MODULE 2 ESP COURSE AND SYLLABUS DESIGN

Introduction

Module 1, as you have seen is an introduction to the course ESP. You have learnt to define ESP and can now distinguish it from GE. In Module 2 will be exposed to the issue of course/syllabus design. The module distinguishes between the terms curriculum, syllabus, course and syllabus design. It also introduces you to factors affecting ESP course design and the steps you will follow in designing a course for specified learners. As ESP is based on learners' reasons for needing English, special attention will be paid to needs analysis. Needs analysis is the process of establishing *what* and *how* of a course (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). Before the advent of Munby's model, EAP course may have been based mainly on teachers' intuitions of students' needs. The needs analyses address workplace and teaching expectations (Engineering and ESP) and learners' (as engineers and language users) needs, wants, and desires (Hutchinson &Waters, 1987). The key feature of ESP is that the teaching and the materials should be founded on the results of needs analysis. We expect to see all this as broken down in the units below.

Unit 1	Definitions of Course, Syllabus, ESP Curriculum and ESP Course/Syllabus Design
Unit 2	Types and Importance of Syllabuses
Unit 3	Factors Affecting ESP Course Design: Language Description
Unit 4	Factors Affecting ESP Course Design: Learning Theories and Needs Analysis
Unit 5	Approaches and Techniques for Needs Analysis; Principles for Analyzing Learners Needs
Unit 6	Approaches to and Steps in ESP Course Design

UNIT 1 DEFINITIONS OF COURSE, SYLLABUS, ESP CURRICULUM AND ESP COURSE/SYLLABUS DESIGN

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous module, you read that one of the functions of an ESP practitioner is to design courses for specified learners. Before we go into how he does that, let us first of all look at the issue of definitions. Often times you hear of syllabus, courses and curriculum. Do you the difference between them? This unit will teach you the difference between courses and syllabus and curriculum. It also lists and explains the different types of syllabuses in language learning. The increasing demand of ESP programmes has sprouted a multitude of language training organizations that offer courses focusing on a particular or specific need. All ESP courses are needs driven.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of the unit, you should be able to:

- define the terms: curriculum, syllabus, course, course design and syllabus design; and
- make a clear distinction between course, syllabus and curriculum;

HOW TO STUDY THE UNIT

a. Read this unit as diligently as possible.
b. Find meaning of unfamiliar words in the unit using your dictionary.
c. As you read, put major points down in a piece of paper or jotter.
d. Do not go to the next section until you have fully understood the section you are reading now.
e. Do all the Self-Assessment exercises in the unit as honestly as you can. In some areas where it is not feasible to provide answers

to Self-Assessment exercises, go to the relevant sections of the unit to derive the answers.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Issue of Definitions: Courses, Syllabus versus Curriculum; Course/Syllabus Design

Every day you hear about curriculum, courses, syllabus and course/syllabus design. Have you ever stopped to wonder what differentiates one from the other?
The terms "syllabus", "syllabus design" and "curriculum" have given rise to confusion in terms of their definitions and use. According to Stern (1983), the field of curriculum studies is part of the discipline of educational studies. In its broadest sense, it refers to the study of goals, content, implementation and evaluation of an educational system. In its restricted sense, curriculum refers to a course of study or the content of a particular course or programme. It is in this narrower sense of curriculum that the term "syllabus" is employed. According to Stern, "syllabus design" is just one phase in a system of interrelated curriculum development activities.

3.1.1 Syllabus

Syllabus refers to the “Content” or “subject matter” of a particular individual subject. Graves (1996), citing White's (1988) definition, states that “A syllabus will be defined narrowly as the specification and ordering of content of a course or courses” (p. 25). So, you may start with the demand for a course, for a specific group of learners over a specific length of time, and then you design a syllabus for it. Shaw (1975) defines a syllabus as “a statement of the plan for any part of the curriculum, excluding the element of curriculum evaluation itself” (p. 62). Syllabus is defined as a set of justifiable educational objectives specified in terms of linguistic content (Noss and Rodgers, 1976); an administrative instrument, partly a day-to-day guide to the teacher, partly a statement of what to be taught and partly a statement of an approach (Strevens, 1977). Wilkins sees syllabuses as specification of the content of language teaching submitted to some degree of structuring or ordering to make teaching and learning more effective (Wilkins, 1981) and Johnson sees it as an organised syllabus inventory, that is, items to be taught (Johnson, 1987).

Candlin (1984) takes a different stand when he says that syllabuses are social constructions, produced interdependently in classrooms by teachers and learners. They are concerned with the specification and planning of what is to be learned, frequently set down in some written form as prescriptions for action by teachers and learners (p. 79).

Basically, a syllabus can be seen as "a plan of what is to be achieved through our teaching and our students' learning" (Breen, 1984) while its function is "to specify what is to be taught and in what order" (Prabhu, 1984).

A syllabus is an expression of opinion on the nature of language and learning; it acts as a guide for both the teacher and learner by providing some goals to be attained. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) define syllabus at its simplest level as "…a statement of what is to be learnt; it reflects the language and linguistic performance" (p. 80). This is a rather traditional interpretation of syllabus, focusing on outcomes rather than process. However, a syllabus can also be seen as a "summary of the content to which learners will be exposed" (Yalden.1987, p. 87). It is seen as an approximation of what will be taught and that it cannot accurately predict what will be learnt. Syllabus then refers to that subpart of a curriculum which is concerned with the specification of what units will be taught.

3.1.2 Curriculum

As defined by Allen (1984) curriculum is a very general concept. It involves consideration of philosophical, social and administrative factors which contribute to the planning of an educational programme. It is the totality of what happens in an educational setting:

Traditionally "curriculum" is taken to refer to a statement or statements of intent – the "what should be" of a course of study. In this work a rather different perspective is taken. The curriculum is seen in terms of what teachers actually do; that is, in terms of "what is", rather than "what should be" (Nunan, 1988, p. 1)

Barnes (1976), in line with the above, talks of 'the school curriculum' to mean 'what teachers plan in advance for their pupils to learn'. But a curriculum made only of teachers' intentions would be an insubstantial thing from which nobody would learn much. To become meaningful a curriculum has to be enacted by pupils as well as teachers… A curriculum as soon as it becomes more than intentions is embodied in the communicative life of an institution… In this sense curriculum is a form of communication (p. 14).

As the word 'curriculum' can be interpreted in many ways. It should be clarified here how it is perceived in this course material. Curriculum is "a very general concept involving consideration of the whole complex of philosophical, social, and administrative factors which contribute to the planning of an education programme" (Allen, 1984, p. 62). It is generally understood that curriculum development comprises three main stages: design, implementation, and evaluation (Brown, 1995; Johnson,

1989; Richards, 2001). It is sometimes interpreted as syllabus or course. However, syllabus is most often defined as specifications of content to be taught in a course, and is concerned with course objectives (Dubin & Olshtain, 1986; Jordan, 1997; Nunan, 1988; Richards, 2001). A course is an instructional programme (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Feez, 1998) with a name such as "English for Engineering Students 1."

In recent times, the 'process' meaning of curriculum has been added to the former 'product' concept. In the process/product orientation framework, a curriculum is designed prior to classes, but remains open to scrutiny and adjustment in real situations Brown (1995) describes curriculum as a systematic process during which language teaching and language programme development are a "dynamic system of interrelated elements" (p. ix). The elements include needs analysis, goals and objectives, language testing, materials development, language teaching, and programme evaluation. He stresses that learner needs should be served, while alternative perspectives should also be taken into account. In addition to language needs, human needs and contextual variables should also be appraised. It is further recommended that evaluation should be regarded as an ongoing needs assessment. Richards (2001) emphasises that the processes of "needs analysis, situational analysis, planning learning outcomes, course organisation, selection and preparing teaching materials, providing for effective teaching and evaluation" (p. 41) are all integrally interconnected. Richards (2001) places teachers at the centre of the planning and decision-making process.

Curriculum refers to the totality of the content to be taught. It includes everything about the learner (who), contents to be taught (what), methodology (how), aims (why), context/setting (where), time (when) and evaluation (how much was achieved). Curriculum is wider term as compared with syllabus. Curriculum covers all the activities and arrangements made by the institution throughout the academic year to facilitate the learners and the instructors; whereas Syllabus is limited to particular subject of a particular class.

ESP curriculum is rather different than the one in General English. In ESP curriculum, the objective or goal is more to the practical aspect: *applying the language in a job-specific-related-situation*. Corresponding to this goal, ESP requires a curriculum which facilitates the use of English language in a job-related-situation. This curriculum contains the following aspects (beside the other core aspects of curriculum such as goal and syllabus):

- specific task, vocabulary, and language in context,
- the starting point based on the learners' background knowledge,
- operational, communicative, and notional syllabus, and
- learner centred.

3.1.3 ESP Curriculum

ESP curriculum is rather different from the one in General English. In ESP curriculum, the objective or goal is more to the practical aspect: applying the language in a job-specific-related-situation. Corresponding to this goal, ESP requires a curriculum which facilitates the use of English language in a job-related-situation.

This curriculum contains the following aspects (beside the other core aspects of curriculum such as goal and syllabus):

- Specific task, vocabulary, and language in context (Higgins in Swales, 1988),
- The starting point based on the learners' background knowledge,
- Operational, communicative, and notional syllabus,
- Learner centred.

In the first aspect, the specific task, vocabulary and language in context need to be taught because ESP learners aim to use the language in their own field. If the ESP students get other aspects of language learning instead of the specific task, vocabulary, and language in context, they will firstly spend too much time in learning English (whereas usually ESP courses are held in 'urgency' basis—for specific purpose and limited time) yet inefficiently.

The next question is where do you start the lesson in ESP? What is the benchmark? The starting point for the ESP lesson is based on the learners' background knowledge (how much they have already known English and to what practical extent: speaking, reading, listening, writing). Then, Operational, communicative, and notional syllabus is the kind of syllabus fitting the ESP setting. The students of ESP usually have more realistic expectation in learning the language (e.g. to be able to read a manual book of a new machine which has just arrived) compared to their fellow university students who learn English for academic reason.

Finally, the ESP curriculum and its syllabus have to be learner-centred, which means all the teaching learning activities are focused on the learners' need and progress. The ESP teachers are true 'facilitators' or the resource-people who are expected to facilitate learning and not only lecturing. As P'Rayan (2008) argues:

One of the hallmarks of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) was that English Language Teaching (ELT) should be learner-centred, i.e., it should respond to the language needs of the learner. In this view, each language-learning situation is unique and should be thoroughly studied and delineated as a prerequisite for the design of language courses. With the spread of communicative language teaching (CLT), much emphasis

in second language (L2) methodology has been paid to the learner-oriented instruction (p. 55).

