they cannot express their ideas in English. In this case, code switching is a symptom of inadequacy rather than competence in the two relevant languages. In reading, some students do not know how to read due to nervousness or anxiety. This problem, according to some faculty-respondents, boils down to lack of self-esteem

or self-confidence. Some cultural considerations like those having to do with audience orientation when they face their classmates during oral reporting are added complications.

Findings

Analysis of the data gathered yielded the following findings:

1. Out of 102 respondents, three or 2.94% were MSU-English 8 teachers; thirteen or 12.75% industrial sector respondents and eighty six or 84.31% MSU faculty respondents;
2. Of the perceived communication skills needs, listening for comprehension (3.97); responding in job interviews (3.72) and demonstrating speaking ability through rendering debates, declamations, orations, and others (3.04); understanding the semantic content of the materials read (3.66); employing the elements of writing essays, compositions and other forms of written discourse and writing effective communications (3.73) and visual materials (3.62) ranked first or were considered very important;
3. In regard to the overall level of congruency, among the perceived communication skills needs, listening to recorded tapes conducted during lectures and demonstration series   (with a difference of 0.68); responding in job interviews (with a difference of 0.72); reading through skimming (with a difference of 0.72) and scanning (with a difference of 0.75) turned out to be moderately incongruent; all writing micro-skills are congruent; catalogues (with a difference of 0.65), essays (with a difference of 0.77), oral reports using multi-media (with a difference of 0.58), progress reports (with a difference of 0.89), research papers (with a difference of 0.56), thesis (with a difference of 0.59) and visual materials (with a difference of 0.62) were all found to be moderately incongruent; and
4. The faculty-respondents encountered communication skills problems of the students such as lack of fluency in English as a medium of transaction and instruction, lack of concentration in listening, low self-esteem, weak foundation in grammar and spelling, lack of motivation, problem with all macro-skills, code switching in expressing ideas and thoughts both in written and oral discourses, lack of content analysis and style in writing, lack of organization of ideas as shown in submitted papers, lack of balancing in format and proper documentation, limited vocabulary, poor skills, low reading comprehension, and inability to detect errors.

Conclusions

The conclusions drawn from the analysis are the following: in terms of the overall average of learners' perceived needs, the respondents saw a need for the students to comprehend what they listen to, to respond in job interviews, to comprehend what they read, to employ the elements of effective written discourse, and to know how to read and prepare visual materials. In terms of the overall level of congruency, students were found to need to listen to instructions and recorded tapes; to respond in job interviews; to learn skimming and scanning; to master or develop competence in writing catalogues, essays, oral reports using multi-media, progress reports, research, thesis and visual materials. These are among the course or job-market requirements that the service department failed to address or meet to prepare the students for competition and survival in the world of job-markets.

Implications

The implications drawn from the findings are the following: a student's communication skills needs, if accommodated, can result to an improved attitudes toward learning and enhance creative thinking; learners become more responsive to the content-based materials or teaching practices; language experts and syllabus designers are better able to facilitate the achievement of communicative competence among students.

English as a second language (ESL) includes substantive content beyond language instruction, such as employment skills, survival skills and cultural information; content-based language curriculum is still relatively new at the university level. On a practical level, the faculty members need to develop, evaluate, refine and share materials and pedagogical strategies. There is, thus, a need for research endeavors along needs assessment to guide syllabus design and materials selection, curriculum development or refinement and controlled evaluation studies on the effects of receiving specific types of content-based instruction.

English requirements are designed for students to improve their oral communication skills. The quality and effectiveness of the speaking voice and develop potentials that will enable them to understand and evaluate messages and in turn create their own effective messages in

dynamic speech interaction. Pragmatic, experience-based instruction aims at preparing learners for real-world demands; contextualizing lessons or specialized materials for specific kinds of learners using content as point of departure. Fluency in both oral and written communication discourse using English as medium of communication and instruction is one of the job requirements; and computer literacy is a key requirement for the teachers to link their teaching or classroom to the world market for more efficient language teaching.

Recommendations

In light of the findings and implications of this research, the following recommendations are hereby presented:

1. Curriculum planners should always take into account the immediate needs of the students as prime consideration in preparing the syllabi.
2. The syllabus in English 8 should be re-examined and revised to meet other needs of the students such as exposure to different job-related work, either local or global. The content of the activities must not focus on mere grammatical structures but on communicative competence.
3. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) or content-based education should be employed in heterogeneous classes. Through this model of integrative approach, students in the fields learn more because their real needs are assessed and addressed.
4. The service department should adopt block sectioning (based on students' specialization) to meet the required communication skills needs of students and for the teacher who handles the subject to have content focus.
5. The teachers handling the said subject should be sent to trainings, symposia and other conferences to upgrade their knowledge and competence and to keep them updated on current trends and issues in language teaching and learning.
6. The school administration should financially assist the teachers and researchers to seek further training and exposure to extend their knowledge and expertise.

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