**ABSTRACT**

The objective of the present study is to conduct job specific, needs analysis of engineering students seeking placements in on campus and off campus recruitments. The engineering students need to face placement tests in campus interviews in the third and final year of their study. The present Communication Skills Laboratory course for the fifth and sixth semester engineering students is lacking in the sense that it has not helped all students to attend campus interviews and get recruitment in companies of their choice. Most of the students are found to be skills deficient when entering into the job market. To meet the requirements of employment in campus recruitments, this study attempts to understand the expectations of the engineering students and the HR personnel for the development of a new course. By analyzing the present and target situation needs, the rationale of the research is to develop a new ESP syllabus and construct a framework for the design and trial of the syllabus to help the engineering students be successful when seeking placements. The hypothesis of the study is

- A needs based ESP syllabus can be developed to promote potential competence of the third year engineering students to transfer the acquired requisite skills to the workplace if the learners’ learning needs and the industry’s demands are incorporated in the language course meant to ensure success in placement interviews and in the work place context.

A total of 43 HR personnel from various companies and three educational and placement consultants of Tamil Nadu are involved in the
study. A total of 524 engineering students, final year students (136) and third year students (388) of three engineering colleges participated in the study. A triangulated research with both quantitative and qualitative analysis is undertaken with the various sources and methods involved in the study. The tools used for collecting the data is questionnaire based survey with the final year students; structured interviews with the HR personnel and educational and placement consultants; unstructured interviews and meetings with the HOD, English teachers and placement coordinators. Observations, formal and informal discussions with the students, faculties and HR personnel are found to be particularly useful in analyzing the trial and revision of the course.

The researcher conducted a questionnaire based survey with the fourth year engineering students to examine the learning difficulties of the engineering students and the limitations of the present academic Communication Skills Laboratory course. Structured interviews with the HR personnel are conducted to analyze the demands of the workplace contexts. As per the students’ submission, third year Anna University prescribed Communication Skills Laboratory course needs to be changed and modified to cater to the growing needs and professional demands of the industry. HR personnel’ views and suggestions are incorporated in designing the content and process of the new ESP course.

The purpose of the new course is to design and trial a needs based ESP course to satisfy the communicative needs and employment demands of the students in seeking placements. The aim of the proposed course is to facilitate the fifth and sixth semester students develop relevant competency skills to be readily employable in campus recruitments. The proposed course is trialled on the third year engineering students to understand the ground realities of the process of teaching, learning and evaluation. Strategy analysis is undertaken to apply eclectic approaches to the learning needs of the mixed
ability students. Gap analysis is conducted to understand the transferability skills of the students in regulating their both academic and professional needs. Performance assessment and feedback of the students, teachers and HR personnel are collected to review the syllabus and to incorporate necessary modifications and revisions in the course. The major findings of the study are

- Most students are found to be confident and responsible in participating in both oral and written tasks. As they understand both speaking and writing skills are predominantly important to execute business transactions, they enthusiastically perform in personal, formal, and social conversations and writing emails and reports.

- It is noted that Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students are beginning to participate in individual, pair and group tasks, but their inability in displaying appropriate language components, postures and gestures are apparent.

- Some students are not found to be comfortable in chatting and casual interactions. As they lack sufficient knowledge on current affairs and positive attitude, they are found to be reluctant to engage in social conversations.

It is also widely noted by the teachers that some of the students are slow in developing their language skills. Due to their poor socio-economic background, they lack cognitive skills and their writing skills are found to be devoid of information and coherence. It is expected that these students need to develop extensive reading skills to seek informative knowledge on the topic and to discuss it with the peers. Based on the findings of the study it is implied that the students need to get more practice in speaking and writing tasks to develop their discursive abilities. It is also recommended that both the
teachers and students need to be trained to understand the specific objectives of learning.

**Key words:** business writing, constructive feedback, discursive skills, employability skills, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), genre based instruction, interactional communication, learner-centred curriculum, needs analysis, negotiated syllabus, present situation analysis, productive skills, purpose, product and process based syllabus, scaffolding, self-directed learning, student autonomy, target situation analysis, technical communication, technology integrated language learning