This last point trait of ESP curriculum, learner-centred curriculum, leads to need analysis in ESP courses. Having understood what the terms "curriculum" and language "syllabus" refer to, the next step would be to come to terms with what language "syllabus design" encompasses.

3.2 Course/Syllabus Design

A Course might be taken to mean a real series of lessons or course delivered last year to such and such a group of students and to be repeated again this year, while a “syllabus” can be taken to be something rather more abstract, with fewer details of the blow by blow conduct of individual lessons. Thus you and I might quite properly write rather different courses, with different materials, but based on the same syllabus. This happens a lot in publishing. For example, when notions and functions became popular as basis for course design, each major ELT publisher published a course based on what became known as a “notional/functional” syllabus.

Having learnt about courses and syllabuses, what does it entail to design a course or a syllabus?

Syllabus Design: To design a syllabus is to decide what gets taught and in what order. For this reason, the theory of language underlying the language teaching method will play a major role in determining what syllabus should be adopted. Theory of learning also plays an important part in determining the kind of syllabus used. For example, a syllabus based on the theory of learning evolved by cognitive code teaching would emphasize language forms and whatever explicit descriptive knowledge about those forms. A syllabus based on an acquisition theory of learning, however, would emphasize unanalyzed and carefully selected experiences of the new language. The choice of a syllabus is a major decision in language teaching, and it should be made as consciously and with as much information as possible.

For Munby (1984), syllabus design is seen as "a matter of specifying the content that needs to be taught and then organizing it into a teaching syllabus of appropriate learning units." According to Webb (1976), syllabus design is understood as the organization of the selected contents into an ordered and practical sequence for teaching purposes. His criteria for syllabus design are as follows:

- progress from known to unknown matter,
- appropriate size of teaching units,
- a proper variety of activity,

- teachability, and
- creating a sense of purpose for the student.

Designing a language syllabus is a complex process. According to Halim (1976), the language course designer has to pay serious consideration to all the relevant variables. He has grouped all the variables into two categories, namely:

1. linguistic variables, which include the linguistic relations, between the language to be taught and the language or languages which the student uses in his or daily activities; and
2. non-linguistic variables which range from policy to social, cultural, technological and administrative variables.

Maley (1984) sums it up that syllabus design encompasses the whole process of designing a language programme. He says that the needs analysis which produces an order unit of items to be taught is organically related to a methodology consistent with the syllabus, a set of techniques consistent with the methodology, and evaluation procedure consistent with the whole (p. 47).

From the above explanations on syllabus design, it can be concluded that syllabus design involves a logical sequence of three main stages, that is:

i) needs analysis,
ii) content specification, and
iii) syllabus organization.

This follows very closely the general model advocated by Taba (1962) which gave the following steps:

i. needs analysis
ii. formulation of objectives
iii. selection of content
iv. organization of content
v. selection of learning activities
vi. organization of learning activities
vii. decisions about what needs evaluating and how to evaluate.

Course Design is concerned precisely with how much design should go into a particular course, that is, how much should be negotiated with the learners, how much predetermined by the teacher, and how much left to chance and the mood of the participants on the day. This notion is bound up with the idea of the "focus on the learner".

Curriculum Design is more general as it includes all processes in which the designers should look into the needs of the learners, develop aims, determine an appropriate syllabus, and evaluate it.
As a distance learner, try to lay hands on the syllabus produced by your institution. See the relevance of the syllabus to the major points learnt in this unit. Such points include:

- characteristics of a syllabus;
- characteristics of a curriculum;
- needs analysis;
- formulation of objectives;
- organisation of content etc.

SELF -ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Distinguish between course design, syllabus design and curriculum design.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Designing a language syllabus is no doubt a complex process with the language planner paying every attention to all variables. Syllabus design is a logical sequencing of what to be taught. In ESP, the practitioner negotiates this with the learner who knows why he or she needs English.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit started with the issue of definitions of often confused terms: syllabus, course and curriculum. It also discussed syllabus and course design and syllabus design is seen as a matter of specifying the content that needs to be taught and then organizing it into a teaching syllabus of appropriate learning units. The steps to be followed in designing an ESP courses were also highlighted. However, it was noted that central to all ESP syllabus design is needs analysis.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

i. Give short definitions of the following:
   (a) curriculum (b) Syllabus (c) course (d) course design and (e) Syllabus design
ii. Distinguish between a curriculum and a syllabus
iii. What do you understand as course design?

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UNIT 2 TYPES AND IMPORTANCE OF SYLLABUSES

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The last unit explained to you what is meant by curriculum, syllabus and courses. It also informed you about designing courses in ESP, and outlining the things a teacher should consider in doing that. The present unit will build on what you have learnt so far. The different ways a teacher can design a syllabus will be discussed with emphasis on the design suitable for ESP. The importance of having an organised syllabus will also be discussed.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to;

- discuss the two syllabus sequencing;
- differentiate between internal and external syllabus;
- differentiate between interpreted and uninterpreted syllabus; and
- mention and describe some importance of a syllabus.

HOW TO STUDY THE UNIT

a. Read this unit as diligently as possible.
b. Find meaning of unfamiliar words in the unit using your dictionary.
c. As you read, put major points down in a piece of paper or jotter.
d. Do not go to the next section until you have fully understood the section you are reading now.
e. Do all the Self-Assessment exercises in the unit as honestly as you can. In some areas where it is not feasible to provide answers to Self-Assessment exercises, go to the relevant sections of the unit to derive the answers.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Types of Syllabuses

The design of a syllabus a teacher adopts is dependent on the needs it is meant to serve. Various types of syllabuses can be designed to serve different needs. Before we go into the different types of syllabuses, let us first of all look at the two kinds of syllabus sequencing known as **"Linear" and "Spiral" Syllabuses**.

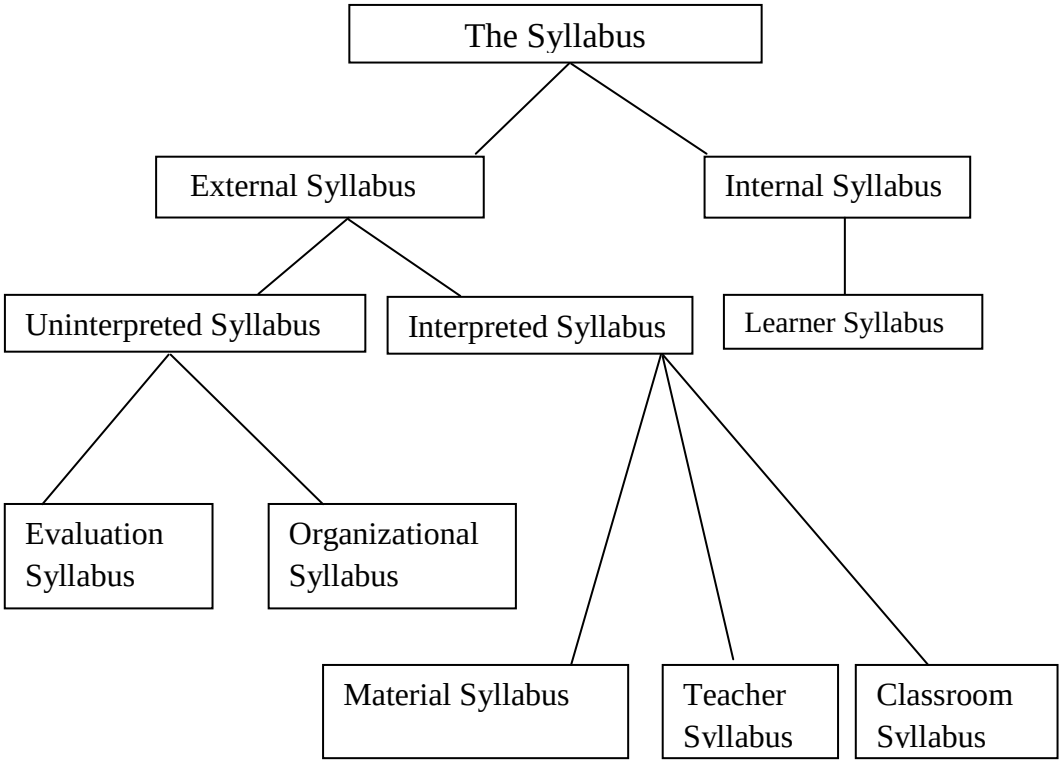
Language is mainly used either for production or reception. Usually, the same resources of language are used in different combinations to express different meanings. New bits of language are gradually learnt by experiencing them intermittently in different contexts. Repeated experiences of the same features of language are necessary. This is the concept behind the "cyclical" or "spiral" syllabus. It reflects the natural process of learning a language whereby the same things keep turning up in different combinations with different meanings.

*Linear Syllabus***:** Most language courses, especially in the past, were usually "linear" whereby new points are strung along in a line and each point was completely utilized before moving on to the next. That is, language items like grammar and vocabulary etc. are presented once. They are presented in the first unit, for example, and then we don't go back to them again. All the learning points are isolated and they are presented one after the other in some order. They require a great deal of practice before moving on to the next item.

Cyclic or Spiral syllabus or language items are presented more than once. For example, if the course has 24 units, every Unit is composed of 4 lessons including language items and the fourth Unit is always a revision. Revision is cyclic which is better. It helps learners to learn more on the general level. The "spiral" syllabuses have greater pedagogical and psychological advantages; they are more difficult to organize. That could be the reason why "linear" syllabuses are more readily found.

You can also classify a syllabus as external or internal to the learner. While external syllabus exemplifies external specifications of the future learning, internal syllabus shows internal constructs developed by the learner. External syllabus is interpreted when the course designer has input to make in the designing of the syllabus but uninterpreted if otherwise. Syllabus types can be grouped under interpreted and uninterpreted as represented by Umera-Okeke (2005, p.57) in the figure below.

Fig 4: Types of Syllabus (Adopted from Umera-Okeke, 2005, p. 57)



3.1.1 Evaluation Syllabus

This is a statement of what is to be learnt as handed down by ministries and/or regulatory bodies. "It states what a successful learner will know by the end of the course… it reflects an official assumption as to the nature of language and linguistic performance (Hutchinson & Waters 1987:80). It is an uninterpreted syllabus because the teacher has no input in its design and s/he is expected to implement it whole without any change.

