RECONCEPTUALIZING CURRICULUM POLITICS: A CASE STUDY OF AN ESP PROGRAM FOR VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN TAIWAN

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ABSTRACT

A curriculum is a form of politics (Apple, 1993). The politics of a curriculum defines what is legitimate and valued and what is not. In Taiwan, the objectives of vocational high school (VHS) education are to prepare students to acquire relevant professional knowledge and practical skills and to integrate them into their future career development. However, with the push for students to pass the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE), few English curriculum designs have been developed to align with the originally intended objectives. Inspired by the notion of critical pedagogy and participatory curricula, a task-based ESP (English for Specific Purposes) program was developed for a group of Vocational High School (VHS) students. This program aimed to empower and embody an alternative curriculum politics that opposed the test-oriented curriculum but highlighted authentic language use and meaningful tasks and emphasized the integration of theory and practice. This paper analyzes and describes how an alternative curriculum politics was shaping and being shaped by different components of the ESP program based on the language design model proposed by Nation and Macalister (2010). It also demonstrates how instructional objectives, activities, and materials were organized and implemented in the four courses of the ESP program to reflect the curriculum politics. Finally, to deepen and broaden our understanding of the notion of curriculum politics, this study reconceptualizes curriculum politics by comparing and contrasting the sociocultural system of the ESP program and that of the VHS English education based on the six dimensions of Gee's (1999) cultural model. In light of the findings and discussion, both theoretical and practical implications are addressed. Suggestions for further studies are provided.

Key Words: Curriculum Politics, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Vocational High School (VHS), Curriculum Design, Cultural Model

INTRODUCTION

A curriculum is a form of political expression; it is "never simply a neutral assemblage of knowledge" (Apple, 1993, p. 222). It is a collective production of the cultural, political, and economic forces and the conflicts, tensions, and compromises in one's society. What a society counts as legitimate knowledge is deeply rooted in the curriculum (Smyth, Down, & McInerney, 2014). In Taiwan, the goal of vocational high school (VHS) education is to prepare students to integrate relevant professional knowledge and practical skills with career employment (Lee, et al., 2011). However, with the push for students to move from the VHS to higher education instead of the workplace, what is considered legitimate and valued curriculum is one that prepares students to pass the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) for colleges/universities. The urge to move on to higher education has created a "mismatch between VHS students' perceived needs from their English course and the actual course of the study they receive" (p. 101, Hua & Beverton, 2013). VHS English education has failed to align with the stated objectives of the VHS educational system, and the consequences for the English learning of the VHS students (e.g., low proficiency and low motivation) have been devastating (Chang, 2009; Chen, 2008; Cheng, 2007; Tsao, 2012).

Despite different methods and approaches in response to the issues and problems facing VHS English education, preparing VHS students to do well in the JEE is still the "hidden curriculum" (Salehi & Mohammadkhani, 2013), and English has been treated as a subject for standardized tests, rather than a tool for communication. The teaching and learning activities are confined to the VHS classroom, and the content of the English course has little to do with the professional fields of the VHS students. As a result of the mismatch between their expectations from the VHS system and the daily practice in their English classroom (Hua & Beverton, 2013), the students are not satisfied. What alternative curriculum can be developed that responds to the issues and problems facing VHS English education?

The inspirations offered by critical pedagogy (e.g., Edwards, 2010) and participatory curriculum (e.g., Salehi & Mohammadkhani, 2013) called for a different curriculum politics for VHS learners. A task-based ESP (English for Specific Purposes) program[1] was developed for a

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[1] In this paper, *program*, *curriculum*, and *course*, are used somewhat interchangeably. However, *program* is particularly attached to the use of

group of Vocational High School (VHS) students to reach an intended goal: to conduct and deliver business PowerPoint presentations for designated workplaces. This intended goal was to demonstrate a curriculum politics that aimed to empower and embody authentic language use and meaningful tasks (for more, see Ellis, 2003) and that emphasized the integration of theory and practice (for more, Christensen & Aldridge, 2013). The curriculum politics embedded in the task-based ESP program was very different from, if not totally opposite to, that of the current VHS English education, which emphasizes rote learning and standardized tests (Lo & Tsai, 2013).

This paper has a twofold purpose. First, from a curriculum development perspective, one might wonder what curriculum elements need to come into play in order to reach the intended goal, which is based on different curriculum politics. One might also ask what the instructor and learners should do in order to facilitate a curriculum with alternative curriculum politics. Scant literature has provided task-based ESP programs in EFL contexts, in particular for secondary learners. To address the gap in the literature, this paper describes and analyzes how alternative curriculum politics shaped and was shaped by different components of the ESP program based on the language design model proposed by Nation and Macalister (2010). It also demonstrates how instructional objectives, activities, and materials were organized and implemented to reflect the curriculum politics embedded in the four courses of the ESP program.

To fulfill the first purpose of the study, two research questions were addressed:

1.   How did the curriculum politics embedded in the task-based ESP program shape, and how was it being shaped by, the various components of the curriculum design?
2.   What instructional objectives, activities, and materials were developed and organized in order to reflect the curriculum politics embedded in the four courses of the ESP program?

Second, while Nation and Macalister's curriculum model enables us to see how each component of a curriculum cooperates to achieve the ultimate goal, it lacks a component that deliberately addresses the value

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task-based activities and ESP; *curriculum* is associated with politics, and *course* refers to the coursework involved in the four courses designed in the study.

system seated in a curriculum. Gee's (1999) cultural model can bridge the gap, allowing us to discuss the value system of the ESP program from a sociocultural perspective. Hence, to deepen and broaden our understanding of the value system embedded in the curriculum politics of the ESP program, this study compares and contrasts the sociocultural system of the ESP program and that of VHS English education based on the six dimensions of Gee's (1999) cultural model.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The studies and theories that shaped the purposes of the study and informed the development of the task-based ESP program are introduced in this section: English education in VHSs in Taiwan, curriculum as politics, the curriculum design process model, and the six dimensions of the cultural model.

English Education in Vocational High Schools in Taiwan

The aim of technological and vocational education in Taiwan is to offer a diverse and appropriate learning environment that fosters the development of job-oriented skills which enable students to enter the job market after graduation (Chen, 2008; Hua, 2012; Lee et al, 2011). Therefore, the English that the VHS students learn should be related to their expertise so that it will benefit them in their future employment. Unfortunately, VHS education does not provide such a suitable English curriculum. In addition, the trend in Taiwan is for most VHS students to pursue higher education instead of entering the job market after graduation because higher education is essential in obtaining more opportunities for well-paid jobs (Chen, 2008; Cheng, 2007; Hua, 2012).

Earlier studies have brought up a concern about the insufficient time spent studying English in VHSs. Non-English-major VHS students have two, 50-minute English lessons per week; English classes provide 12 credits over three years of VHS education (Hua, 2012; Tsao, 2012). The main features of VHS English courses in Taiwan are the following (Hua, 2012; Tsao, 2012):

1.   The implementation of General English instead of English for Specific Purposes, where broad topics rather than vocational contexts are emphasized.

2.   Teacher-centered classrooms with little interaction, where students listen to lectures, do grammar drills, and memorize vocabulary.
3.   Application of the traditional grammar-translation language teaching method.
4.   Rigid and exam-oriented teaching.

As a result of the dominant features of VHS English education, VHS students have long been viewed as lower-achievers, especially in the subject of English (Chang, 2006; Chang, 2009; Chen, 2008; Cheng, 2007). Several factors leading to the low English proficiency of VHS students have been widely and repeatedly highlighted. Some scholars regard VHS students as underachievers as a result of their relatively lower socioeconomic background and their unsatisfactory achievement in English in junior high school (Chen & Li, 2007; Lo, 2000). Others believe their low proficiency is due to (1) low learning motivation, (2) the limited number of course hours, (3) inappropriate teaching methods, (4) unsuitable teaching materials, and (5) the mismatch between the teaching goal and the educational goal (Chen, 2008; Cheng, 2007; Hua, 2012; Tsao, 2012).

Over the years, several methods and approaches have been suggested in response to these factors. For example, Liu (2002) has proposed incorporating a portfolio assessment into drama teaching in vocational schools as a way to boost students' motivation for learning English and to cultivate autonomous learners. Liu (2008) suggested the introduction of a reader's theater to the existing curriculum as a way to improve VHS students' reading comprehension. Moreover, some scholars recommend that technology be integrated into the VHS English curriculum. For example, Liu (2010) conducted an experimental study of how a Podcast could be used to improve the listening proficiency of VHS students.

Although different methods and approaches have been developed and implemented, they mainly concerned language skills rather than integration of professional knowledge and practical skills with English learning. This study attempts to address this gap by developing a task-based ESP program rooted in alternative curriculum politics.

Curriculum as Politics

Curriculum politics, like the backbone of a curriculum, is deemed to be critical for curriculum development. Important theories and relevant

studies, such as "curriculum as political text", "hidden curriculum", "critical pedagogy", and "praxis and a participatory curriculum" are an essential part of the discussion as far as curriculum politics is concerned and will be discussed in the following section.

Curriculum as political text. "The curriculum is never simply a neutral assemblage of knowledge… It is always part of a selective tradition, someone's selection, some groups' vision of legitimate knowledge. It is produced out of the cultural, political, and economic conflicts, tensions, and compromises that organize and disorganize a people" (Apple, 1993, p. 222). In other words, curriculum is a medium for implementing political control over subordinate groups and at the same time legitimizing the authority of the dominant group so as to propagate a class system and dominant beliefs, which are often influenced by every aspect of society (Foster, 2012; Salehi & Mohammadkhani, 2013; Smyth, Down, & McInerney, 2014). Currently, through excessive mass media, the curriculum exists not only in textbooks and schools, but also outside of schools (Foster 2012). Foster further notes that although diversity in schools is gradually increasing, official knowledge is controlled by people of authority, and standardized tests are still the main measurement of students' learning outcomes.

