A Vignette on Reflective Teaching: Potential Challenges Faced by Future ESP Practitioners

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I. English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

- initially developed at the end of Second World War in 1945
- as the response of expansions in science, technology and commerce
- brought a consequence of English becoming the accepted international language
- In its development, ESP is defined by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) as an approach to language learning
- specifically aimed to meet particular needs of learners.
Being *simply* an approach (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987):

- ESP does not refer to a special form of language, grammar nor different form of language teaching.
- Rather, it is an approach to course designs that accommodate particular needs of learners.

This paper describes the challenges faced by students taking ESP as university subject particularly in conducting project on course design.
II. ESP in the Curriculum

In English Education Study Program, Yogyakarta State University:

• ESP course has two credits
• taken by students in their sixth semester
• attended by between 40 and 50 students
• before taking ESP subject the students took subjects such as Sociolinguistics, TEFL Methodology, English Instructional Technology, and School Curriculum Development
• some other similarly supporting subjects, such as Materials Development and Language Assessment are taken in the same semester.
This course is aimed at

• providing skills in designing programs on English for Specific Purposes whether for the needs of occupational or general schools

• creating an attitude to give an emphasis on the learner and the practical needs of learning English

• providing experiences and exercises in specific vocabulary for specific discipline
Transferring the course description to the reality..

• dividing the syllabus into two major themes, i.e. discussions of theories and workshops
• focusing more on the workshops than the discussions of theories

The ultimate goal is that I can bring into the classroom the real life experience of designing ESP courses
Topics covered in discussion sessions include basic concepts as

- What is ESP?
- The Development of ESP

Meanwhile, the fundamental topics in framework of ESP course design such as

- ESP as an Approach,
- Conceptualizing Content,
- Formulating Goals & Objectives,
- Needs Analysis & Assessing Needs,
- Organizing the Course (syllabus design), and
- Materials Development and Evaluation

are integrated into the workshop.
During the workshops:

- work in groups of 4-5 members

- As some topics need a follow-up outside classroom, they need more than one meeting to complete, e.g. the topic of Needs Analysis and Assessing Needs took 3 meetings for students to come up with the result
E.g. Needs Analysis and Assessing Needs

- Week 1: a discussion of the concepts,
  result: a brief description of the target learners and a list of interview questions for the Needs Analysis process
  follow-ups: students’ project outside classroom to conduct Needs Analysis by interviewing and/or observing the target learners.

- Week 2: students presented the result of the interview and observation and received feedback from the class and lecturer

- Week 3: students handed in the final draft of the Needs Analysis, shared their experiences to class and reflected upon what they did during Needs Analysis process based on the guiding questions
III. Challenges in Designing ESP course

A. Determining Goals and Objectives
   - Conceptualizing the information of ‘What do learners need to learn?’ into particular goals and objectives
   - Some students found that the objectives they suggested seemed too general

B. Designing Syllabus
   - Selecting, adapting and putting the language focus in appropriate sequence
   - Determining course duration, the number of meetings, and matching what learners need to learn with their language proficiency seemed to be demanding tasks
C. Developing Materials

- collecting texts containing relevant topics in learners’ field
- adjusting the texts with learners’ level of proficiency once they came across topic-relevant texts

IV. Conclusion

First, applying a framework of course development suggested by Grave (1996a) helped students to have a clear procedure to conduct the project.
Second, students needed more trainings to put the concepts into practice, especially in formulating the goals and objectives, organizing the contents to produce a syllabus and searching for suitable materials that fit learners’ needs.

Finally, referring back to the concept of ESP as an approach, not having its own language, methodology nor a specific form of language teaching, it is believed that success attained in ESP class results from supports from the teaching learning process in other subjects, such as TEFL Methodology, Materials Development, and Sociolinguistics in Educational Contexts. Thus, integrating the notion of ESP in such subjects is well worth considering.
Thank you
REFERENCES