3.1.2 The Organisational Syllabus

You can define organisational syllabus as an implicit statement about the nature of language and of learning. This kind of syllabus not only lists what should be learnt, but also states the order in which it should be learnt. Example of an organizational syllabus is the contents page of a textbook. It is the most commonly know syllabus. It differs from evaluation syllabus "in that it carries assumptions about the nature of learning as well as language, since, in organizing the items in a syllabus, it is necessary to consider factors which depend upon a view of how people learn (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987: 81). Such factors, they state, include:

- What is more easily learnt
- What is more fundamental to learning?

- Are some items needed in order to learn other items?
- What is more useful in the classroom?

These criteria determine the order of items to be learnt. Organisational syllabus is also an un-interpreted or a pure syllabus.

3.1.3 The Materials Syllabus

While organizational and evaluation syllabuses state what should be learnt with some indication of the order to be followed, they do not say how learning will be achieved. The organizational syllabus undergoes a lot of interpretations on its way to the learner. The first interpreter is the material writer; thus we have 'materials syllabus.' While the material writer writes his or her material, he or she makes assumptions about the nature of language, language learning and language use. The author also makes decisions as to the context of use, the skills and strategies, the number and types of exercises to be given, the how and when of revisions and tests, etc. There are eight criteria for a materials syllabus design, namely, topic syllabus, structural/situational syllabus, functional/notional syllabus, skills syllabus, situational syllabus, functional/task-based syllabus, discourse/skills syllabus, and skills and strategies syllabus (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987: 85). In some syllabuses such as topic syllabus and skills syllabus, a single criterion is at work, while other syllabuses blend two criteria together, such as structural and situational syllabus.

3.1.4 Teacher Syllabus

Another person that interprets the syllabus is the teacher. Many students learn a language through the mediation of a teacher who influences the clarity, intensity and frequency of any item.

3.1.5 Classroom Syllabus

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) feel that the classroom is not simply a neutral channel for the passage of information from teacher to learner, it is a dynamic, interactive environment, which affects the nature both of what is taught and what is learnt (p. 82). According to Breen (1984), "the classroom generates its own syllabus" (p. 66).

3.1.6 The Learner Syllabus

The learner syllabus is an internal syllabus. It is the network of knowledge that develops in the learner's brain and which enables that learner to comprehend and store the later knowledge (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 83). Candlin (1984) describes it as "a retrospective

record of what has been learnt rather than a prospective plan of what will be learnt." The learner's syllabus is important because it is through its filter that the learner views all the other syllabuses.

Items in a syllabus can be broken down following certain criteria. These can generate other kinds of syllabuses such as structural/situational syllabus, functional-notional syllabus, skills syllabus, tasks-based syllabus, etc.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

i. Briefly describe the two types of syllabus sequencing.
ii. What do you understand by interpreted and uninterpreted syllabus?
iii. What is the difference between internal and external syllabus?
iv. Briefly describe three types of syllabuses.

3.2 Importance of Syllabus

In designing a syllabus, the designer actually organizes and specifies what is to be taught in a body of materials to enable the learning of a language to be as effective as possible. Hutchinson & Waters (1987, p. 83) give the following as the 'hidden reasons for having a syllabus:

(a) Syllabus is a way of breaking learnt items into manageable units. It provides a practical basis for the division of assessment, textbooks and learning time.
(b) A syllabus gives moral support to the teacher and learner, in that it makes the language learning task appear manageable.
(c) A syllabus, particularly an ESP syllabus, has a cosmetic role. Sponsors and students (where there are commercial sponsors) will want some reassurances that their investment of money and/or time will be worthwhile. It shows that some thought and planning has gone into the development of a course.
(d) It gives direction to the teacher and the learner. It can be seen as a statement of projected routes, so that teacher and learner not only have an idea of where they are going, but how they might get there.
(e) A syllabus is an implicit statement of views on the nature of language and learning. It tells the teacher and the student not only what is to be learnt, but, implicitly, why it is to be learnt.
(f) A syllabus provides a set of criteria for materials selection and/or writing. It defines the kind of texts to look for or produce; the items to focus on in exercises, etc.
(g) A syllabus is one way in which standardization is achieved (or at least attempted). It makes for uniformity in educational activities.
(h) A syllabus provides a visible basis for testing.

To sum up, you must have learnt that a syllabus is an important document in the teaching/learning process though it has its limitations. It cannot express the intangible factors that are so crucial to learning: emotions, personality, subjective views, motivation. Syllabuses cannot take account of individual differences. Just as they are statements of ideals in language, they implicitly define the ideal learner.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Why do you think a language course should be divided in a syllabus?

4.0 CONCLUSION

A syllabus is either external or internal to the learner. It exemplifies external specifications of the future learning, or the internal constructs developed by the learner. It clearly satisfies a lot of needs. You need to know the roles that the syllabus plays, so that it can be used appropriately. You also need to know its limitations so that as good and future ESP practitioners, you can fill in the missing gap. In closing, it is of great importance to realise that no single type of syllabus is appropriate for all teaching settings. This is due to the fact that the needs and conditions of each setting are so characteristic and idiosyncratic that particular proposals for integration are not easily possible. The *possibility* and *practicality* aspects of a particular syllabus to be developed and implemented are of great significance. To put in more tangible terms, in making practical decisions about syllabus design, you must take into account all the potential factors that may affect the teachability of a specific syllabus. By beginning with an assessment and investigation over each syllabus type, keeping track of the choice and integration of the different types according to local needs, you may find a principled and practical solution to the problem of suitability and efficiency in syllabus design and implementation.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit you have learnt that the syllabus can be either internal or external to the learner. You were also informed that external syllabus is interpreted when the course designer has input to make in the designing of the syllabus but uninterpreted if otherwise. Syllabus types were grouped along interpreted and uninterpreted lines. While evaluation and organizational syllabuses are uninterpreted, material, teacher and classroom syllabuses are interpreted. Finally, the roles of syllabuses were also discussed. The mastery of all these make for the appropriate use of the syllabuses, especially in an ESP setting.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSESSMENT

i. Describe, using adequate examples, the two broad divisions of a syllabus.
ii. State at least five roles of a syllabus.

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UNIT 3 FACTORS AFFECTING ESP COURSE DESIGN: LANGUAGE DESCRIPTION

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, you studied the different kinds of syllabuses – both internal and external to the learner. In this unit we shall study what is expected of an ESP course designer. The unit will tell you about different ways of describing language as one of the factors to be considered in ESP course design.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- state the factors that play crucial role in organizing an ESP course;
- state and explain some of the linguistic developments in course design;
- list the six main stages in the development of language in ESP
- distinguish the variations of register;
- distinguish between register analysis and discourse analysis; and
- state and explain the development stages that are communicative in nature.

HOW TO STUDY THE UNIT

a. Read this unit as diligently as possible.
b. Find meaning of unfamiliar words in the unit using your dictionary.
c. As you read, put major points down in a piece of paper or jotter.
d. Do not go to the next section until you have fully understood the section you are reading now.
e. Do all the Self-Assessment exercises in the unit as honestly as you can. In some areas where it is not feasible to provide answers to Self-Assessment exercises, go to the relevant sections of the unit to derive the answers.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 General Introduction

An ESP programme designer usually looks at the specific purposes of learners, designs the course and prepares materials for the learners of a particular profession with special needs. ESP course is a pre-planned activity involving a lot of ingenuity on the part of the teacher or ESP practitioner. Course design in ESP involves syllabus design, material writing, classroom teaching and evaluation. According to Robinson (1991, p. 41), course design involves putting theoretical decisions about objectives and syllabus into context." Strevens (1977) is of the opinion that ESP course design should be based on "restriction", that is, "selection of items and features from the corpus of the language that are relevant to the designer's intention and students' needs" (p. 25). This is termed language description; that is the designer's ability to find answers to issues concerning the nature of language. This unit will tell you about different ways of describing language as one of the factors to be considered in ESP course design.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) list the questions that need the attention of the teacher in designing a course to include:

- Why does the student need to learn?
- Who is going to be involved in the process? – the teacher, sponsor, inspector, etc.
- Where is the learning to take place?
- What potentials does the place provide and what limitations?
- When is the learning to take place?
- How much time is available?
- How will it be distributed?
- What does the student need to learn?
- What aspect of language will be needed?
- How will they be described?

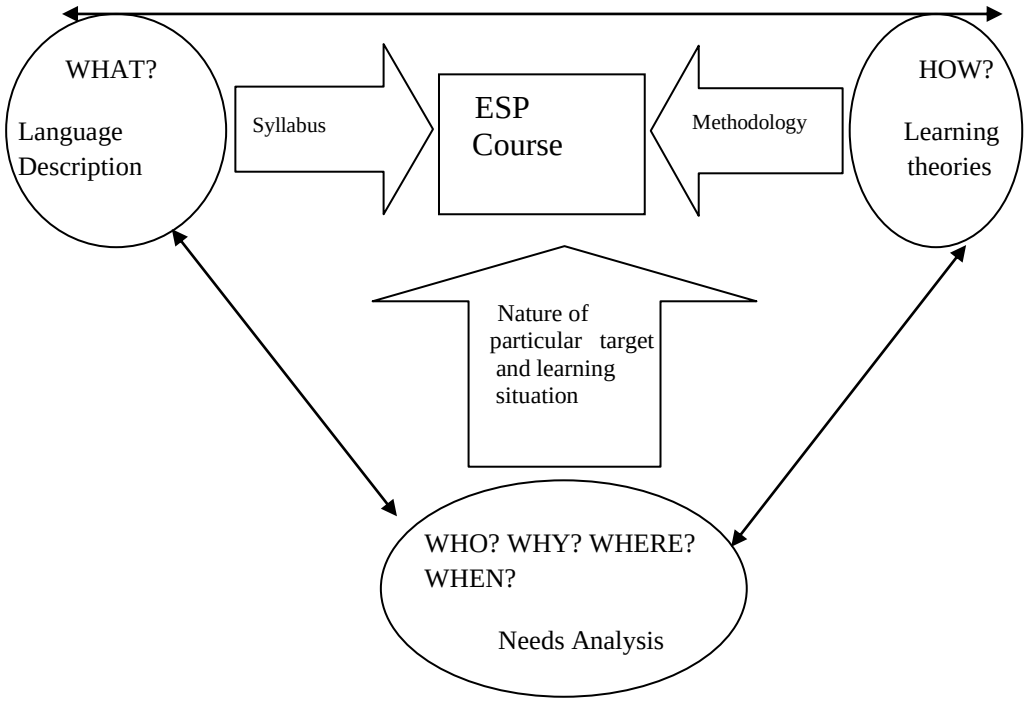
- What level of proficiency must be achieved?
- What topic area will be covered?
- How will the learning be achieved? and
- What learning theory will underlie the course? (pp. 21-22).