Hidden curriculum. According to Salehi and Mohammadkhani (2013), "The hidden curriculum emphasizes competition, consumerism, and private ownership to sustain the current socioeconomic conditions" (p. 62) and is embedded in the messages that various sources give to students. Specifically, the hidden curriculum is formed implicitly and exists in various forms (Loftus & McKenzie, 2013). A common trend brought up by Kincheloe (2011) is that "low-ability students are trained for specific tasks, while true education is reserved for the academically talented" (p. 111). As an example, Lee (2014), who has investigated the curriculum used in English classes for North Korean refugees in a South Korean school, found that the North Koreans' poor adaptation to the curriculum was due to the difficulty level and the implicit discrimination towards them. Other studies, such as that of Korzh (2014), have found that orphans in Ukraine are stigmatized as "academically weak," "unmotivated," and "disengaged" (p. 172). Because of the teachers' low expectations of their students, they have adopted an "unchallenging curriculum" indicated by "watered-down teaching and learning material, oversimplified assignments, cancellation of classes, and grade inflation" (p. 172), which caused the "intellectually inferior and economically

disadvantaged" students to pursue vocational tracks and remain "at the bottom of society in a cycle of social reproduction" (p. 177).

Critical pedagogy. A critical curriculum can facilitate the transformation of education and at the same time must also function as a means of assisting students in becoming socio-politically knowledgeable members of society, altering any inequality and providing democracy and justice (Christensen & Aldridge, 2013; Edwards, 2010; Salehi & Mohammadkhani, 2013; Smyth, Down, & McInerney, 2014). Edwards (2010) argues that "critical pedagogy is not concerned primarily with democratic theory, but rather with conscientization, students' awareness of the means of oppression, and mobilization for the purpose of combating such forces, policies, structures, etc." (p. 250). He proposes that the incorporation of critical pedagogy into democratic education is beneficial for nurturing students. In addition, Loveless and Griffith (2014) suggest that instead of putting too much emphasis on good scores on standardized tests, which people believe can provide students with a promising future, teachers should cooperate with students in building an environment where students can learn skills that support life-long learning and skills that are useful in all aspects of society, including the workplace. To sum up, the goal of critical education is to nurture students to become active participants who can think critically and contribute to society.

Praxis and a participatory curriculum. As more and more teaching practices become student-centered, learning will be complemented by "social interaction, criticism, and research, problem-solving and hands-on experience" (Salehi & Mohammadkhani, 2013, p. 61). As stated by Christensen and Aldridge (2013), "Praxis is the interplay between theory and practice" (p. 35). Kincheloe (2011) argues that, in order to bring equality between academic and vocational education, academic and vocational teachers should incorporate both academic principles and job skills into their teaching. Because of students' need for real context, he suggests employing situated learning in order to link "the needs and concerns of students to conceptual/theoretical understandings and to the insights gained from a practical context" (p. 116). Lee (2014) has also pointed out that a practical curriculum "should reflect the students' needs and situation" (p. 2), which will contribute to their eagerness to participate in classroom activities. After reviewing previous studies, Lee suggests that teachers and students collaborate in creating a functioning, participatory curriculum. In addition, teachers

must assist students in discovering their needs, use materials and teaching approaches that suit students' interests, and offer students' practical and beneficial training.

Although, curriculum politics is worth our attention and investigation, little is known about how alternative curriculum politics can be supported by different and essential components of a curriculum. This study adopts Nation and Macalister's (2010) curriculum design model to address the gap, which will be described below.

The Curriculum Design Model

A curriculum model that responds to the various needs of the multiple parties involved in this project is critical. Among the various models, the model for curriculum design developed by Nation and Macalister (2010) incorporates the needs analysis approach greatly emphasized by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), who are well-respected scholars in the field of ESP. This model (see Figure 1) is composed of three outer circles (Principles, Needs, and Environment) and a subdivided inner circle (Content and Sequencing, Format and Presentation, and Monitoring and Assessing), all of which are enclosed within the largest circle, representing evaluation. The subdivided inner circle represents the syllabus, while the three outer circles represent the three factors that influence the syllabus. At the very center of the subdivided inner circle are the Goals of the curriculum. The function of Evaluation, the biggest circle, is to inspect and control the overall quality of the curriculum from every other aspect.

The purpose of analyzing the **Environment** is to understand the situational factors (e.g., environmental constraints) that strongly affect the curriculum; **Needs** analysis concerns learners' necessities (e.g., What is necessary in the learner's use of language?), lacks (e.g., What do the learners lack?), and wants (e.g., What do the learners want to learn)? The section of Principles mainly deals with twenty methods and principles of language teaching that can be divided into three groups: methods and principles concerning content and sequencing (e.g., frequency, strategies and autonomy, etc.), format and presentation (e.g., motivation, comprehensible input, learning style, etc.) and monitoring and assessment (e.g., ongoing needs and environment analysis and feedback).

Content and Sequencing deals with *what* to teach (a list of items to teach) and how to sequence the items in order to achieve the intended effectiveness. **Format and Presentation** includes decisions about *how*

to teach (choosing from a list of teaching approaches, strategies, and techniques) to design and implement lesson plans. **Monitoring and Assessing** involves different types of monitoring and assessment such as placement assessment, observation of learning, short-term achievement assessment, diagnostic assessment, achievement assessment, and proficiency assessment. **Evaluation** involves deciding how to check whether the curriculum design is successful and what needs to be improved (see Figure 1).
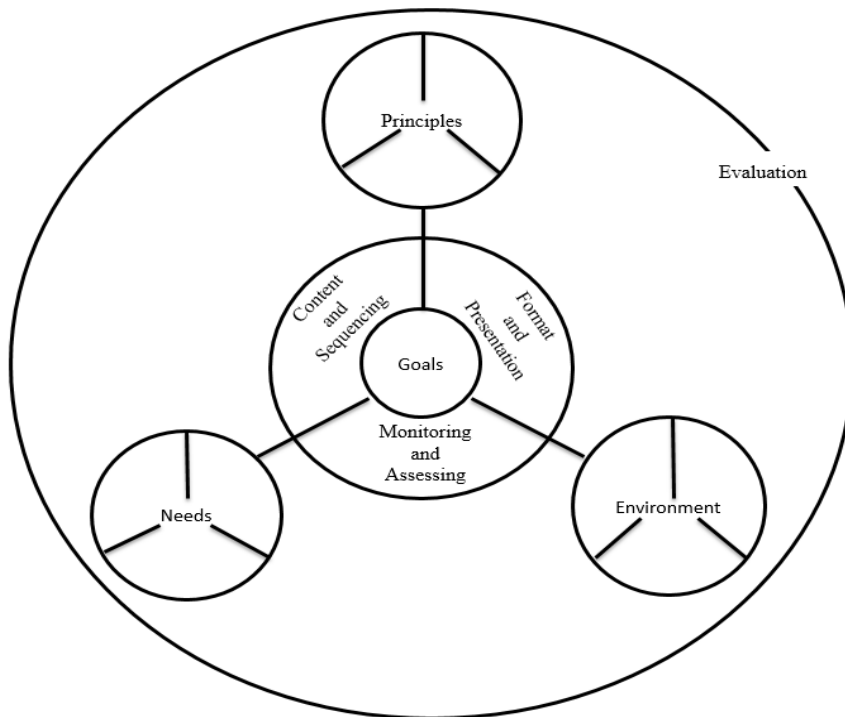

Figure 1. The curriculum design model developed by Nation & Macalister (2010)

While Nation and Macalister's (2010) model enables us to see how different components of a curriculum shape curriculum politics, it fails to address the value system embedded in a curriculum. Gee's (1999) six dimensions of the cultural model respond to this gap because the very

center of the model (the dimension of political building) draws our attention to the value system embedded in a curriculum, and it urges us to examine how the other five dimensions contribute to the value system of a curriculum. Below is an introduction of Gee's (1999) cultural model.

The Six Dimensions of the Cultural Model

A cultural model is usually a totally or partially unconscious explanatory theory or "storyline" connected to language use. Bits and pieces of language use are distributed across people in socioeconomic or cultural groups. This phenomenon helps explain why language use has different situated meanings and possibilities for specific social and cultural groups of people. Theories, explanations, and models, as suggested by Gee's cultural model (1999), are rooted in the practices of the sociocultural groups to which the learner/writer/speaker belongs. Gee (1999) suggests an interesting way to observe the relationships between human beings and social and political activities in our daily lives. In his view, it is sometimes useful to think about social and political issues as if it is not just we humans who are talking and interacting with each other, but rather, the Discourses human beings represent and enact that are doing the talking and interacting. The Discourses we enact existed long before each of us came to the scene and most of them will exist long after we have left the scene. This is to say that Discourses have histories. They have circulated through other Discourses and within other institutions. They have been part of specific historical events and episodes. Gee (1999) argues that meaning is not general and abstract, not something that is inside people's heads or something that is defined by dictionaries. Instead, meaning is situated in specific social and cultural practices and is continually transformed in those practices. While communicating, speakers and writers assign language specific meanings within specific situations. Rejecting the notion that meanings of words are stable and general, Gee (1999) argues that "words have multiple and ever changing meanings created for and adapted to specific contexts of use" (p. 40). The meanings of words are integrally associated with social and cultural groups in ways that rise above individual minds.

