**International Communication: What Learners Really Need English For**

[Plenary]

**Summary:**

While what we may say can be grammatically and lexically perfect, it may not be the right thing for the time, person, culture or place. International communication is far more than just linguistic knowledge, it is a matter of also having the right communicative skills and mindset. Together, our knowledge, skills and mindset may be termed “competence”.

The competences required for real world communication outside the classroom include the linguistic, the paralinguistic, the non-linguistic, the functional and the intercultural and interpersonal.

Linguistic competence is the foundation of most interactions and acts as a carrier for other communication. This is our vocabulary and grammar. Paralinguistic covers tone and tempo while non-linguistic covers issues such as layout of a text or design of a presentation. Functional competences include the lexis we need for a task. Finally, intercultural and interpersonal competence relate to our handling of variables such as directness, time, power and so on. To build relationships and achieve success, it is imperative that all of these are considered.

This will be a practical session assisted by group input and real-life examples as well as practice, theory and ideas. We will look at how language acts as a carrier for communication, how we can develop our learners’ competences rather than only language knowledge and undertake an exploration of these competences and their effect on communication as well as what can be done in the classroom to assist.

**About Ben Dobbs:**

Ben Dobbs is an international communication and business skills trainer. He works with companies, universities, schools and other institutions training and coaching course participants in areas including presenting, negotiating, academic writing, intercultural communication and interpersonal skills. He has most recently been delivering training in Russia, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and China.

Ben is a frequent conference speaker on matters of international communication and writer of articles on communicative issues, ESP and Business English. Ben is also accredited by English UK and Trinity College London to run the Cert IBET (Certificate in International Business English Training) teacher training course.

E-mail: [ben@bd-comms.co.uk](mailto:ben@bd-comms.co.uk)

Twitter: @bdcomms

E-mail: www.bd-comms.co.uk