These questions they summarized into three key factors namely:

(a) Language description
(b) Learning theory and
(c) Needs analysis

Now look at the diagram below to see the systemic relationship existing between the three.

Fig 5: Factors affecting ESP Course Design



Source: Hutchinson & Waters (1987, p. 22)

In this unit, we shall discuss one of the factors which is language description. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), the language description involves questions like "What topic areas will need to be covered?" 'What does the student need to learn?' "What aspects of language will be needed and how will they be described?" You can only find the right answers to these questions if you have been able to set exact goals and objectives of the course. Designing a syllabus analyses 'what' the course is going to be about. Setting goals and objectives of the course in advance is inevitable. The aim of language description is to

understand the features of the development stages and incorporated the ideas in the course design. There are six main stages in the development of language. They include:

(a) Classical or Traditional Grammar
(b) Structural linguistics
(c) Transformational Generative Grammar
(d) Language Variation and Register analysis
(e) Functional/Notional Grammar
(f) Discourse (Rhetorical) Analysis

3.1 Classical or Traditional Grammar

Under classical grammar, languages were described based on the classical languages – Greek and Latin. They described language in terms of case based (Nominative, Genitive, dative, Instrumental cases). Inflections were used to mark grammatical classes. Traditional grammar is seen as prescriptive grammar because it is rule governed. It is seen as word grammar because it fails to show language as an integrated systemic event. The grammar of a language is the rules that enable the language user to generate the surface structure (performance) from the deep level of meaning (competence). At a point, traditional grammar could no longer account for all the possibilities in grammar. However, register analysis draws heavily from its terminology and it shows how language operates.

3.2 Structural Linguistics

The structural or descriptive linguistics school emerged in the 20th century, around the 1930s-1950s. It is characterized by its emphasis on the overt formal features of language, especially of phonology, morphology, and syntax. It is usually a synchronic approach to language study in which a language is analyzed as an independent network of formal systems, each of which is composed of elements that are defined in terms of their contrasts with other elements in the system.

It deals with languages at particular points in time (synchronic) rather than throughout their historical development (diachronic). The father of modern structural linguistics is Ferdinand de Saussure, who believed in language as a systematic structure serving as a link between thought and sound; he thought of language sounds as a series of linguistic signs that are purely arbitrary. It is an approach to linguistics which treats language as an interwoven structure, in which every item acquires identity and validity only in relation to the other items in the system. All linguistics models in the 20th century are structural in this sense, as opposed to much of the work in the 19th century, when it was common to trace the history of individual words. Insight into the structural nature

of language is due to the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, who compared language to a game of chess, noting that a chess piece in isolation has no value and that a move by any one piece has repercussions on all the others. An item's role in a structure can be discovered by examining those items which occur alongside it and those which can be substituted for it.

The structural approach was developed in a strong form in the US in the second quarter of the century, when the prime concern of American linguists was to produce a catalogue of the linguistic elements of a language, and a statement of the positions in which they could occur ideally without reference to meaning. Leonard Bloomfield was the pioneer among these structuralists, attempting to lay down a rigorous methodology for the analysis of any language. Various Bloomfieldians continued to refine and experiment with this approach until the 1960s. From the late 1950s onwards, *structural linguistics* has sometimes been used pejoratively, because supporters of *generative linguistics* (initiated by Noam Chomsky) have regarded the work of the American structuralists as too narrow in conception. They have argued that it is necessary to go beyond a description of the location of items to produce a grammar which mirrors a native speaker's intuitive knowledge of language.

3.3 Transformational Generative (TG) Grammar

In the 1950s, the school of linguistic thought known as transformational-generative grammar received wide acclaim with the publication of Noam Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures* in 1957. Chomsky postulated a syntactic base of language (called deep structure), which consists of a series of phrase-structure rewrite rules, i.e., a series of (possibly universal) rules that generates the underlying phrase-structure of a sentence, and a series of rules (called transformations) that act upon the phrase-structure to form more complex sentences. The end result of a transformational-generative grammar is a surface structure. After the addition of words and pronunciations, a surface structure identical to an actual sentence of a language emerged. All languages have the same deep structure, but they differ from each other in surface structure because of the application of different rules for transformations, pronunciation, and word insertion.

Another important distinction made in transformational-generative grammar is the difference between language competence (the subconscious control of a linguistic system) and language performance (the speaker's actual use of language). Although the first work done in transformational-generative grammar was syntactic, later studies have applied the theory to the phonological and semantic components of language.

For ESP, the lesson we got from Chomsky's work was the difference between performance and competence, that is, surface structure and deep structure respectively. You must note that ESP, at the early stage, paid attention to describing just the performance needed for communication in the target situation but ignored or paid little attention to competence. It is important to describe what people do with the language, as well as the competence that enables them do it.

Language in the three developments so far discussed was only seen from the point of view of form. Language exists because people do something with it such as to give information, to make a promise, to identify, classify, report or to make excuses. It does not exist in isolation. This means that, apart from form, the function of language should also be considered.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

i. Briefly explain the three factors to be considered in designing an ESP course.
ii. How can you summarize ESP at its early stages?
iii. Write short notes on (a) classical grammar (b) structural linguistics and (c) TG grammar

Linguistic Developments Based on Communicative Competence

The concept of communicative competence is important to ESP and it led to the following three stages of linguistic development:

(i) Language Variation and Register analysis
(ii) Functional/Notional Grammar
(iii) Discourse (Rhetorical) Analysis

Before you look into each of these, let us first of all discuss what is meant by communicative competence. This involves the rules that guide "the formulation of grammatical correct sentence as well as what, whom to speak with, where and in what manner of a language" (Umera-Okeke, 2005). Dell Hymes states that communicative competence is "a person's knowledge and ability to use all the semiotic systems available to him as a member of a given socio-cultural community" (p. 26). Thus, the study of language should involve non-verbal communication, medium and channel of communication, role relationship between participants, topic as well as purpose of communication. It is that part of our language knowledge which enables us to choose the communicative system we wish to use, and when that selected system is language, to connect the goals and contexts of the situations with the structures which we have available in our linguistic repertoire through functional choice at the pragmatic level. In making these selections, language users

accommodate linguistic features both consciously and unconsciously in order to adjust the social distance between the producer and the receiver. The linguistic development based on communicative competence will henceforth be discussed:

3.4 Language Variation and Register Analysis

Dialect variation, because it is semi-permanent, is language variation which helps to distinguish one person, or group of people from others. But all of us are also involved in another kind of language variation, which is much more rapid. We vary our language from one situation to another many times in the same day. Typically, the English we use when we write is different from the English we use when we speak. The language students use to write literature essays is different from the language use to write linguistics or biology essays. The English we use in formal situations like lectures and seminars is different from the English we use when chatting with friends in a market place or beer parlours. This means that language varies according to context of use. Thus we can have Legal English, Medical English, etc. This kind of language variation, which can vary from minute to minute in the same day, is usually called **register**.

Register can vary according to medium, domain and tenure.

Medium (sometimes called 'mode'): Your language changes according to the medium used (e.g. 'the language of speech', 'the language of writing').

Domain (sometimes called ‘field’): Your language changes according to the domain that the language is related to. This includes (a) the subject matter being spoken or written about (e.g. the language of science, the language of law) and (b) the function that the language is being used for (such as the language of advertising, and the language of government).

Tenor: The tenor of your language (e.g. how politely or formally you speak) changes according to (a) who you are talking or writing to (e.g. the language we use when talking to close friends compared with that used when talking to strangers or people who are socially distant from us) and (b) the social situation you find yourself in (e.g. a child whose mother is a teacher will talk to her in different ways, depending on whether they are at home or at school).
ESP is concerned with the identification of the characteristics of various registers in order to establish a basis for the selection of syllabus items. Register analysis is a result of language variation.

3.5 Functional/Notional Grammar

This is a juxtaposition of function and notion in language learning. While function is concerned with social behaviour and intention of the speaker or writer, notion reflects on the way in which the human mind thinks and how it uses language to divide reality. This is an offshoot of work into language as a communication that has greatly influenced ESP. The functional view was adopted into language teaching in the 1970s. Then, there was a move from syllabuses organized on structural grounds to ones based on functional or notional criteria (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 32). The move towards functionally based syllabus has greatly influenced ESP because the adult ESP learners, who must have mastered the language structure, probably at school are acquiring English for the needs. This is learning to use the structures already acquired.
The weak point of this syllabus type, according to Hutchinson and Waters (1987) is that "it suffers in particular from a lack of any kind of systematic conceptual framework, and as such does not help the learners to organize their knowledge of language".

3.6 Discourse (Rhetorical) Analysis

Not until this stage of discourse analysis, language has not been looked at beyond the sentence level. Discourse analysis is a logical development of functional/notional view of language. The emphasis here is on how meaning is generated between sentences. To create meaning, you should also consider the context of a sentence.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

i. What are the linguistic developments based on communicative competence?
ii. What do you understand by the term "communicative competence?"
iii. What are the differences between register analysis and discourse analysis?

4.0 CONCLUSION

To design a syllabus is to decide what gets taught and in what order. For this reason, the theory of language explicitly or implicitly underlying the language teaching method will play a major role in determining what syllabus is adopted.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have examined language description as one of the factors necessary for designing an ESP course. Six areas of description were discussed – classical/traditional grammar, structural linguistics, TG grammar, language variation and register analysis, functional/notional grammar and discourse analysis. The first three depict how ESP was organised at its earliest stages while the last three took care of communicative competence in language description. A course designer must have a knowledge of all these to be able to come up with appropriate course that meets the learner's target need.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

i. Write short notes on any three ways a course could be designed.
ii. Register can vary according to medium, domain and tenure. Explain.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 4 FACTORS AFFECTING ESP COURSE DESIGN: LEARNING THEORIES AND NEEDS ANALYSIS

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

You should remember that the term ´specific´ in ESP refers to a specific purpose for which English is learnt and teacher should be familiar with. Different speech situations require entirely a different course unlike the general English. Organizing the ESP course is a very important step to achieving a satisfying goal in the course. There are many factors playing a crucial role in organizing ESP course. Without them, the learning process would not lead to effectiveness. In the last unit, you studied one of the factors which is language description. In this unit, we shall look at how it is to be taught (learning theories) and for whom it is meant at what time and place (needs analysis).

