International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences
Vol-10, Issue-6; Nov-Dec, 2025

Peer-Reviewed Journal
Journal Home Page Available: https://ijels.com/
Journal DOI: 10.22161/ijels

Designing ELT Syllabi for Industry-Ready Professionals

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Received: 07 Nov 2025; Received in revised form: 05 Dec 2025; Accepted: 09 Dec 2025; Available online: 14 Dec 2025

Abstract— *In an era of rapid technological disruption, global competition, and evolving workplace expectations, higher education institutions must revise and redesign curricula to produce industry-ready graduates. This paper argues that up skilling, workplace immersion, and a growth mindset are fundamental to bridging the academia–industry gap. The empirical study is based on a questionnaire administered to corporate heads, senior managers, and industry professionals. The findings reveal that digital communication etiquette, technical writing proficiency, persuasive presentation skills, active listening, workplace responsiveness, crisis communication, and conflict resolution abilities are among the most demanded competencies. The study proposes a collaborative model involving curriculum co-design, simulation labs, real-world documentation, industry mentorship, and experiential learning. It highlights existing challenges such as limited resources, inconsistent industry engagement, and slow curriculum revisions. The recommendations include structured collaboration frameworks, periodic industry mentoring followed by student's assessment and feedback, increased funding, exposure of industrial practices for faculty. The paper concludes that integrating authentic workplace communication tasks into ELT syllabi can significantly enhance employability, industry readiness, and professional behaviour among learners.*

Keywords— ***Industry-ready professionals, ELT curriculum, up skilling, curriculum co-design, simulation labs, employability skills, workplace communication.***

I. INTRODUCTION

India's ascent as a global technological and economic force underscores the urgent need for a robust academia–industry partnership. To develop a skilled and industry-ready workforce, higher education institutions must integrate authentic workplace communication practices into English Language Teaching (ELT). Traditional English instruction—limited to grammar, literary texts, or isolated communication exercises—fails to address real-world expectations.

Recent research supports this shift.

- Tushar (2023) emphasizes that 21st-century employability relies on communication, teamwork, critical thinking, and digital literacy, advocating for industry-integrated curricula.
- A 2025 systematic review on communication in ESP and vocational education confirms that digital tasks—virtual meetings, e-portfolios, and workplace simulations—enhance workplace readiness.
- Studies published in MDPI (2025) and World Journal of English Language (2025) highlights that continuous professional development (CPD), authentic materials, and industry input significantly improve ESP/ELT outcomes.
- Conceptual papers from 2023 (Granthaalayah, ShodhKosh) also emphasize aligning English curricula with employer expectations, short internships, and industry mentors.

Although engineering and management students possess strong technical abilities, their inability to express ideas concisely and persuasively often becomes a barrier during presentations, interviews, and corporate discussions. As organizations increasingly prioritize communication proficiency, academic institutions must adapt their ELT syllabi to reflect real workplace practices.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Recent scholarship in ELT, ESP, and workplace communication highlights several recurring themes:

2.1 Employability and Workplace Communication

Studies consistently affirm that communication is the most valued employability skill (Tushar, 2023). Employers expect graduates to demonstrate clarity, conciseness, presentation skills, and digital etiquette.

2.2 Industry-Aligned ELT Materials

Research by Erkir (2024/2025) indicates that Business English courses aligned with authentic corporate materials—emails, reports, meeting minutes—significantly improve employability.

2.3 Digital and New-Media Competence

Vocational studies (2025) highlight that new-media-enabled tasks—simulated meetings, recorded presentations, e-portfolios—enhance confidence, linguistic accuracy, and professional readiness.

2.4 Teacher Professional Development

MDPI (2025) emphasizes that CPD programs co-designed with industry mentors equip teachers to deliver workplace communication more effectively.

2.5 Academia–Industry Collaboration

Studies recommend curriculum co-design, periodic industry feedback, and exposure to real workplace documentation (audit reports, SOPs, incident logs) to strengthen ELT programs.

Collectively, research suggests that industry-integrated ELT curricula produce more confident, job-ready, and professionally competent graduates.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a descriptive research design using a structured questionnaire administered to:

- Corporate heads
- HR managers
- Senior engineers
- Project managers
- Industry trainers

A total of 110 responses were collected from various sectors including manufacturing, IT/ITES, public sector undertakings, and private business houses. Quantitative and qualitative feedback was analyzed to identify key communication competencies expected from fresh graduates.