Gee's (1999) cultural model serves as a useful analytical framework for understanding the situated meanings employed under the current VHS system and those proposed by the study. This analytical framework is used to help us understand how the worldview (World Building) shapes and is shaped by the ways teachers and students use tools

(Semiotic Building), by the actions they take (Activity Building), by the social interactions they maintain and perform with others (Socioculturally-Situated Identity and Relationship Building), by the value system (Political Building) all the relevant stakeholders in the two curricula hold, and by the intertextual context and historical background teachers and students carry with them from the past, what they are doing in the present, and what they want to do in the future, which contribute to the (dis)integration of theory, belief, and practice (Connection Building). Figure 2 demonstrates the essence of each dimension of the model and the interrelationships among the six dimensions.
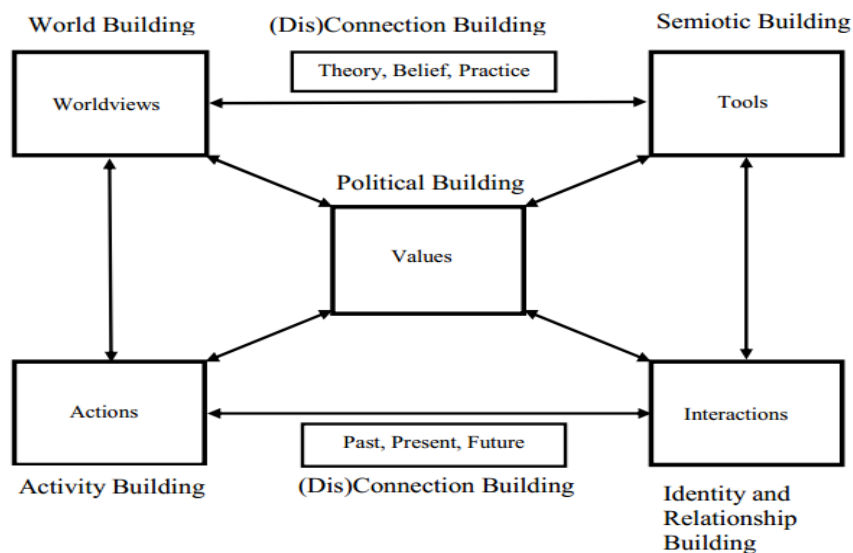

Figure 2. Interrelationships of the six dimensions (Gee, 1999)

METHODOLOGY

This section introduces the program, the instruments for data collection, and data analysis.

The Task-based ESP Program

The intended goal of the ESP program. Students in Applied Foreign Languages (AFL) and business-related departments are usually required

to give a PowerPoint (PPT) presentation in English, which is considered a must-have skill demanded by real-life workplaces where English is used for professional communication. Hence, being able to conduct and deliver a PPT presentation in English in a designated workplace in front supervisors became a shared goal for the participants and the curriculum development of the ESP program.

Overview of the task-based ESP Program. The ESP program consisted of four courses: Enterprise Culture, PPT Presentation Structure, PPT Design, and Nonverbal Performance and Oral Delivery. The ESP program took place in one public VHS in Taipei during the summer break. The 10-day ESP program consisted of two stages. In the first stage (the first five days), in the morning sessions, students were required to learn the essential knowledge of organizing and giving business PPT presentations effectively. In the afternoon sessions, students were given time to apply the theories learned in the morning sessions. In the second stage (the second five-day period), students videotaped their presentations and asked for feedback and comments from two AFL teachers, two business teachers, and three workplace supervisors. Based on this feedback, the students modified their PPT presentations. Appendix A delineates the days and time slots for all the instructional activities involved in the two-week program.

The participants. The major participants in the study were 24 second-year students from one VHS in Taipei, 12 Applied Foreign Language (AFL) and 12 business students, who were invited to participate in the program on a voluntary basis. While the majority of the students (19 of 24) had not had experience in making a PPT presentation prior to the program, four of the five students who reported having had such experience were in the AFL department. The secondary participants in the study were three workplace supervisors, four VHS subject teachers (two business-track teachers, and two AFL teachers) and six teacher-learners (Lai et al., 2015), undergraduate TESOL-track students who were conducting their senior project in the ESP program under the supervision of their advisor, also the principal investigator for the ESP program.

Instruments

Instruments included a questionnaire, interviews, and inspection of documents.

Questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. First, to assist needs analysis of students, students' needs (necessities, wants, and lacks) in learning the four courses (Introduction to Enterprise Culture, PPT Structure, PPT Design, and Nonverbal Communication) were investigated. Second, to understand the learning environment in which the ESP program was situated, an environment analysis investigating students' experience in English presentation and their English proficiencies was conducted (see Appendix B).

Interview. In order to understand the demands of the three designated companies in regards to presenting a professional PPT presentation, interviews were conducted with the three workplace supervisors to obtain insights into the critical components (as laid out by the four courses) of a PPT presentation (see Appendix C).

Inspection of documents. Relevant documents that would facilitate the investigation of different components of curriculum design process were collected, including program schedule, course handouts for the students, the PPT slides made for courses, lesson plans, the PPT slides made by all the participants along with the transcripts as well as the meeting minutes taken throughout the program

Data Collection

Prior to the program, needs analysis and environment analysis were administered. A questionnaire was administered to the VHS participants to understand their needs, and interviews were held with the workplace supervisors to investigate the demands of the workplace in relation to the PPT presentations. Based on the results of the needs analysis and environment analysis, materials were developed, handouts made, a syllabus created, and activities designed. Pre-teaching was held to adjust the teaching materials and methods. During the program, to effectively adjust the implementation of the program, a research team meeting (consisting of the principal investigator and the six teacher-learners) were held at the end of the day to report any difficulties or challenges encountered and to determine adjustments that needed to be made in response to the difficulties. All the meeting minutes were collected.

Throughout the entire research project, the researcher played a dual role simultaneously: as principle investigator and as course instructor. While the researcher was the principle investigator of the research project who worked with the research team to design the program, to ensure each component of the ESP program was carried out as planned,

49

and to adjust the program whenever it was necessary, the researcher, also the instructor of the six teacher-learners, also needed to give detailed guidance and instruction to the six teacher-learners who were learning how to facilitate VHS students' ESP learning through collaborative learning between two different disciplines (i.e., AFL and Business) in order to achieve the intended goal.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed based on qualitative data analysis procedures (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). In the initial stage, the data sets (the open-ended questionnaire with the VHS students and the interviews with the workplace supervisors) were read several times to code in terms of students' needs (necessities, wants, and lacks) and the demands required in the business presentation in English.

In the second stage, the findings of the initial stage were then triangulated with the data sets collected from relevant documents (e.g., meeting minutes, course handouts, course syllabus, etc.) to understand how each component of the curriculum design contributed to the ESP program. Important questions were asked to facilitate the data analysis process (see Table 1). While coding line-by-line and component-by-component based on Nation and Macalister's model (2010), salient codes under each component were grouped into categories based on which themes and patterns were observed and then extracted to answer research question one. In addition, to provide a detailed description on the instructional objectives, activities, and materials of each course, relevant documents (program schedule, course handouts, and course materials) were read several times to code and extract information until the research question could be fully addressed.

Table 1

Important Questions Raised to Facilitate Data Analysis

Major Analytical Concept	Questions to be Asked
Needs Analysis	1. What were learners' necessities, wants, and lacks? 2. What pedagogical actions were developed to respond to the needs?
Environment Analysis	3. What environment analysis was taken into consideration? 4. What pedagogical actions were taken to facilitate the teaching and learning activities involved in the ESP program?
Principles	5. What language teaching and learning principles were employed? 6. What pedagogical actions were generated based on the principles?
Goals	7. What were the intended goals for the program? Why? 8. What pedagogical actions were taken to reach the intended goals?
Content and Sequencing	9. What materials were developed and how were they organized? 10. What pedagogical actions were facilitated by the materials prepared and by the ways they were organized?
Format and Presentation	11. How was course content presented to the learners? 12. What pedagogical actions were taken to deliver the content to the learners?
Monitoring and Assessing	13. What were the learning and teaching activities monitored and assessed? 14. What pedagogical actions were taken to facilitate the on-going monitoring and assessment?

To reconceptualize the curriculum politics from a sociocultural perspective, the findings of the two questions were first further analyzed, based on Gee's cultural model (1999), to examine the values embedded in the ESP program and the worldview held, tools used, activities designed,

relationships established, and (dis)connections made to support the value system. Next, to deepen and expand our understanding of the curriculum politics of the ESP program, each component investigated was then compared and contrasted with that of the VHS English curriculum discussed in the literature. Finally, to enhance data analysis for the comparison, parallel questions were raised (see Table 2). While analyzing, initial codes were labeled and categorized under each building, based on which contrasting themes and patterns were observed and extracted, and will be presented in the Discussion section.

Table 2

Important Questions Raised to Facilitate Data Analysis

Building (focus)	Questions to be Asked
World Building	1. What kind of worldview did the ESP program suggest?
	2. What kind of worldview does the current VHS English education suggest?
Semiotic Building	3. What were the preferred language learning tools in the ESP program?
	4. What are the preferred language learning tools in the current VHS English education?
Activity Building	5. What were the major activities employed in the ESP program?
	6. What are the major activities employed in the current VHS English education?
Identity & Relationship Building	7. What kind of teacher-student relationships did the ESP program entail?
	8. What kind of teacher-student relationships does the current VHS English education entail?
Political Building	9. What kind of cultural values did the ESP program entail?
	10. What kind of cultural values does the current VHS English education entail?
(Dis)Connection Building	11. What kind of (dis)connection between theory, belief, and practice and past, present, and future did the ESP program suggest?
	12. What kind of (dis)connection between theory, belief, and practice and past, present, and future does the current VHS English education suggest?

FINDINGS

1.   How did the curriculum politics embedded in the task-based ESP program shape, and how was it shaped by, each component of the curriculum design?