2.0 OBJECTIVES

- mention and explain some of the learning theories;
- define needs analysis and state its importance in ESP course design;
- define needs analysis;
- state and explain the various interpretation of needs;

- distinguish between product and process-oriented needs objective and subjective needs;
- mention steps that could be taken in conducting needs analysis;
- state what informs a teacher's decisions about needs; and
- discuss in groups Jordan's Needs analysis steps.

HOW TO STUDY THE UNIT

a. Read this unit as diligently as possible.
b. Find meaning of unfamiliar words in the unit using your dictionary.
c. As you read, put major points down in a piece of paper or jotter.
d. Do not go to the next section until you have fully understood the section you are reading now.
e. Do all the Self-Assessment exercises in the unit as honestly as you can. In some areas where it is not feasible to provide answers to Self-Assessment exercises, go to the relevant sections of the unit to derive the answers.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Learning Theories

Let us start this unit by looking at another way of organising a course for learning to be achieved. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) speak about "´learning theories´ which provide the theoretical basis for the methodology, by helping us to understand how people learn" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p.23). It is the psychological processes involved in language use and language learning. It is natural that learning strategies vary and corresponds with learners' groups, their age, level or for what reason they study English. The way adults acquire language differ from the way children do. Advanced group expects different attitudes from beginners, and teachers determine which aspects of ESP learning will be focused on to meet learners' needs and expectations successfully. Some of these theories are: (a) Cognitive Code, (b) Behaviourism (c) Mentalism (d) Constructivism (e) Humanistic Theory/ Affective Factor (f) Learning and Acquisition

3.1.1 The Cognitive Theory

What is a cognitive theory? Try to define it before reading this section. Cognitive theory according Cunnningsworth (1984: 31) involves activities which engage conscious mental processes such as analysing and understanding. It also involves learning and applying explicitly formulated rules. It assumes that responses are the result of insight and intentional patterning. Insight can be directed to (a) the concepts behind language i.e. to traditional grammar. It can also be directed to (b)

language as an operation - sets of communicative functions. The grammar translation method which dominated the 60s is essentially cognitive in that it requires a clear understanding of rules and the ability to apply the given rules to new examples of language.

The weakness of this method lies in its too limited concept of what is involved in learning and using language. Being able to learn, and then apply it to an academic exercise involving translating sentences (often isolated sentences) from the L1 to the L2 is hardly fully representative of real-life language use in normal situations.

3.1.2 Behaviourism

Following grammar translation in the 1960s, the influence of Pavlov and Skinner and behaviourist theory revolutionized foreign-language learning with the concept that language learning, seen essentially as habit formation in response to external stimuli. The theory argued that 'learning is a mechanical process of habit formation of a stimulus-response sequence' (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987:40), in which the basic exercise technique of a behaviourist methodology is pattern practice, particularly in the form of language laboratory drills. As a matter of fact, such drills are now still found in ESP textbooks with more and more interesting and meaningful contexts.

Behaviourism is a learning theory that only focuses on objectively observable behaviours and discounts any independent activities of the mind. Behaviour theorists define learning as nothing more than the acquisition of new behaviour based on environmental conditions. According to behaviourist thinking it wasn't really necessary for learners to internalize rules; instead they should learn the right patterns of linguistic behaviour, and acquire the correct habits.

Experiments by behaviourists identify **conditioning** as a universal learning process. There are two different types of conditioning, each yielding a different behavioural pattern:

1. **Classic Conditioning** occurs when a natural reflex responds to a stimulus. We are biologically "wired" so that a certain stimulus will produce a specific response. One of the more common examples of classical conditioning in the educational environment is in situations where students exhibit irrational fears and anxieties like fear of failure, fear of public speaking and general school phobia.

2. **Behavioural** or **Operant conditioning** occurs when a response to a stimulus is reinforced. Basically, operant conditioning is a simple feedback system: If a reward or reinforcement follows the

response to a stimulus, then the response becomes more probable in the future. For example, leading behaviourist B.F. Skinner used reinforcement techniques to teach pigeons to dance and bowl a ball in a mini-alley. This is like reinforcing a child each time he does something right.

There have been many criticisms of behaviourism, including the following:

- Behaviourism does not account for all kinds of learning, since it disregards the activities of the mind.
- Behaviourism does not explain some learning–such as the recognition of new language patterns by young children–for which there is no reinforcement mechanism.
- Research has shown that animals adapt their reinforced patterns to new information. For instance, a rat can shift its behaviour to respond to changes in the layout of a maze it had previously mastered through reinforcements.

How Behaviourism Impacts Learning

This theory relies only on observable behaviour and describes several universal laws of behaviour. Its positive and negative reinforcement techniques can be very effective – such as in treatments for human disorders including autism, anxiety disorders, and antisocial behaviour. Behaviourism is often used by teachers who reward or punish student behaviours.

Behaviourism is often seen in contrast to constructivism. Constructivists are more likely to allow for experimentation and exploration in the classroom and place a greater emphasis on the experience of the learner in contrast to behaviourists.

3.1.3 Mentalism

This theory is of the opinion that thinking is rule-governed. Chomsky's question in tackling behaviourism was how the mind is able to transfer what was learnt from one stimulus-response situation to another. Behaviourist theory states that it is due to generalization but Chomsky thinks otherwise. He sees learners as thinking beings who are capable of coping with infinite range of possible situations from a finite range of experience. The mind uses individual experiences to formulate hypothesis. For instance, knowing that words that end in '–y' take '–ies' to form their plural, while those that end in '–f' will change to '–ives', the learner given these rules can form a lot of plurals even of words they have never seen before.

3.1.4 Constructivism

Constructivism is an educational philosophy which holds that learners ultimately construct their own knowledge that resides within them. Each person's knowledge is as unique as they are. Constructivist learning is based on students' active participation in problem-solving and critical thinking regarding a learning activity which they find relevant and engaging. They are "constructing" their own knowledge by testing ideas and approaches based on their prior knowledge and experience, applying these to a new situation, and integrating the new knowledge gained with pre-existing intellectual constructs. Among its key precepts are:

- situated or anchored learning, which presumes that most learning is context-dependent, so that cognitive experiences situated in authentic activities such as project-based learning;
- cognitive apprenticeships, or case-based learning environments result in richer and more meaningful learning experiences;
- social negotiation of knowledge, a process by which learners form and test their constructs in a dialogue with other individuals and with the larger society [15].
- collaboration as a principal focus of learning activities so that negotiation and testing of knowledge can occur.

Relevance: Constructivism is one of the hot topics in educational philosophy right now. It potentially has profound implications for how current `traditional' instruction is structured, since it fits with several highly touted educational trends, for example:

- the transition of the teacher's role from "sage on the stage" (fount/transmitter of knowledge) to "guide on the side" (facilitator, coach);
- teaching "higher order" skills such as problem-solving, reasoning, and reflection (for example, see also generative learning);
- enabling learners to learn how to learn;
- more open-ended evaluation of learning outcomes; and
- cooperative and collaborative learning skills.

3.1.5 Humanism and Affective Factors

Let’s look at another aspect of the learning theory which is humanism. Humanism, a paradigm that emerged in the 1960s, focuses on the human freedom, dignity, and potential. A central assumption of humanism, according to Huitt (2001), is that people act with intentionality and values. This is in contrast to the behaviourist notion of operant conditioning (which argues that all behaviour is the result of the application of consequences) and the cognitive psychologist belief that discovering knowledge or constructing meaning is central to learning. Humanists also believe that it is necessary to study the person as a

whole, especially as an individual grows and develops over the lifespan. It follows that the study of the self, motivation, and goals are areas of particular interest.

Key proponents of humanism include Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow. A primary purpose of humanism is the development of self-actualized, autonomous people. In humanism, learning is student-centred and personalized. The educator's role is that of a facilitator. Affective and cognitive needs are the key, and the goal is to develop self-actualized people in a cooperative, supportive environment.

Affective factors are emotional factors which influence learning. They can have a negative or positive effect. Negative affective factors are called affective filters and are an important idea in theories about second language acquisition. For instance, a learner's attitude to English, to the teacher, to other learners in the group and to yourself as a learner are all affective factors that have impact on how well we learn. Affective factors may be as important for successful language learning, if not more so, than ability to learn. Teachers can reduce negative factors and develop positive ones by doing activities to build a positive group dynamic, by including students in deciding aspects of the course and choosing activities that are motivating for the age and interests of the learners.

The cognitive theory tells us that learners will learn when they actively think about what they are learning. This pre-supposes the affective factor of motivation. Motivation is important in the development of ESP. Gardner and Lambert (cited in Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) identified two forms of motivation: instrumental and integrative motivation.

Instrumental motivation is the reflection of the external needs of the learner. The learners learn a language not because they want but because they need the language for something such as for study or work purposes, to transact business with the owners of the language, and learning a language for exam purpose and not for leisure, etc.
Integrative motivation, on the other hand, derives from the desire on the part of the learners to be members of the speech community that uses a particular language. Integrative motivation, according to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), "is an internally generated want rather than an externally imposed need" (p. 48). Example could be this new trend of many parents speaking English to their children at home in order to hasten their children's integration into the English dominated prestigious social class in Nigeria.

In ESP, students are motivated to learn English because they are offered courses relevant to their target needs. Students ought to be intrinsically motivated so that they can learn.

3.1.6 Learning and Acquisition

These are two psychological concepts. While acquisition is a subconscious, natural process and the primary force behind foreign language fluency, learning is a conscious process that monitors or edits the progress of acquisition and guides the performance of the speaker. It is used to correct errors in speech. ESP should exploit the processes of all the theories studied. None is superior to the other. They all help us to know how to imbibe or inculcate a given knowledge to a learner. Learning theories provide theoretical basis for methodology by helping us to understand how people learn as language is a reflection of human thoughts processes.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

i. What do you understand by behaviourism as a theory of learning?
ii. Distinguish between instrumental motivation and integrative motivation.
iii. What is the difference between language learning and language acquisition?

3.2 Needs Analysis

3.2.1 Definition and Development

Let's begin by defining needs analysis before studying its development. Needs analysis is based on the premise that in ESP, learners have different specific and specifiable communication needs or demands which informed the development of courses to meet these varying needs. It is, therefore, the process of determining the needs for which a learner or group of learners requires a language and arranging the needs according to priorities. Needs analysis was firmly established in the mid-1970s as course designers came to see learners' purposes rather than specialist language as the driving force behind ESP. Needs analysis is the process of establishing *what* and *how* of a course (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). Conducting a needs analysis is an important first step in the development of a curriculum that is being developed from scratch for a completely new program (Brown, 1995). According to Brown (1995), needs analysis is "the systematic collection and analysis of all subjective and objective information necessary to define and validate defensible curriculum purposes that satisfy the language learning requirements of students within the context of particular institutions that influence the learning and teaching situation" (p. 36). For Jordan (1997),

"needs analysis is the requirement for fact-finding or the collection of data" (p. 22). Brindley (cited in Johnson 1989) states that it is "a vital pre-requisite to the specification of language learning objectives" (p. 63) while Hutchinson and Waters (1987) add that needs analysis is "the most characteristic feature of ESP course design."