IV. FINDINGS

The analysis highlights several critical competencies demanded by employers:

4.1 Key Communication Skills Required

- Digital communication etiquette
- Technical writing proficiency (reports, SOPs, MOMs)
- Presentation and persuasion abilities
- Listening skills and responsiveness
- Crisis communication and conflict resolution
- Professional email writing
- Workplace interaction etiquette

4.2 Preferred ELT Interventions

Employers strongly endorsed:

- Boot camps facilitated by industry professionals
- Simulation-based activities (virtual meetings, on boarding tasks)
- Proper drafting and editing of official documents (MoUs, emails, logs)
- Effective and persuasive presentations
- Exposure to real incidents, troubleshooting reports, and communication failures
- Strong ethico-moral behavior and professional skills

4.3 Importance of Authentic Documentation

Employers noted syllabi incorporating:

- Project overview, timely completion and assessments are integral.
- Professional behaviour and discipline must be taught under soft skills like :adherence to guidelines, precision, responsiveness, these are vital traits for which employees look in fresh recruits.
- Hands on reports like Failure analysis, feasibility, audit and Troubleshooting reports, must be well practiced.
- Preparing Maintenance SOPs, industry manuals for better understanding of the modus operandi of the company.
- Incident logs and understanding Quality control standards should be a must component.
- On sight exposure and interaction with officials greatly enhance students' understanding of corporate communication.

V. DISCUSSION

Technological advancements—AI, IoT, automation, data analytics—are transforming workplace expectations. Employers expect graduates who can adapt quickly, communicate effectively, and act professionally. Without up skilling, students are at a risk of being unaware about industrial ethics and standard practices and their textual knowledge become obsolete soon after entering the job market.

5.1 Communication as a Professional Necessity

A single ambiguous instruction in a maintenance manual or safety protocol can lead to operational failures. Therefore, communication accuracy is not merely a linguistic requirement but a safety and performance imperative.

5.2 Simulation-Based Learning for ELT

Simulation labs can integrate:

- Virtual corporate meetings
- Remote collaboration platforms
- Technical report drafting
- Client complaint handling
- Cross-cultural negotiation
- Budgeting presentations
- Crisis communication drills
- Fire and safety and contingency service briefings.

These activities refine workplace behavior, analytical thinking, and interpersonal skills.

5.3 Industrial Data as Course Material

Using real industrial data enables students to:

- Understand workplace expectations
- Learn technical vocabulary naturally
- Develop clarity and accuracy
- Interpret and draft official documents
- Strengthen decision-making and analytical reasoning

5.4 Behavioural and Soft Skills through Industry Interaction

Soft skills such as punctuality, etiquette, empathy, adaptability, and teamwork cannot be learned from textbooks. They develop through repeated interaction with industry mentors during:

- Guest lectures
- Internships
- Mentorship programs
- Workshops
- Live projects

VI. INCORPORATING INDUSTRY INSIGHTS INTO ELT SYLLABI

To systematically integrate real-world insights, the paper proposes establishing a Communication Skills Advisory Board to executing an effective industry–academia partnership along with a structured mechanism that aligns curriculum, training, and real-world expectations. The entire model can be divided into five stages: planning, partnership, integration, execution, and evaluation.

1. Strategic Planning and Need Identification

- Conduct a joint needs assessment between industry and the academic institution.
- Identify skill gaps, emerging technologies, behavioral expectations, and workplace competencies required in the sector.
- Align program outcomes with industry requirements such as technical skills, communication, teamwork, and problem-solving.

2. Building Strong Partnerships

- Form formal MoUs with companies that are committed to talent development.
- Create an Industry Advisory Board with professionals, HR leaders, and domain experts.
- Assign faculty coordinators and industry mentors for seamless communication.
- The board may comprise of : Engineers and managers, Supervisors and technicians, Academicians and entrepreneurs, Legal and defence professionals, CEOs, HR trainers, and industry leaders, Freelancers and retired professionals.

3. Curriculum Integration and Co-Design

- Co-develop modules with industry (technical modules, communication skills, digital tools, project management, and workplace behaviour).
- Embed industry certifications, job-oriented courses, and domain-specific workshops.
- Align teaching outcomes with real industry cases, standards, and documentation formats.
- Introduce blended learning: classroom + practical labs + online modules.