The different curriculum politics put into practice in this task-based ESP program opposes the test-oriented curriculum. Rather, it highlights authentic language use and meaningful tasks (for more, see Ellis, 2003) and emphasizes the integration of theory and practice (for more, see Christensen & Aldridge, 2013). This section addresses how each part of the curriculum contributed simultaneously to reach the intended Goal (the innermost circle in Figure 1): to be able to deliver a PowerPoint business presentation in English at a workplace. The outer circles (the three interactive parameters: Principles, Needs and Environment) are analyzed, followed by the inner circles (Content and Sequencing, Format and Presentation, and Monitoring and Assessment).

Goal

Because the majority of the English courses offered to VHS students are not related to either their expertise or the workplace (Hua, 2012; Hua & Beverton, 2013), the aim of this program was to provide a task-based ESP program that fostered their English skills in their expertise along with opportunities to demonstrate their skills in a real workplace. As presentation ability is an important skill in the workplace and English is considered a lingua franca, the ability to give a presentation in English is essential and should be taught. Hence, the main goal of this program was to teach students how to create and deliver an effective business PPT presentation.

Parameter One: Principles

Motivation has long been known as a factor that influences the language learning process (Fallah, 2014). Low motivation can result in students' low confidence and learning outcome. VHS students have been marked as "low-achievers," especially with regard to English ability. In addition, the materials used in the VHS English course are not related to their expertise, which may diminish their motivation. Thus, the crucial principles embedded in the program are nurturing students' enthusiasm

in learning English together with bridging the gap between school and workplace.

Parameter Two: Needs

Understanding the needs of different parties is crucial in developing a practical and constructive curriculum (Zhou, 2015). All 24 participants had taken TOEIC tests with the scores ranging from 450 to 600, whereas only five of them had experience in delivering presentations in English. The various levels of language proficiency and experience supported the rationale for conducting NA to ascertain the students' needs (i.e., necessities, wants, and lacks) in relation to the skills to make and deliver a business presentation in English.

The results of the questionnaire showed that the VHS participants considered PPT Presentation Design abilities the most necessary skills to learn while Nonverbal Communication abilities were the most desirable and lacking skills to equip themselves in order to achieve the intended goal. On the other hand, among all the four courses, the workplace supervisors believed that nonverbal communication skills were the key to effective PPT presentation. In addition, understanding professional culture and practice offered by the course of Enterprise Culture was the most critical step for fulfilling the purpose of giving a PPT presentation to the target audience in the workplace.

Parameter Three: Environment

The 24 participants came from two disciplines: English (12) and business (12). Each had its strengths and weaknesses. The English majors were good at organizing PPT slides and delivering the presentation orally. However, they tended to lack knowledge in business and concepts in professional practice. In contrast, the business majors had a better sense of professional culture and PPT design. However, they were not confident in their English, particularly their oral skills. To match each other's strong and weak points, heterogeneous grouping was designed in which students with different majors were grouped to engage in collaborative tasks in order to research the goal.

A supportive learning environment was created. The four VHS subject teachers (two AFL teachers and two business teachers) and three workplace supervisors were invited to offer their comments and suggestions on the first version of the PPT slides and performance. The

six teacher-learners served as group facilitators to offer their assistance whenever needed throughout the entire ESP program.

Content and Sequencing

Responsive materials. The word "responsive" here is derived from the term "culturally responsive teaching," in which students' ability and identity is incorporated into teaching (Gay, 2000). In this case, materials were designed to meet students' needs and abilities. Comments and feedback from the previous two years of experience in conducting the program and the outcomes of these earlier projects were incorporated into four courses related to effective business PPT presentation: Enterprise Culture, Presentation Structure (2 parts), PPT Design, and Nonverbal Performance and Oral Delivery. The results of in-depth interviews with the workplace supervisors contributed to creating materials that corresponded to professional workplace practices and which were incorporated into the four main courses. With materials that were responsive to students' abilities and workplace needs, it was possible to bridge the gap between school and workplace.

Appropriate level of difficulty. Prior to the program, students' English proficiency and learning habits were examined through self-assessment. In addition to students' self-assessment, peer reviews and pre-teaching were used to validate that the difficulty level of the materials was appropriate for the students. Several students who had just graduated from VHS and thus had more understanding of VHS students' English level were asked to offer comments and suggestions on the materials and teaching approaches.

Format and Presentation

Intensive task-based instruction. The ultimate task for the students was to deliver an English business PPT presentation that complied with real workplace needs. The intensive program lasted for two weeks (five days per week) and was divided into two main parts. In the first week, the four main courses about creating and delivering an effective business presentation were taught in the morning periods. In the afternoons, students were given time to practice the theories they had learned in the morning and to finish assigned tasks. In the second week, the students' presentations were videotaped and sent to VHS teachers and workplace supervisors for comments and suggestions. After receiving feedback,

students revised, polished, and practiced their presentations accordingly. Lastly, students participated in the school presentation contest and delivered their presentations in the workplaces. The workplace-targeted presentation shed light on students' perceptions of PPT presentations where they need to consider workplace needs and practices.

Simulation. Javid (2013) showed that simulation has a positive effect on English learning and teaching. As the task was to deliver an effective business PPT presentation, students were required to see themselves as representatives of an assigned company, create PPT presentations that met the needs of the corporation, and present them in a way that showed the image and niche of both the company and its products. A simulation approach was used during the afternoon sessions: students were required to practice the theories they had learned in the morning courses (for example: outlining structures for their presentations, designing PPT slides, and practicing oral delivery). With the simulation approach, students showed more involvement and appeared more enthusiastic during the whole process.

Lastly, like every curriculum, the ESP program took several measures to monitor and assess the on-going learning process in order to ensure the success of curriculum implementation.

Monitoring and Assessing

Performance assessment. Both qualitative and quantitative measures were used throughout the program in monitoring and assessing students' learning outcomes. The qualitative measures were concept-based questionnaires and concept-focused interviews which aimed at disclosing changes in students' concepts over time. The quantitative measures, ability assessment sheets, and rubrics, focused on students' ability to create and deliver a presentation based on five main aspects: enterprise culture, structure, PPT slide design, oral delivery, and non-verbal performance (for more see Lai et al., 2015).

Expert input and multiple monitoring. Workplace supervisors and teachers were encouraged to give comments and suggestions on students' presentations. Thus students received feedback from different perspectives. Students were also given freedom to choose which suggestions were appropriate for their revisions, which encouraged them to think and make decisions.

Presentation in the real workplace. Providing an opportunity for students to go to the workplace, deliver a presentation in front of workplace

supervisors, and listen to supervisors' comments and suggestions in person was a vital part of this program (Lo & Sanjaya, 2015). Being aware that they had to present in the real workplace provided motivation, and students were excited about preparing their presentations. They actively participated during the classes. After the two-week program, students went to their assigned company to deliver their presentation. The experience not only left a deep impression on the students, it also boosted their confidence and increased their motivation.

Spontaneous assistance of the teacher-learners. Sufficient, appropriate, and immediate assistance from the teacher-learners was a noteworthy contribution to the effectiveness of the program. The assistance given to the students during the program included providing suggestions for the PPT slides and script production, improving students' pronunciation, and training students for their onstage performance. The teacher-learners not only assisted students but also encouraged them and boosted their confidence.

Figure 3 summarizes the interconnected features of the program represented by the outer and inner circles of the curriculum design process.
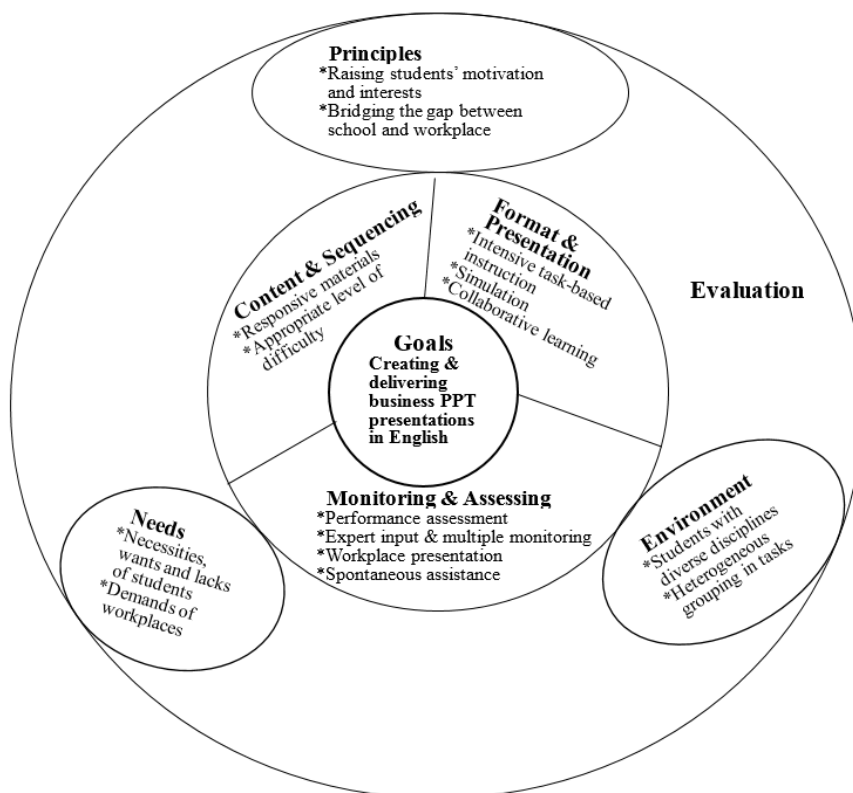
Figure 3. The interconnectedness of the outer circles and the inner circle for the ESP program

2.   What instructional objectives, activities, and materials were developed and organized in order to reflect the curriculum politics embedded in the four courses of the ESP program?