The outcome of a needs analysis should be a list of goals and objectives for the parties involved. This should "serve as the basis for developing tests, materials, teaching activities, and evaluation strategies, as well as for re-evaluating the precision accuracy of the original needs assessment" (Brown, 1995, p. 35).

Since needs analysis serves as an important initial step in curriculum design for further development of teaching materials, learning activities, tests, program evaluation strategies, and so forth, there is an impressive amount of research on needs analysis in the language teaching field. Recently, a considerable degree of emphasis has been placed on needs analysis for English for Academic Purposes, English for Business Purposes, and English for Specific Purposes (Bosher & Smalkoski, 2002; Brown et al., 2007; Cowling, 2007; Edwards, 2000; Jasso-Aguilar, 2005 & Robinson, 1991). Needs analysis also made appearance in language planning, language teaching, specification of behavioural objectives and syllabus development. But, needs analysis did not find its remarkable influence until Munby's approach to needs analysis came into being.

Before the advent of Munby's model, EAP course may have been based mainly on teachers' intuitions of students' needs. Today, however, EAP literature is replete with descriptions of the methodology and outcome of research into learner needs around the world (Braine, 2001). Needs analysis was firmly established in the mid-1970s as course designers came to see learners' purposes rather than specialist language as the driving force behind ESP. Early instruments, notably Munby's (1978) model, established needs by investigating the target situation for which learners were being prepared. Munby's model clearly established the place of needs as central to ESP, indeed the necessary starting point in materials or course design. However, his model has been widely criticized for two apparently conflicting reasons: (i) its over-fullness in design, and (ii) what it fails to take into account (that is, socio-political considerations, logistical considerations, administrative considerations, psycho-pedagogic, and methodological considerations).
Needs analysis is neither unique to language teaching nor within language training. It is often seen as being "the corner stone of ESP and leads to a much focused course" (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998 p. 122).

Before beginning a needs analysis, one must first answer the following crucial question: "Will the students use English at the university or in their jobs after graduation?" If the answer is no, then ESP is not a reasonable option for the university's English language programme. The university will have to justify its existence and improve the programme via other means. If the answer is yes, however, then ESP is probably the most intelligent option for the university curriculum. ESP begins with some basic questions to survey what will be needed. Will students use English at the university or in their jobs after graduation? In what situations? For what purposes? What language skills will be required (reading, writing, listening, speaking)? What are the significant characteristics of the language in these situations (lexicon, grammar, spoken scripts, written texts, other characteristics)? What extralinguistic knowledge of academia, specific disciplines, specific vocations, or specific professions is required for successful English usage in these areas?

Brindley (1989, p. 65) in trying to state the role of needs analysis, first of all tried to define the word "needs". Looking at the works of others like Berwick, Mountford and Widdowson, he provides different interpretations of needs. The first interpretation is "narrow or product-oriented needs". The learner's needs are seen as the language they will use in a particular communication situation. It is the target language behaviour, that is, what the learners have to be able to do at the end of the language course. Widdowson (cited in Robinson 1991) calls this "goal oriented needs" (p. 7) while Berwick (1989) used the term "objective needs".

The second interpretation of needs, according to Brindly is the "broad or process-oriented needs". This involves analyzing the needs of the learner as an individual in the learning situation. In this kind of interpretation, the teacher tries to identify and take into account both the affective and cognitive variables which affect learning such as learner's attitudes, motivation, awareness, personality, wants, expectations and learning styles. This is also called 'subjective needs' by Widdowson (1978).

Although there are various ways of interpreting 'needs', the concept of 'learner needs' is often interpreted in two ways:

- as what the learner *wants* to do with the language (*goal-oriented* definition of needs) which relates to terminal objectives or the end of learning; and
- what the learner *needs* to do to actually acquire the language (a *process-oriented* definition) which relates to transitional/means of learning.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) classified needs into necessities, lacks and wants.

Necessities are what the learners have to know in order to function effectively in the target situations. By observing the target situations and analyzing the constituent parts of them, we can gather information about necessities.

Lacks are the gap between the existing proficiency and the target proficiency of learners.

Wants are what the learners feel they need. Wants perceived by learners may conflict with necessities perceived by sponsors or EAP teachers and this conflict may have a de-stabilizing effect on motivation. Therefore, ESP course designer or teacher must take into account such differences in materials and methodology (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

The objective needs should act as the starting point in programme design. After learning has begun, methods such as surveys, group discussion, counselling, interview, communication awareness activities and learning contracts can be used to assess needs as they arise and are expressed (Richterich & Chancerol, 1980). In gathering information on learners' ability to use English, their biological data (subjective needs) are necessary in order to make decisions on matters such as class placement and learning mode.

Jordan (1997:29) is of the opinion that the stakeholders in needs analysis are the student, the course designer and teacher, the employer/sponsor and the target situation. What is expected from each of them, he states as:

A. Student: needs – present, current, subjective, felt, learning, learner-centred, wants/likes, lacks, deficiency analysis, present situation analysis (PSA) and process-oriented
B. Course Designer and Teacher: purposes/needs- perceived needs, process-oriented, PSA, strategy analysis, means analysis, constraints, learning-centred.
C. Employer/Sponsor: demands – product-oriented, PSA and TSA, language audits
D. Target Situation: (Subject/department) needs – target, future, objective, target-centred, goal-oriented, aims, necessities, TSA, language analysis

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

i. What is needs analysis?
ii. State two broad interpretations of needs and explain them.

iii. What is the difference between product and process oriented needs?

3.2.2 Conducting Needs Analysis?

Conducting needs analysis requires knowing the sources of learners' needs and methods/steps to be used. The teachers' views of students' needs were identified as

i. Language proficiency view
ii. The psychological-humanistic view and
iii. The specific purposes view.

Needs analysis from the specific purposes point of view is the 'instrumental' needs of the learners which arise from their stated purposes for learning English. That is, what a learner needs to do with the language once he has learnt it. Their responses will necessitate aligning course content with the learner's occupational or academic goals.

Jordan (1997) provides a variety of methods of data collection for needs analysis. They include advance documentation, tests, self-assessment, observation and monitoring, surveys, structured interview, learner diaries, case-study, evaluation, follow-up investigations and previous research. In order to obtain more information, different methods should be used simultaneously. In practice, time, money and resources may influence needs analysis. It is important to plan in advance and remember that needs analysis is not a once-for-all activity but a continuing process, in which conclusions are constantly checked and re-assessed (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

Learners: Find out what information they can provide. Do they have enough knowledge about the content of the job and language needs? Are they familiar enough with a target discourse domain to provide usable, valid information?
Information could be gotten from the learner through structured, semi-structured and unstructured interview.

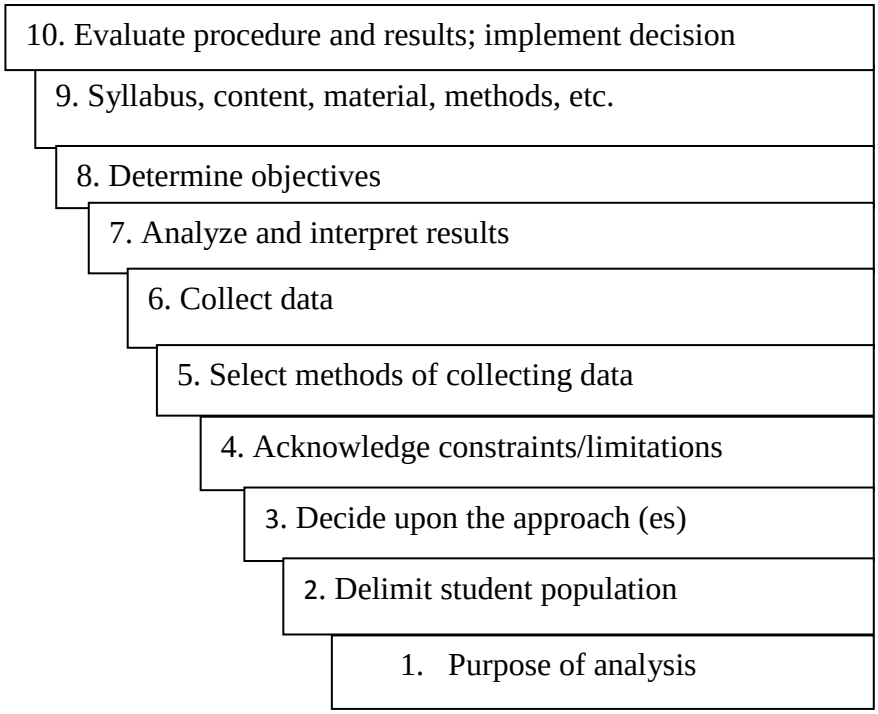
Structured interview generates both qualitative and quantitative data. It consists of prepared questions to which the answers are noted or recorded, allowing follow-up of points arising. Unstructured interviews is time-consuming, has no fixed format, allowing in-depth coverage of issues than the use of pre-determined questions, categories and response options. Once unstructured interviews are done and the data from them analyzed, semi-structured or structured interviews may follow.

Participant observation and non-participant observation could also be used to assess the learners' needs. Non participant observation means there is no involvement with the people or activities studied (collecting data by observation alone). Participant observation shows there is some degree of involvement. From the point of view of situation analysis and developing a real feel for workplace, it is the most useful of data gathering procedures.

Questionnaires might be designed for broad coverage of representative members and numbers of each category. It is the chief instrument for collecting quantitative data and also the most formal.

Needs analysis is not a once for all affair. It should be a continuous process in which the conclusion drawn are constantly checked and reassessed. It is also a systematic thing which follows the steps identified below.

Fig 6: Steps in Needs Analysis (Jordan R. R. 1997:23)



Below are questions you may ask a learner to ascertain the learner's language needs.

	STUDENT NEEDS ANALYSIS
1.	Why are you studying English?
2.	Where do you expect to use English in the future (e.g. what context or situation)?
3.	Order the following language skills from 1 (important) to 6 (unimportant): Reading ____ Listening ____ Vocabulary ____ writing ____ speaking ____ grammar ____
4.	What percentage (%) of class time do you think should be spent on each skill?
5.	What do you expect to learn from this class?
6.	What are your language strengths and weaknesses?
7.	Do you have a preferred learning style? If so, what is it?
8.	Do you prefer to learn individually, in pairs or in a group?
9.	Would you prefer to learn American or British English? or both?
10.	Do you like using a textbook? Why or why not?