4. Hands-On Exposure and Real-World Learning

- Provide live projects, internships, industrial visits, and problem-based challenges.
- Conduct master classes, guest lectures, technical demonstrations, and tools-based training by industry experts.
- Organize mentorship programs where professionals guide students on projects, communication, attitude, and professionalism.
- Establish on-campus labs or Centres of Excellence with industry partners for continuous skill training.

5. Faculty Development and Capacity Building

- Train faculty through industry immersion programs, company visits, and technology workshops.
- Encourage joint research, consultancy, publications, and innovation challenges.
- Align faculty's teaching content with updated industry standards.

6. Continuous Evaluation and Feedback

- Collect feedback from industry mentors on student performance, communication, discipline, teamwork, and technical understanding.
- Regularly revise curriculum based on market trends, new technologies, and employer expectations.
- Use assessment tools such as presentations, industry-reviewed assignments, case studies, and workplace simulation tasks.

7. Outcome Mapping and Placement Integration

- Track whether students demonstrate improved employability skills.
- Map outcomes to placement data, employer satisfaction scores, and internship-to-job conversion rates. Celebrate success stories, publish impact reports, and strengthen partnerships

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Strengthening Academia–Industry Collaboration

- Establish MoUs for curriculum co-design
- Conduct quarterly industry review meetings
- Organize periodic guest lectures
- Review ELT syllabi every semester
- Recommend outcome-based learning
- Suggest AI-driven language tools
- Facilitate internships focusing on communication
- Integrate simulations and role plays

7.2 Enhancing ELT Pedagogy

- Use authentic corporate documents
- Introduce industry-aligned assessments
- Provide case studies, MOUs and Minutes of meetings, resolutions, sustainability, vigilance awareness quizzes and pledges, corporate templates and other official communication drafts etc as a reference resource or material.

7.3 Faculty Exposure and Training

- Industry immersion programs
- Workshops on technical communication
- Joint research with corporate mentors

VIII. CONCLUSION

Employers today view fresher as enthusiastic learners who must possess essential professional skills such as clear communication, teamwork, discipline, problem-solving ability, learning agility, digital literacy, and a positive attitude. While they do not expect deep experience, they do look for fresher who can express ideas confidently, adapt quickly to new environments, work collaboratively across diverse teams, and demonstrate strong work ethics and responsibility. These skills can be nurtured through structured communication training, industry-linked projects, behavioural workshops, digital-skills enhancement, and continuous mentoring. Corporate leaders and industry mentors play a crucial role in this process by providing real-world insights, guiding students through practical problem-solving, offering feedback on workplace behaviour, and exposing them to current industry expectations. Their involvement bridges the gap between academic learning and professional readiness, helping fresher evolve into competent, confident, and industry-aware professionals. The increasing demand for workplace-ready professionals places greater responsibility on academic institutions to redesign ELT curricula that reflect authentic industry practices. The shift from theoretical language teaching to experiential, simulation-driven, and industry-informed communication training is essential.By institutionalizing advisory boards, internships, real-world documentation, and corporate simulations, institutions can produce graduates who are:

- Technically proficient

- Linguistically agile
- Behaviourally mature
- Professionally confident

Such graduates are better equipped to thrive in fast-paced, technology-driven workplaces and contribute meaningfully to organizational growth. ELT classrooms—once peripheral to engineering and management education—can become dynamic laboratories where future professionals are nurtured, refined, and prepared for real-world success.

Industry–academia programs are executed through a coordinated framework that includes need identification, partnership building, joint curriculum design, hands-on learning, continuous mentoring, faculty development, and outcome evaluation. Corporate mentors play a vital role by sharing real-time insights, guiding students through live projects, nurturing professional skills, and ensuring that graduates are workplace-ready. Hough all the above discussed pointer can be well assimilate in syllabi, but limitation to such liberal thought is companies may not be willing to share their technical drafts, reports or manuals with academician due to confidentiality protocols of not sharing companies SOPs and modus-operandi in an open forum, and herein lies the scope of future research, that Govt. organizations or PSUs with Govt. Stake are liable to facilitate academics under CSR projects. So even that small sharing of official documents or technical drafts along with the face to face interaction with industry professional or workshops can be of immense help for budding engineers and Managers to adopt professional ways and behavior of doing things.

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