The politics of a curriculum can be examined by what is commonly practiced and valued and what is not (Apple, 1993). This section presents a detailed account of each of the four courses of the ESP program: (1) Enterprise Culture, (2) PowerPoint Presentation Structure, (3) PowerPoint Design, (4) Nonverbal Performance and Oral Delivery based on instructional objectives, teaching materials, and organization.

Enterprise Culture

Instructional objectives. Every company has its own style, characteristics, and emphases in regard to presentations. Thus, an effective business presentation should be able to project a company's image and niche, fulfill the company's needs, and attract the intended audience. Therefore, it was essential for the students to understand the culture of the three assigned companies. In this course, the implications of a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis were also taught so that students could apply them in analyzing products, market forecasts, and companies and use their analysis in their presentation.

Teaching materials. Based on the results of interviews with the three companies, handouts, PPT slides, and activity sheets were designed by the teacher-learners (six university students who were responsible for designing teaching materials, teaching the four courses, and assisting VHS students in creating and delivering the presentations, Lai et al., 2015). Lists of vocabulary associated with the three companies were also provided. The teaching materials provided the information that the students needed to be able to discuss the SWOT (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats) of the three companies with their group members, take notes on the activity sheets, and share their discussion in front of the class.

Organization of the course. This was a two-period (in VHSs in Taiwan, each period lasts 50 minutes) course. To avoid boredom during the course and maintain students' attention, the material was delivered in an interactive talk show format where the hosts, who were the teacher-learners, asked questions of the audience, that is, the students. After the talk show, activity sheets were distributed to the students, who discussed and wrote answers to questions on the activity sheets, and shared the results of their discussion with the entire class. Table 3 presents the instructional activity, instructional focus, and allocated time for the Enterprise Culture course.

Table 3

Instructional Activity, Instructional Focus, and Allocated Time for Enterprise Culture

Instructional Activity	Instructional Focus	Allocated Time
SWOT analysis	- Enact a situational short drama ("Finding Mr./Mrs. Right") to introduce the concept of a SWOT analysis.	20 minutes
Talk show	- Perform a talk show to introduce the enterprise culture of three companies.	30 minutes
Small group discussion	- Discuss the SWOT analysis of the three companies and write down the answers on the worksheet.	20 minutes
Sharing answers	- Share answers in front of the class	15 minutes
Class discussion	- Look at the students' answers and discuss with the whole class.	15 minutes

PowerPoint Presentation Structure

Instructional objectives. Skills in opening and closing a presentation are fundamental because a remarkable presentation always has an interesting beginning and an outstanding ending (Duarte, 2009). Consequently, in this course, students learned the structure of openings and conclusions together with strategies they could use and mistakes they should avoid. In addition to an appealing opening and impressive conclusion, a good presentation should have well-organized content which fulfills the audience's needs. Hence, teaching and training students about systematic ways to arrange information that satisfies an audience's needs while providing evidence supporting presented ideas was also the purpose of this course. Transitional words and sentences were also taught to provide linguistic cohesion and articulation of ideas.

Teaching materials. Handouts and PPT slides were created from various sources (books, websites, videos, materials from previous projects, and results of interviews), such as "Making presentations in English" by I.A. McKinnon and "30 Magazine special edition:

Presentation skills." In addition, examples in the handouts were related to the three companies so that students could see the relationship between the content and the enterprise culture. Lastly, drills and exercises were designed to let students practice instead of just listening to a lecture.

Organization of the course. This course was split into two parts: the opening and conclusion and the body. Each part lasted two periods (each period for 50 minutes). In the beginning, the structure of a presentation—opening, body, and conclusion—was explained, to give students a general overview. Later, a more detailed explanation about the opening and conclusion along with strategies that can be implemented was delivered. At the end of this first part, there was an activity where students were allowed to cooperate with teammates to finish the worksheets. After finishing the worksheets, students were required to practice their English by reading their answers aloud in front of the class. Next, during the first period of the second part, the organization of a presentation body was explained and examples and exercises were given. In the next period, diagrams, figures, and symbols were shown and explained. The students then finished another exercise and shared their answers in front of the class to help them become more confident speaking in front of an audience. Table 4 presents the instructional activity, instructional focus, and allocated time for the first part of Presentation Structure, while Table 5 presents the instructional activity, instructional focus, and allocated time for the second part.

Table 4

Instructional Activity, Instructional Focus, and Allocated Time for the First Part of Presentation Structure – Opening and Conclusion

Instructional Activity	Instructional Focus	Time
General introduction to presentation structure	- Introduce the main parts of a presentation and their purposes.	20 minutes
Openings (skills and strategies)	- Introduce the opening, strategies that can be used, what should be avoided, and each company's enterprise culture regarding the opening. - Assist students in filling in the blanks and doing exercises from the handouts.	30 minutes
Conclusions (skills and strategies)	- Introduce the process of concluding, strategies that can be used, what should be avoided, and each company's enterprise culture regarding the conclusion. - Assist students in filling in the blanks and doing exercises from the handouts.	30 minutes
Interactive activities	- Discuss and fill out the correct answers in the worksheet. - Ask students to share and read their answers aloud in front of the class.	20 minutes

Table 5

Instructional Activity, Instructional Focus, and Allocated Time for the Second Part of Presentation Structure – The Body

Instructional Activity	Instructional Focus	Time
Reviewing the overall structure of a presentation	- Review presentation structure and mention the course focus, the body.	5 minutes
Topic sentences and supporting sentences	- Explain topic sentences and supporting sentences. - Assist students in doing the exercise on the handouts.	20 minutes
Introduction of 3Ps–people, purpose, place	- Introduce the 3P concept and its application to the three companies. - Assist students in using the 3P concept in brainstorming the possible topic sentences and supporting details related to the companies.	25 minutes
Transitional words	- Introduce some transitional words. - Assist students in doing the exercise.	10 minutes
Diagrams and figures	- Introduce how to use and explain charts in a presentation.	10 minutes
Symbols	- Introduce specific symbols, such as, @, www, and %.	5 minutes
Game	- Give students a series of PPT slides and a list of paragraphs. - Ask students to match each slide with its correspondent paragraph and put the slides into a logical order. - Invite several students to share their answers in front of the class.	25 minutes

PowerPoint Design

    Instructional objectives. PPT slides are universally regarded as a supplementary tool in a presentation (Duarte, 2009), and the audience will refer to the slides as needed. As a result, the display of information

on the slides influences the whole presentation. In this course, students learned the purposes, skills, and basic principles of designing slides and also the value of designing these slides in coordination with the preferred styles of the three companies.

Teaching materials. The teaching materials were PPT slides, handouts, and a video. The teacher-learners designed the materials by assembling essential information from different sources. The preferred styles of the three companies were also merged into the material. In order to add variation to the course, a video by Don McMillan (2009) about mistakes people make in their PowerPoint slides was played during the course.

Organization of the course. One period was allocated for the course. The course started with the video, followed by the explanation of the importance and purpose of PPT slide design. The important principles that students should follow were next explained in detail, along with examples. Finally, students were tasked with pointing out mistakes on several slides. Please refer to Table 6 to see the instructional activity, instructional focus, and allocated time for the PPT Design course.

Table 6

Instructional Activity, Instructional Focus, and Allocated Time for PPT Design

Instructional Activity	Instructional Focus	Time
Introduction and video	- Introduce the importance, purpose, and concept of PPT slide design; play the video.	15 minutes
Important aspects in designing PPT slides	- Introduce the slide design skills, including words (font style and size, key words, capitalized words), slide format (consistency and animation), graphics and picture, videos, and color selection.	25 minutes
Quiz time	- Show several slides with different design mistakes and ask students to find the mistakes.	10 minutes

Nonverbal Performance and Oral Delivery

Instructional objectives. An impressive presentation also requires an outstanding delivery. In this course, basic manners and gestures, intonation,

enunciation, pauses, and appropriate voice control were taught so that students could deliver their presentation smoothly and confidently.

Teaching materials. Handouts, PPT slides, and a video were used in the course. Similar to the materials for the other courses, the materials for this course were compiled from numerous sources. Nancy Duarte's (2009) video "Five Rules for Presentations" was played during the course. In addition, in order to incorporate enterprise culture into the course, students were told to always adjust their apparel and presentation style to suit the place, purpose, and people. Lastly, several activities such as finding mistakes and reading aloud were designed for the students in order to increase their engagement in the class.

Organization of the course. The time allotted for this course was one period. The course started with the video. Then, an overview of nonverbal performance and oral delivery was presented, followed by an explanation of the essential features of nonverbal performance and oral delivery along with strategies. During the lecture, students engaged in several exercises; for example, from several pictures shown on the slides, students had to choose the most suitable apparel for presentations and give reasons why the apparel in the other pictures was inappropriate. In order to build their confidence, students were asked to read scripts aloud using the principles that had been taught in the course. Table 7 outlines the instructional activity, instructional focus and allocated time for the course of Nonverbal Performance and Oral Delivery.

Table 7

Instructional Activity, Instructional Focus, and Allocated Time for Nonverbal Performance and Oral Delivery

Instructional Activity	Instructional Focus	Time
Introduction and video	- Introduce the importance, purpose, and main aspects of nonverbal performance and oral delivery (begin by playing the video).	10 minutes
Important aspects of nonverbal performance	- Introduce the content, which consists of confidence, preparation, purpose, apparel, gestures, voice, intonation, and enunciation, and eye contact.	40 minutes

The findings have shown how different components came into play to shape a different curriculum politics and how they facilitated the implementation of a curriculum. The instructional objectives and activities of the four courses in the program based on the alternative curriculum politics have been presented in detail. This detailed information can be used to help fill the gap in the literature created by the lack of sufficient descriptions of task-based ESP programs for secondary learners, particularly in an EFL context.