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

i. Group Work: Looking at the diagram above and considering what you have studied in this course so far, discuss the steps in needs analysis

ii. How is the teacher expected to see the learner's needs?

3.2.3 The Purpose of Needs Analysis

Richards (2001) itemized the following as some of the reasons why needs analysis is conducted. These are to:

(1) find out what language skills a learner needs in order to perform well at the target situation;

(2) help determine if an existing course adequately addresses the needs and potential students;

(3) determine which student from a group are most in need of training in particular language skills;

(4) identify a change of direction that people in a reference group feel is important;

(5) identify a gap between what students are able to do and what they need to be able to do; and

(6) collect information about a particular problem learners are experiencing.

The information gathered distinguished ESP from General English instruction because it focused on an awareness of need. A flexible and responsive curriculum determined by an instructor's assessment led to ESP as an attractive learning alternative.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Theory of learning plays an important part in determining the kind of syllabus used. For example, a syllabus based on the theory of learning espoused by cognitive code teaching would emphasize language forms and the explicit descriptive knowledge about those forms. A syllabus based on an acquisition theory of learning, however, would emphasize unanalyzed, though possibly carefully selected experiences of the new language in an appropriate variety of discourse types.

To organize the ESP course effectively and consequently achieve a satisfactory goal, respect for all three factors necessary for course design is important. In addition, selecting an appropriate material regarding the main criteria is an essential phase in organizing each course. It may happen that learners´ needs and expectations are not met due to wrong choice of material. Text as a learning material is also an important aspect to be considered in ESP course design as it is a rich source for new vocabulary and other range of skills. Needs analysis came to be as a result of the fact that in ESP, the learners have different specific and specifiable communication needs which inform the development of courses to meet these varying needs. The importance of needs analysis lies in the fact that the outcome should be a list of goals and objectives for the parties involved, which should serve as the basis for developing tests, materials, teaching activities, and evaluation strategies, as well as for re-evaluating the precision accuracy of the original needs assessment. Finally, you must note that needs analysis is a continuous process in ESP.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have examined the last two factors necessary for designing an ESP course. They include a consideration of how? (learning theories) who? why? where? and when? (needs analysis) of learning. No ESP course could be designed without needs analysis. It means looking at the learner's needs in language learning which involve his wants, lacks and necessities. Different orientations to needs analysis were also discussed and they include broad or process oriented needs and narrow or product-orientated needs, objective and subjective needs of the learners. These needs could be ascertained through documentation, tests, self-assessment, observation and monitoring, surveys, structured interview, learner diaries, case-study, evaluation, follow-up investigations and previous research, questionnaires, etc. In order to obtain more information, different methods should be used simultaneously. Finally, the unit also gave us the steps in ESP needs analysis as provided by Jordan (1997), the outcome of which should be used in determining the syllabus, content, material and methods to be used. The role of materials and appropriate activities in running ESP course was also examined. All these are geared towards meeting the learning goals and objectives.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

i. Briefly discuss the factors that are necessary for designing an ESP course.
ii. How can you ascertain the learner's needs?
iii. What do you understand by necessity, lacks and wants as regards learner's needs?
iv. Discuss the implication of the specific purposes view of needs.

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UNIT 5 APPROACHES AND TECHNIQUES FOR NEEDS ANALYSIS: PRINCIPLES FOR ANALYZING LEARNERS NEEDS

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Under the umbrella of needs analysis, various approaches have been integrated. A lot of models have also been proposed for identifying the needs of adults learning of a foreign language but Influential models of needs analysis include a sociolinguistic model (Munby, 1978), a systemic approach (Richterich & Chancerel, 1977), a learning-centred approach (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), learner-centred approaches (Berwick, 1989; Brindley, 1989) and a task-based approach (Long 2005a, 2005b). These approaches shall be discussed in this unit. Needs analysis should embrace the following principles: The ESP practitioner should first consider all the communication needs of the learner; equal importance should also be given to learning needs. The 'context' should be taken into account. The teacher should invite multiple perspectives and employ multiple data collection methods and needs analysis should be seen as an on-going activity. All these are the subjects of this unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- explain some of the models to needs analysis;
- distinguish between learning-centred approach and learner-centred approaches;
- suggest with reasons which model you think best fits ESP;
- describe some needs analysis strategies that complement target-situation analysis;
- say why communication needs of the learners should be considered first while carrying out needs analysis;
- distinguish between learning needs and communication needs;
- explain why there is need to source information about the learner from multiple perspectives;
- explain why you think that needs analysis should be an on-going thing; and
- describe the principle that should guide the teacher in analyzing learner's needs.

HOW TO STUDY THE UNIT

a. Read this unit as diligently as possible.
b. Find meaning of unfamiliar words in the unit using your dictionary.
c. As you read, put major points down in a piece of paper or jotter.
d. Do not go to the next section until you have fully understood the section you are reading now.
e. Do all the Self-Assessment exercises in the unit as honestly as you can. In some areas where it is not feasible to provide answers to Self-Assessment exercises, go to the relevant sections of the unit to derive the answers.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Approaches to Needs Analysis

3.1.1 A Sociolinguistic Model

Munby's model can be used to specify valid 'target situations' (Jordan, 1997; West, 1994) that is, target communicative competence. *Target-situation analysis* proceeds by first identifying the target situation and then carrying out a rigorous analysis of the target tasks, linguistic features and knowledge requirement of that situation (Robinson, 1989). The best-known framework for target-situation analysis is devised by Munby. The core of this framework is the "Communication Need

Processor" in which account is taken of the variables that affect communication needs and the dynamic interplay between them. After operating with this framework, we can obtain a profile of students' language needs and convert them into a "communicative competence specification" from which a syllabus is drawn up (Jordan, 1997).

A profile of communication needs which Munby presented comprise of communicative events (e.g. discussing everyday tasks and duties), purposive domain (e.g. educational), medium (e.g. spoken), mode (e.g. dialogue), channel of communication (e.g. face-to-face), setting of communication, main communicator/s, person/s with whom the communicator/s communicate, dialect, attitudinal tone (e.g. informal), subject content and level of English ability required for the communication. After a profile has been created, the communication needs are developed into a syllabus. You can see that Munby emphasizes everything relating to learner's needs – purpose, medium/mode/channel of communication, Sociolinguistic aspects, linguistics and pragmatics. He looks at all the assumptions regarding the roles of language, the learner, the syllabus, the teacher that lie behind his design.

This indicates that he is taking into account language and culture and communication purpose, but pays no attention to implementation (activities, resources, and classroom dynamics). He also seems to assure a very teacher-directed method, in which students' inputs about purpose are superficial and only required at the beginning of the course. It is clear that his emphasis on text and his categorisation rely on his intuition. All of these weaknesses result in criticisms of his work.

While the model provides an abundance of detail, it is impractical, inflexible, complex and time-consuming (West, 1994). It does not include needs that are dependent on human variables. For example, learner's voice is not taken into account: "[It] collects data about the learner rather than from the learner" (West, 1994:9). Jordan (1997) criticizes the model for considering 'implementational constraints' such as the number of trained teachers available only after completion of syllabus specifications. Despite these criticisms, sociolinguistic variables remain important for effective communication

To counter the shortcomings of target-situation needs analysis, various forms of pedagogic needs have been identified to give more information about the learner and the educational environment. These forms of needs analysis should be seen as complementing target-situation needs analysis and each other, rather than being alternatives. They include deficiency analysis, strategy analysis, and means analysis. Before we move into another approach to needs analysis, let us consider these other needs analyses complementing target-situation analysis:

Deficiency Analysis gives us information about what the learners' learning needs are (i.e., which of their target-situation needs they lack or feel they lack). This view of needs analysis gains momentum when we consider that the question of priorities is ignored by standard needs analysis. In discussing learners' perceptions of their needs, deficiency analysis takes into account lacks and wants, as well as objective needs of the learners (Allwright, 1982).

Strategy Analysis seeks to establish how the learners wish to learn rather than what they need to learn. By investigating learners' preferred learning styles and strategies, strategy analysis provides a picture of the learner's conception of learning.

Means Analysis, on the other hand, investigates precisely those considerations that Munby excluded. These relate to the educational environment in which the ESP course is to take place (Swales, 1989).
West (1994: 9-10) mentions the shortcomings of the Munby's model in terms of four headings:

1. **Complexity**: Munby's attempt to be systematic and comprehensive inevitably made his instrument inflexible, complex, and time-consuming.
2. **Learner-centredness**: Munby claims that his CNP is learner-centred. The starting point may be the learner but the model collects data *about* the learner rather than *from* the learner.
3. **Constraints**: Munby's idea is that constraints should be considered after the needs analysis procedure, while many researchers feel that these practical constraints should be considered at the start of the needs analysis process.
4. **Language**: Munby fails to provide a procedure for converting the learner profile into a language syllabus.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) also point out that it is too time-consuming to write a target profile for each student based on Munby's model. This model only considers one viewpoint, i.e. that of the analyst, but neglects others (those of the learners, user-institutions, etc.). Meanwhile, it does not take into account of the learning needs nor does it make a distinction between necessities, wants, and lacks.

3.1.2 A Systemic Approach

Richterich and Chancerel (1977) propose a systemic approach for identifying the needs of adults learning a foreign language. This approach fills the gaps in the sociolinguistic model in terms of flexibility and shows a distinct concern for learners. The learners are the centre of attention, and their present situations are thoroughly investigated.

Present-situation analysis ascertains students' language proficiency at the beginning of the course. Information is sought on levels of ability, resources and views on language teaching/learning. You can get information about the learners from students themselves, the teaching establishment and the user institution. In the words of Jordan (1997) "Learner needs are approached by examining information before a course starts as well as during the course by the learners themselves and by 'teaching establishments' such as their place of work and sponsoring bodies." Richterich and Chancerel (1977) also recommend using more than one or two data collection methods for needs analysis such as surveys, interviews and attitude scales.