DISCUSSION

The findings have shown how the curriculum politics permeated and was also influenced by the different components of the task-based ESP program as analyzed by the language curriculum design model (Nation & Macalister, 2010). In addition, the results have also revealed how the curriculum politics was embodied via the instructional objectives, activities, and materials of the program. A curriculum is not apolitical. Every curriculum has its own core values, as implicated in the "politics" of the curriculum (Apple, 1993).

To address the research gap and to deepen and broaden our understanding of the notion of curriculum politics, this study, in light of the findings and through discussion, reconceptualizes the curriculum politics by comparing and contrasting the sociocultural system of the ESP program and that of the VHS English education based on the six dimensions of Gee's (1999) cultural model: political building, world building, activity building, semiotic building, identity and relationship building, and connection building (Figure 2). Within each dimension, the current VHS English education is discussed first, followed by the task-based ESP program.

Political Building

Political building addresses the value system attached to a curriculum. The fundamental difference between these two curricula has a profound influence on the rest of the five dimensions, as it reflects the value system held by relevant stakeholders. Value has much to do with what a society considers as legitimate, significant, and critical (Foster, 2012; Salehi & Mohammadkhani, 2013).

Moving upward is the goal for learning. In Taiwanese society, it is generally believed that having a higher degree has much to do with securing a stable job (Cheng & Kaplowitz, 2016). Therefore, what is seen as legitimate, significant, and critical for the majority of stakeholders (the administrators, the VHS English teachers, and the VHS students and their parents) under the current VHS educational system is getting high examination scores to move to a higher level of education (i.e., college/university of science and technology). In other words, although the educational goal for the VHS system that sets it apart from the academic track in the general senior high school is that it is meant to equip students with knowledge and skills necessary for employment that relates to their professional discipline, the primary and ultimate goal for VHS English education has become helping students do well in the JEE, in which English is one of the subjects, in order to enter a college/university of science and technology.

Making sense of VHS students' relevant professional fields is what matters. In contrast, in the curriculum developed for the task-based ESP program, English is a communication tool closely tied to the student's professional field. Instead of seeing English as a subject to be tested, in the ESP program what was viewed as legitimate, significant, and critical was being able to integrate professional knowledge and skills with the professional discipline and being able to apply them in their future potential workplace. The VHS students in the program were either English or business majors and thus being able to prepare and deliver an effective English business PPT presentation required by the designated workplace became the primary and ultimate goal for the curriculum design and the value for teaching and learning.

World Building

It is not difficult to imagine what a different world each value system projects. In the extremely competitive JEE world, the English input and output is judged by its accuracy and correctness. It is through this right-or-wrong world that VHS students are judged as to whether they are qualified to enter the next higher education level (Smyth, Down, & McIncerney, 2014).

English knowledge is right or wrong and is limited to the classroom. For the VHS students whose goal is to prepare for and do well in the JEE, the "world" of English learning is confined to the classroom. It is mostly a matter of getting good grades on daily quizzes, monthly tests and, in the

end, the ultimate examination. English is equated with vocabulary, repetition, grammar rules, memorization, drills, exercises requiring filling in the blanks and answering multiple choice questions, Chinese and English translation, and reading comprehension. The "world" of English learning is usually about how many new words are to be memorized, how well one can understand the grammar rules and fill in the blanks, and finally how well one can read and comprehend the assigned reading, answer the multiple-choice questions, and compose a piece of writing within the assigned time span (Ren, Chen, & Lin, 2016).

English knowledge is co-constructed and extends to the outside related professions. The "world" of the VHS participants in the ESP program is quite different. Their "world" of English learning involved not only making sense of the necessary knowledge and skills relevant for their future employment, but also being able to apply the knowledge and skills in the required profession. It consists of finding out the information necessary in the assigned workplace and constructing the information in a way that fulfills the demands of the workplace. It is also a world that expands and is connected to an off-campus space (a workplace). In this program, the students' world of English teaching and learning is expanded because English learning is not limited to the classroom but linked to the workplace.

Activity Building

Because of the different "worlds" portrayed by different value systems, what the teacher and the VHS students are expected to do in the two different worlds also varies to a great extent (Loftus &McKenzie, 2013).

Learning by cramming. Since preparing VHS students to do well in the JEE is the ultimate goal, it is not difficult to imagine what the teacher and students focus on in the English class. Based on interviews with VHS students in Chen's (2008) study, the majority of the time in these classes is used for cramming what will be tested in the examination. The teacher becomes the source of knowledge, pouring out the knowledge necessary for the examination (Liu, 2012). The students, on the other hand, become the passive receivers, absorbing what is given by the only authoritative figure in the room. Moreover, to effectively memorize the necessary content for the examination, the students sit by themselves in chairs, in straight rows, and the teacher usually is the only one in front of the classroom providing what needs to be learned and tested.

68

Learning by doing. Making sense of the knowledge and skills required in a designated field is, however, only the first step for learning; being able to do—to apply—what is learned is a necessary second step. To do something with what is learned implies that students need to learn what is required in the workplace. In the ESP program, different parties were in charge of different aspects of preparing students to do what was demanded in the workplace. The VHS students were not merely receivers. They worked together with peers to interpret the knowledge and skills given by the teacher-learners and to create the structure and contents of the PPT slides as informed by praxis that emphasizes the interplay of theory and practice (Christensen & Aldridge, 2013) and participatory curriculum that highlights the importance of hands-on experience (Salehi & Mohammadkhani, 2013). They also presented the slides based on their understanding and interpretation and applied the knowledge and skills introduced in the courses of Nonverbal Performance and Oral Delivery.

Semiotic Building

Semiotic building refers to the tools and methods used to make sense of the English learning. The politics (the hidden curriculum) of a curriculum is reinforced and reproduced through the tools used in the classroom (Kincheloe, 2011; Lee, 2014).

Traditional methods are employed to ensure that English is a subject matter to be tested. For the current VHS students, the only way to make sense of English is through listening to lectures, memorizing new words, studying the English grammar rules, and making sense of the reading through the grammar-translation method. They make sense of reading and writing by preparing for the daily quizzes and tests, with the ultimate aim of a good score on the JEE. The sequence of the English they learn is based on the perceived level of difficulty and the language is presented in segments so that it is easier to memorize. With this method, certain rules have to be learned before others. Textbooks also become the major, if not only, source of knowledge of the English language and culture and the teacher is the major, if not the only, person delivering what is covered in the textbook.

Task-based approaches are used to ensure that English is for communication purposes. The ESP program, on the other hand, required the VHS participants to use English as a communication tool in the job market. In order to understand what was needed in their assigned workplace, they

studied business PowerPoint presentations through the four courses (Enterprise Culture, Structure of PPT Slides, Display of PPT Slides, and Oral Delivery and Language Skills) and incorporated the knowledge into the development of the content for their presentations. Rather than grammar rules, it was the development of the necessary content, the meaning, that guided the students' English reading and writing; rather than the sequencing and segmenting of the language to help students memorize the information, the purpose of the activities was to highlight the use of English; rather than textbooks with canned material to be studied, the ESP materials could be anything feasible to help students do well on the assigned task.

Identity and Relationship Building

Identity and relationship building refers to the sociocultural roles taken up by the teacher and the students in the classroom and the interaction patterns being built as the result of the relationships shaped by the teacher and students. From a critical pedagogy perspective, the way in which identities and relationships are built and transformed in the classroom can also shape and be shaped by how the students identify themselves and interact with others in society (Christensen & Aldridge, 2013; Edwards, 2010; Kincheloe, 2011)

Fixed roles and expected interaction patterns are built by the teacher and the students. Under the current VHS system that aims to prepare students for the JEE, students are viewed as receptacles into which is poured all the necessary knowledge for the examination, and the English teacher is seen as the provider who, along with the textbook, has the authoritative knowledge (Hu & Tian, 2012). In other words, the students view the teacher as the major, if not the only, source of knowledge, and they seldom challenge the information passed down by their teacher. Given the fixed roles played by the teacher and students, there is not much interaction in the classroom because the teacher, as giver of knowledge, is busy delivering the required knowledge to prepare the students to pass the ultimate examination while the students take the role of passive consumers, cramming the knowledge delivered from their teacher.

Fluid roles and intensive interaction patterns are shaped by the teacher and students. In contrast to the roles of givers and receivers in the VHS English classroom, none of the stakeholders in the ESP program (the teacher-learners, the VHS students, the VHS English teachers, and the VHS business teachers) possessed all the knowledge and skills required

by the relevant profession. They all had their strengths, but no one was viewed as the sole source of knowledge and thus no one had complete ownership of the knowledge. They were collaborators who worked together to bring about the success of the program. The VHS participants were no longer merely the receivers of the knowledge and skills or the consumers of what was delivered in the classroom. The program required that peers in different fields (AFL and business majors) collaborate to accomplish the assigned task; therefore, the students were co-constructors of knowledge with their peers and with the teacher-learners. There was an intensively inter-dependent relationship between the teacher-learners and the VHS participants because of the fluid roles and the nature of the task.

(Dis)connection Building

(Dis)connection building examines integration or separation in two aspects: (1) theory, belief, and practice and (2) past, present, and future.

The VHS English classroom is a contested site of theory, belief, and practice. Most VHS students choose to enter the VHS system because either they appreciate its "application" side or they may not be good enough or willing to focus merely on "knowledge for knowledge's sake," as in academic subjects. However, after they enter the system, they find that the entire school system is under pressure to prepare students for the JEE. What they believe (application vs. academics) and what they do (the primary activities in the classroom) are contradictory. The disconnection between belief, theory, and practice creates an "identity crisis" (Hua & Beverton, 2013, p. 104) for the VHS students. Ironically, what the students are doing in the VHS is intended to help them move up to a university of science and technology where the incorporation of theory and practice is also greatly emphasized. However, in order to get to that place, they suffer from a disconnection between belief, theory, and practice. This, paradoxically, creates another form of disconnection—between their past, present, and future—which worsens their identity crisis.

The ESP Program is a platform for integrating theory, belief, and practice relevant to professional fields. Completing the task assigned by the ESP program required an integration of theory, belief, and practice. The ESP program was developed based on the belief that an alternative program, one with a different politics of curriculum, should be developed and carried out. The program was also developed to create a different

opportunity for VHS students to learn and use English. Finally, in the ESP program, theory (the coursework intended to introduce knowledge and skills for business PPT presentations) went hand in hand with practice (creating and delivering the presentation both in the classroom and in the workplace). The integration of belief, theory, and practice was expected to provide a smooth connection between students' past (VHS students' inclination for applied knowledge), present (the current educational objectives of the VHS educational system), and the future (the higher educational level that also emphasizes the practical aspect of knowledge).

Figure 4 summarizes the six dimensions of the cultural model in the two distinctive value systems embedded in the current VHS English classroom and the alternative ESP program.

World Building (Worldviews)	(Dis)connection Building (Theory, Belief, Practice)	Semiotic Building (Tools)
• English knowledge is right or wrong and is limited to the classroom • *English knowledge as co-constructed that should be expanded to the outside related professions*	• English classroom as a contested site of theory, belief & practice • *ESP program as a platform for integrating theory, belief & practice*	• Traditional tools employed to ensure that English as a subject matter to be tested • *Task-based approaches used to ensure that English for communication purposes*

Political Building
(Values)

• Moving upward as the key for learning
• *Making sense of relevant professional field is what matters*

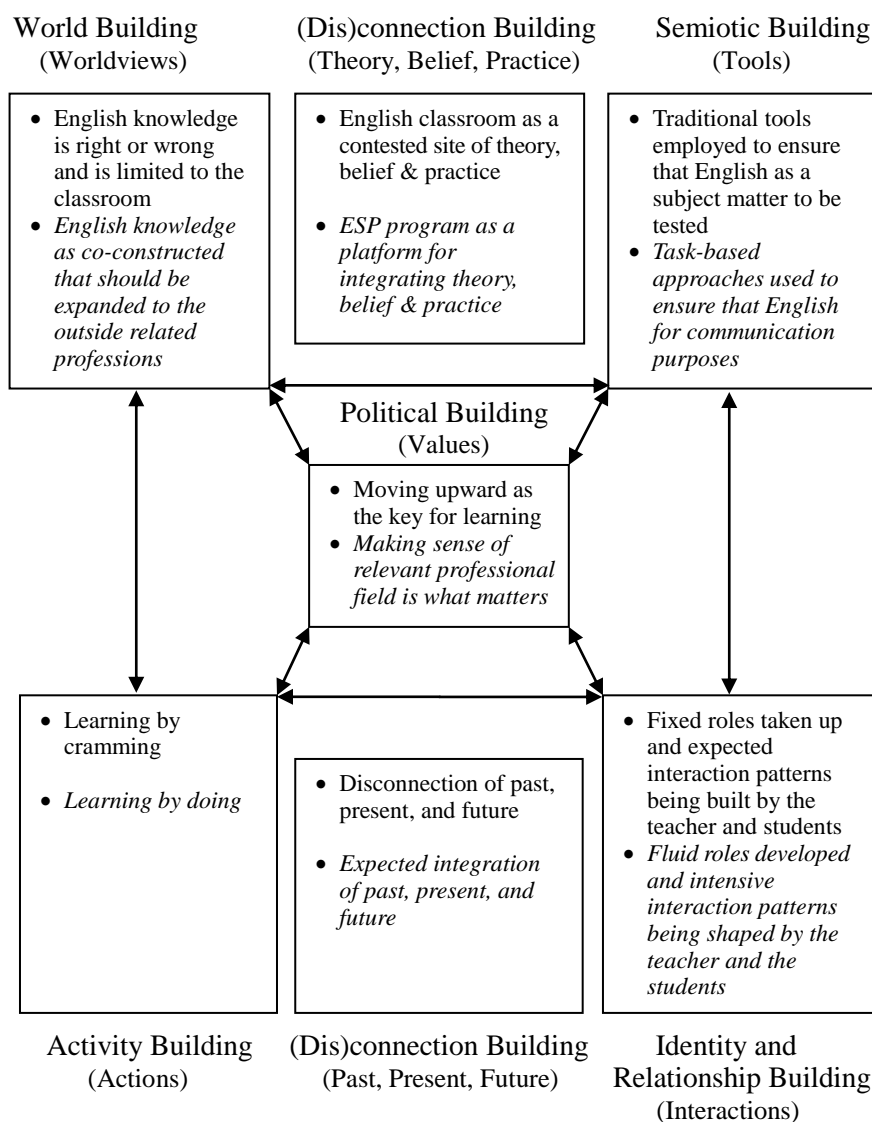| Activity Building (Actions)	(Dis)connection Building (Past, Present, Future)	Identity and Relationship Building (Interactions)
• Learning by cramming • *Learning by doing*	• Disconnection of past, present, and future • *Expected integration of past, present, and future*	• Fixed roles taken up and expected interaction patterns being built by the teacher and students • *Fluid roles developed and intensive interaction patterns being shaped by the teacher and the students*

Figure 4. Interrelationships of the six dimensions between the politics of the VHS English education and the politics of the task-based ESP program (in Italics)

CONCLUSION

This study has three contributions. First, based on the curriculum design model developed by Nation and Macalister (2010), this study describes how different parts of the curriculum (needs, environment, principles, goal, content and sequencing, format and presentation, and monitoring and assessment, as well as evaluation) shaped and contributed to an alternative curriculum politics informed by critical pedagogy and participatory curriculum. The alternative curriculum politics highlighted the authentic use of language and meaningful tasks, which is different, if not totally different, from the one underpinning the VHS English education. This paper delineates in detail what and how instructional activities and materials were presented and organized to embody the alternative curriculum politics promoted by the task-based ESP program.

Second, this study illustrates how curriculum politics can be much more fully addressed when its value system is investigated by incorporating Gee's six dimensions of cultural model. This paper reconceptualizes the curriculum politics by comparing and contrasting the sociocultural system of the ESP program and that of the VHS English education based on the six dimensions of Gee's (1999) cultural model. Both the findings and the discussion have important theoretical and practical implications for teacher education in general and VHS English education in particular.

Finally, this study provides empirical evidence to demonstrate how different parts of a curriculum shaped a task-based ESP program for Taiwanese VHS students based on a curriculum politics that is very different from that of the current VHS English education. It enriches the literature, which lacks empirical cases that address the needs of secondary learners of ESP in EFL contexts.

IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The analysis and discussion of the study have yielded important implications for theorizing curriculum politics and curriculum development, on which are based some practical suggestions for VHS English education in Taiwan and ESP for secondary learners in particular.

This study suggests that a curriculum can and should be better theorized from two perspectives: inside-out and outside-in. An inside-out perspective refers to how the goal of a curriculum relates to and connects to the demands of the outside world. An outside-in perspective, on the other hand, addresses how a curriculum assembles all the out-out-classroom resources into the curriculum development. Both perspectives are interactive and interrelated. Nation and Macalister's (2010) curriculum development model can be re-visited from both interactive and interrelated perspectives. The analysis of the task-based ESP program suggests the importance of setting up clear goals for a curriculum. Informed by an inside-out perspective, being able to create and deliver a business PowerPoint presentation was a stated objective intended to respond to the demands required by the workplace. This suggests that what an English teacher needs to consider is not only what to teach (content and sequencing), how to teach (format and presentation), and how to see the outcome of the learning (monitoring and assessment), but also the learning/teaching environment in which the curriculum is situated and the needs of various stakeholders (students, teachers, parents, administrators, policy makers, etc.). The failure to consider any component may cause a well-intended curriculum to fail. In addition, change in one component (e.g., the demands of the workplace) often leads to subsequent changes in another (e.g., what to do and how to do it in the ESP program). The interactivity and interrelatedness of a curriculum should be considered simultaneously to ensure the effectiveness of the program design and the success of the implementation.

The analysis of both the ESP program and VHS English education program, from an inside-out perspective, confirms the notion that curriculum is not apolitical (Apple, 1993). Gee's (1999) cultural model suggests that the worldview held by all the stakeholders involved, the instructional objectives set and instructional activities organized, the roles played by the teacher and the students, and the relationships co-constructed by the teacher and students, all the components come into play to shape the core values of a curriculum, which in turn, has a fundamental impact on it. In a practical sense, this discussion implies that what we do (or do not do) in our classrooms reflects what is legitimate, valued, and critical and what is not given within an educational system embedded in a particular sociocultural society (Apple, 1993). What we do (or do not do) reflects what we believe in and what

75

values we hold dear. What we do (or do not do) also determines what worldview is brought to the curriculum, how the teacher and students interact and relate to each other in their daily practice, and what types of teachers and students the curriculum educates, and consequently, from a critical pedagogy perspective (Christensen & Aldridge, 2013), what types of citizens the curriculum eventually nurtures for society.

The major objective of vocational education is to nurture in students the skills needed in the workplace; thus, practical job skills and hands-on activities should be the focus of VHS education. The inside-out and outside-in perspectives suggest that all the stakeholders in the system need to think about what principles to employ, what learning environment to create, whose needs to consider, what to teach, and how to teach, as well as how to monitor and assess the learning outcome in order to align with the stated objectives of VHS education. When the learning environment is confined by the embedded idea of cultural capital (Cheng & Kaplowiz, 2016; Norton, 2015), which associates being able to do well in the JEE to colleges/universities with the key to future success. It implies that all the stakeholders (e.g., teachers, administrators, parents, policy makers, curriculum developers, etc.) need to work together to think about how to create possibility within the confinement. A task-based ESP program held during the summer is an alternative response to the confinement. Although it is unlikely to counteract the deeply seated value (viewing education as the key to social mobility), it is suggested that VHSs develop curricula that coincide with the intended objective of VHS education. One way to do so is to collaborate with universities and workplaces during summer or winter breaks to develop English programs that match the main objective of VHSs.

Gee's (1999) model implies that VHS English education is being situated in a contradictory zone with competing curriculum politics: official vs. practical.

Officially, the VHS education, different from the other senior high school system (the academic track system), should feature equipping VHS students with professional knowledge and practical skills as the priorities. Practically, however, with more than eighty percent of VHS graduates (You & Chen, 2014) choosing to enter universities and colleges, it is not surprising that the VHS system is preparing VHS students for the JEE. Through the perspective of Gee's (1999) cultural model, we can see that VHS English teachers and students are

confronted with contested values and demands. The implementation of a task-ESP program for VHS students to attend suggests potential alternatives for daily practice in VHS English education. For example, rather than being confined within the classroom, VHS English education could consider a different worldview that connects to students' related professions (e.g., giving a business presentation in the workplace); in addition to textbooks, suitable topics and authentic materials related to students' professional knowledge could be used to supplement the regular curriculum; in addition to monthly tests, meaningful tasks demanded in the workplace could be incorporated into the extracurricular activities, particularly during summer and winter breaks.

LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER STUDIES

This study employed the model of language curriculum design proposed by Nation and Macalister (2010). The use of the model entails several essential components of curriculum development. However, different curriculum development models (e.g., Graves, 2000) may provide different perspectives for analyzing curriculum that may not be addressed in Nation and Macalister's model and which may yield different results. It is suggested that similar task-based ESP programs for secondary learners be analyzed by other language curriculum designs models to see what new insights for curriculum development the different types of models can add. Analyzing a curriculum by various models can expand and deepen our understanding.

Gee's (1999) cultural model suggests a sociocultural perspective for examining the curriculum politics rooted in the task-based ESP program and the VHS English education program. Curriculum politics can also be examined by other sociocultural models (e.g., Engeström, 1987) to conceptualize what other components of curriculum could come into play to inform the complexities and particularities involved in curriculum politics.

Few studies have attempted to combine a language curriculum design model and a sociocultural model to examine a task-based ESP program for secondary learners. More juxtapositions of language curriculum design models and cultural models are suggested for different types of programs for different populations of learners situated in different educational contexts.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A. The Curriculum of the Task-Based ESP Program

Week 1				
Day \ Time \ **Day 1**	**Day 2**	**Day 3**	**Day 4**	**Day 5**
09:10-10:00 / **09:10-09:20** Introduction of the ITB ESP Program	**Enterprise Culture**	**PPT Structure** (Body)		Preparation for Mid-ability Assessment
10:10-11:00 / **09:20-11:00** Preparation for Pre-ability Assessment	**PPT Structure** (Opening, Conclusion)		**09:00-11:30** Script Writing	**Mid-ability Assessment** **10:20-10:35** 6 & 1 **10:40-10:55** 2 & 5
11:10-12:00 Pre-ability Assessment		**Nonverbal and Oral Delivery**	**11:30-12:00** Practice Time	**11:15-11:30** 3 & 4 **11:30-12:00** Group Discussion
12:00-13:00	Lunch Break			
13:10-13:30 Pre-course concept-based questionnaire	**PPT Design**	PPT Making 2 (Body)	**13:15-13:30** Videos Watching (Videos from Previous Year) **13:30-13:45** Discussion **13:45-15:00**	**13:10- 13:40** PPT and Script Combining **13:40- 14:50** Small Games **14:50-15:00** Daily
13:30-15:00 / **15:10-15:30** **Enterprise Culture**	PPT Making 1 (Opening, Conclusion)		Script Revising **15:10-16:00**	Feedback **15:10- 15:40** **After-lesson Concept Questionnaire**
15:30-16:00 Daily Feedback	Daily Feedback	Daily Feedback	Practice Time & Daily Feedback	**15:40- 16:00** Reminder

Appendix A. The Curriculum of the Task-Based ESP Program (Continued)

Week 2				
Day / Time	**Day 6**	**Day 7**	**Day 8**	**Day 9**	**Day 10**
09:10-10:00	**09:10-09:40** *Body*	**09:10-09:30** *Opening* **09:30-09:45** Theory Reviewing	**09:10-9:30** *Non-verbal* **09:30-9:45** Theory Reviewing	School Contest Preparation and Rehearsal	Presentation Filming
10:10-11:00	**09:40-10:00** Theory Reviewing **10:10-11:00** Checking & Expanding	**09:45-10:00** Checking & Expanding **10:10-10:30** Small Group Practice	**09:45-10:00** Checking & Expanding **10:30-11:30** Small Group Practice		PPT Revising Based on Comments from School Contest
11:10-12:00	Practice and Revising	**10:30-11:30** Whole Class Practice **11:30-12:00** PPT Revising	**10:30-11:30** Whole Class Practice **11:30-12:00** PPT Revising		
12:00-13:00	Lunch Break				
13:10-14:00	**13:10-13:40** Small Group Practice	**13:10-13:30** *Conclusion* **13:30-14:00** Theory Reviewing	Practicing and Discussing Comments from Supervisors and School Teachers	School Contest (School Contest Ability Assessment)	**13:10-13:40** After-school Contest **13:40-15:00** Concept Questionnaire
14:10-15:00	**13:40-14:15** Whole Class Practice **14:25-15:00** Whole Class Practice	**14:10-14:30** Checking & Expanding **14:30-15:00** Small Group Practice			
15:10-15:30	PPT Revising	**15:00-15:30** Whole Class Practice	PPT Revising		Certificate and Group Photo
15:30-16:00	Daily Feedback	Daily Feedback	Daily Feedback	Daily Feedback	
Open	**Workplace Presentation (date/time to be negotiated with the workplace)** **Post-ability Assessments (conducted after the workplace presentation)**				

Appendix B. Questionnaire for VHS Students

Learning Needs	**Four courses will be offered in this ESP program: Introduction to Enterprise Culture, PPT Presentation Structure, PPT Presentation Design, and Nonverbal Communication.**
	Among the four major courses, which course taught the knowledge you lack most and why?
	Among the four major courses, which course taught the knowledge you need most and why?
	Among the four major courses, which course taught the knowledge you want most and why?
Learning Expectations	***The aim of this ESP program is on professional culture, business-oriented. Please tell us your learning expectations toward the following ESP courses in hope that we can meet your learning needs as well as possible.**
	From 【Introduction to Enterprise Culture】class, I would like to learn:
	From 【PPT Structure】class, I would like to learn:
	From 【PPT Design】class, I would like to learn:
	From 【Nonverbal Communication】 class, I would like to learn:
Professional Certificates	**English:** ☐No ☐TOEIC(score): _____ ☐GEPT Level: _____ (☐1st ☐2nd) ☐Other: _____ **Other professional certificates or licenses:**
(1) Have you ever made any English presentation? ☐Yes ☐No If yes, what was the purpose of the presentation? _____(e.g. content, report); who was your audience? _____ **(2) Have you ever participated in our ESP program?** ☐Yes ☐No	

Appendix C. Sample Interview Questions for the Workplace Supervisors

Enterprise Culture
1. Could you introduce your company culture, including the theory of business, prospect, brands, management, and selling models and sales channels?
2. What is the SWOT analysis of your company?
3. What kind of style do you require when making and giving the presentation?
PPT Structure
4. What is the specific order of your company English presentation?
5. What evidence do you use to certify products' strengths in the presentation?
6. Do you use statistics, graphs, and pictures in English business presentation?
PPT Design
7. Could you explain how to arrange the layout of the PPT slides regarding words, graphics and colors in your company?
8. What would you describe the style of your PPT slides?
9. Is there any special requirement as to the color of the layout?
Nonverbal Communication
10. What do you consider appropriate gestures, movements, and tone while presenting?
11. What is your dress code?
12. What do you consider the most critical element of nonverbal communication?
Verbal Skills
13. Which verbal skills do you emphasize most in the presentation?
14. How is the overall English level of your audience?
15. In the presentation, do you prefer colloquial words or formal ones?

課程政治學的再建構：
以一個台灣高職專業英文課程為例

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課程是一種形式的政治學。課程政治學定義何種為合法且具價值的知識。台灣高職教育的目標之一是為結合學生的專業知識與未來職場所需之實用技能。但在升學主義掛帥的台灣社會，合法且有價值的知識被準備考上理想的科技大學所取代;漸漸地，高職教育偏離了設立的初衷。受到批判教育學和參與式課程理論的啟發，本研究採用了有別於現有一般高職英語教學之課程政治學，專為高職學生研發設計了以任務為導向的專業英文課程。本文首先以 Nation 和 Macalister（2010）的課程發展模式介紹並分析課程發展中各個組成面向互動下所呈現的課程政治學，接著本文具體而微的描繪研究中的四門課程，其教學目標、活動和教材，如何啟動並開展新的課程政治學;最後，為深化並延伸我們對課程政治學的理解，本研究以 Gee（1999）社會文化基模之六大面向，探究此套專為高職生所設計的專業英文課程與台灣現有一般高職英文課程所架構之社會文化體系，其相同相異之處。根據研究分析結果，本文提出理論與實務的啟發和建議，以及未來可行之研究方向。

關鍵詞：課程政治學、專業英文（ESP）、高職（VHS）、課程設計、文化基模