Although this approach has not received much criticism, two concerns should be raised: lack of attention to learners' real-world needs and over-reliance on learners' perceptions of their needs. Jordan (1997) suggests that course designers approach real-world learner needs both in terms of the target situation as recommended by Munby, and in the systemic model put forth by Richterich and Chancerel (1977) as complementary approaches. Over-reliance on learners' perceptions becomes an issue because many learners are not clear about what they want (Long, 2005a). 'Learner training' (Trim, 1988, cited in Holec, 1988) can be usefully incorporated to strengthen the systemic approach, as it aims at training learners on how to learn. It is important for engineering students in particular because their needs are continually changing. Engineers must be able to identify emerging needs and gain new skills to satisfy them.

3.1.3 A Learning-Centred Approach

As a result of the attention given to strategy analysis, a new generation of ESP materials was founded. This new generation of materials is based on conceptions of language or conception of need. The concern was with language learning rather than language use. It was no longer simply assumed that describing and exemplifying what people do with language would enable someone to learn it. A truly valid approach to ESP would be based on an understanding of the processes of language learning. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) call this approach the learning-centred approach and stress the importance of a lively, interesting and relevant teaching/learning style in ESP materials. They argue that other approaches give too much attention to language needs, whereas more attention should be given to how learners learn. They suggest that a learning needs approach is the best route to convey learners from the starting point to the target situation.

Learner needs are approached from two directions; target needs and learning needs. Target needs are defined as "what the learner needs to do in the target situation" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987:54). They are

broken down into three categories: necessities, lacks and wants. Necessities are considered to be "what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation" (p. 55). Lacks are defined as the gaps between what the learner knows and the necessities (p. 56). Wants are described as "what the learners think they need" (Nation, 2000:2). Under target needs the following question can be posed:

- Why is the language needed?
- How will the language be used?
- What will the content areas be?
- Who will the learner use the language with?
- Where will the language be used?
- When will the language be used? (Jordan 1997:25).

The second focus in this approach is on learning needs, referring to numerous factors, including who the learners are, their socio-cultural background, learning background, age, gender, background knowledge of specialized contents, background knowledge of English, attitudes towards English, attitudes towards cultures of the English speaking world and studying English. Hutchinson and Waters suggest posing the following questions to analyse learning needs:

- Why are the learners taking the course?
- How do the learners learn?
- What resources are available?
- Who are the learners?
- Where will the ESP course take place?
- When will the ESP course take place?

Learner needs also involve:

- Teaching and learning styles with which the learners are familiar
- Appropriate or ineffective teaching and learning methods
- Knowledge of specialized contents that teachers should have
- Suitable instructional materials and the study location
- Time of study and status of ESP courses
- Expectations about what learners should achieve in the courses
- How necessary the courses are for the learners

Similar to the systemic approach, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) also recommend that needs analysis be checked constantly. They also stress the use of multiple methods of data collection – such as interviews, observation, and informal consultations with sponsors, learners and others involved – to deal with the complexity of target needs.
Analysis of needs in this approach is well-supported (Nation, 2000; West, 1994). Richterich and Chancerel (1977) insist on considering learners' background knowledge from the outset of the teaching and

learning process. Grellet (1981) supports the use of authentic materials to encourage students to face the complexity of authentic texts. Eggly (2002) discusses differences in expectations between students who are forced to study and those who voluntarily enrol.

As a distance learner, you should be able to determine your learning needs in any course you are studying. Try as much as possible to look for a way of meeting these needs.

3.1.4 Learner-Centred Approach

Berwick (1989) and Brindley (1989) are leaders in contributing learner-centred approaches to needs analysis. Three ways to look at learner needs are offered: perceived vs. felt needs; product vs. process oriented interpretations; and objective vs. subjective needs. 'Perceived needs' are from the perspective of experts while 'felt needs' are from the perspective of learners (Berwick, 1989). In the product-oriented interpretation, learner needs are viewed as the language that learners require in target situations. In the process-oriented interpretation, the focus is on how individuals respond to their learning situation, involving affective and cognitive variables which affect learning (Brindley, 1989).

Finally, objective needs are explored prior to a course, whereas subjective needs are addressed while the course is underway. According to Brindley (1989), objective needs can be derived from various kinds of factual information about learners, their real-life language use situations, their current language proficiency and difficulties. Subjective needs can be derived from information concerning their affective and cognitive factors such as personality, confidence, attitudes, learning wants, learning expectations, cognitive style and learning strategies.

Aside from language needs, learners' attitudes and feelings are clearly highlighted in the learner-centred approaches. The classification of perceived vs. felt needs gives rise to consideration of how needs can depend on an individual's perceptions and interpretations. A combination of the concepts of needs as specified in the sociolinguistic model and the learning-centred approach would effectively embrace the issue raised concerning learner-centred approaches. For example, needs in the product-oriented interpretation are similar to the concepts of communication needs (Munby, 1978) and target needs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Needs in the process-oriented interpretation, can be combined with learning needs.

In the context of a language program that emphasizes the needs of the learners, anything but a learner/learning-centred syllabus and methodology is bound to create contradictions that will negatively affect students' perceptions of the program. As advocated in the literature on

communicative language teaching, content and teaching-learning procedures must take into account the interests and concerns of the learners, as well as the socio-economic and cultural context in which the language program is to be implemented.

Getting learners to determine their needs is less relevant at the lower level of education. For example, it may be worthless to ask nursery or lower primary pupils their learning needs. They are likely not going to tell you anything very reasonable.

3.1.5 A Task-Based Approach

A task-based syllabus supports using tasks and activities to encourage learners to utilize the language communicatively so as to achieve a purpose. It indicates that speaking a language is a skill best perfected through interaction and practice. The most important point is that tasks must be relevant to the real world language needs of the learner. Long (2005a) recommends taking a task-based approach to needs analysis as well as with teaching and learning based on the argument that "structures or other linguistic elements (notions, functions, lexical items, etc.)" should not be a focal point of teaching and learning. "Learners are far more active and cognitive-independent participants in the acquisition process than is assumed by the erroneous belief that what you teach is what they learn, and when you teach it is when they learn it" (p. 3). In this approach, tasks are the units of analysis and "samples of the discourse typically involved in performance of target tasks" (p. 3) are collected. An example of a 'real-world task' or 'target task' for engineers is the reading of textbooks (Mudraya, 2006).

The concept of tasks is similar to that of communicative events as defined by Munby (1978). The difference is that language variables, rather than sociolinguistic variables, are highlighted in the task-based approach.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

i. Write short notes on (a) sociolinguistic model, (b) systemic approach and (c) task based approaches to needs analysis.
ii. What can you say are the differences between learning-centred approach and learner-centred approach to needs analysis?
iii. Which of the approaches to needs analysis you have studied do you consider best for ESP? Give reasons for your answer.

3.2 Principles for Analysing Learners' Needs

3.2.1 Give First Priority to Communication Needs

Communication needs come to attention when it is believed that what learners are taught should be specifically what they will really use, and that this should determine the contents of ESP courses (Munby, 1978; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). It is also argued that specific knowledge concerning English language alone is insufficient. The ability to communicate also involves understanding the discourse practices where the language is situated and in which learners must operate (Long, 2005a, 2005b; Orr, 2002). While many types of needs can be addressed in an ESP course, communication needs analysis is particularly necessary. These cases highlight the importance of predicting students' specific communication needs as accurately as possible to prepare them adequately for situations they are likely to face in the near future.

3.2.2 Give Equal Importance to Learning Needs

Cognitive and affective variables as well as learning situations are influential in determining the manner in which a language is learned or should be learned (Berwick, 1989; Brindley, 1989). Hutchinson and Waters (1987) argue that the study of language descriptions, namely, the study of communication needs, does not enable someone to learn a language. Learning situations comprising several learning factors must also be taken into account. In fact, a thorough study of both descriptions will help elaborate learner needs more thoroughly.

3.2.3 Take "Context" into Account

Context influences the teaching and learning of ESP (Holliday & Cooke, 1982; Jordan, 1997; Richterich & Chancerel, 1977). Language teaching and design that does not consider particular groups of students is likely to be either inefficient or inadequate (Long, 2005b). For instance, English instruction for the technical students can be directly based on the students' specialised knowledge, e.g. engineering, as suggested by Hutchinson & Waters (1987). The civil engineering students of the course under investigation will come from the technical background. English instruction for the academic students, on the other hand, probably should not be too closely connected with their specialised knowledge, as they do not possess much knowledge of the specialised content before attending ESP courses.

Additional factors to consider when looking at the context of teaching and learning include societal, institutional and teacher factors (Richards, 2001). Societal factors refer to expectations of society such as employers' English standards for employment. Educational institutions

may influence the specificity of ESP for engineering. Finally, teacher factors influence the way ESP courses are run, for example, when ESP courses aim at teaching all four skills, a given teacher may believe that reading and writing should be emphasised more than listening and speaking. Teaching style, conservatism, and personality are also vital factors that influence every learning situation.

3.2.4 Invite Multiple Perspectives

Learners' English needs depend on various expectations, interpretations and individual value judgments (Berwick, 1989; Brindley, 1989). It is, therefore, important to ensure that interpretations consider the perspectives of all involved. Multiple perspectives refer to institutions, teachers and learners. ESP relates to work or professional study situations (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001; Jordan, 1997). Therefore, stake-holders from both locations should be invited to participate in needs analysis research.
Employers and engineers can be direct sources of learners' communication needs in workplaces. Lecturers witness actual professional study situations. Former students include those who have already completed the course under investigation, but continue studying other professional courses required in their programme of study. They will be witnesses of both learning needs and communication needs in professional study situations. The teachers and current students will contribute useful knowledge of the learning situation as well as a variety of experience.

3.2.5 Employ Multiple Data Collection Methods

Use of multiple data collection methods is recommended when dealing with complex needs and for validating data. Jasso-Aguilar's (2005) study reveal that some of the language needs of hotel maids could not have been found if participation observation had not been employed in addition to the study of task force predictions. Long (2005a, 2005b) calls for more attention to 'methodological options' in needs analysis. It is also recommended that limitations of data collection methods should be dealt with both before and during the research process.

Some of the data collection methods that will capture all available data include: individual interviews, class observation, collection of students' work samples, focus group interviews and evaluation of instructional materials. Interviews are the most direct way of determining what stakeholders will think about learner needs (Long, 2005a). Using structured interviews, questions concerning learner needs that have been carefully constructed can be asked repeatedly to focus all stakeholders on specific concerns (Dudley-Evans & John, 1998; Lynch, 1996). By collecting data through observation, enquiries into learner needs can be

addressed by perceiving what will actually happen in day-to-day situations. Structured, but open-ended observation will provide the opportunity for observers to focus on particular aspects of learner needs and at the same time be open to the discovery of innovative findings (Lynch, 1996). Students' classroom work samples can be useful sources for confirming the relative success of a course in satisfying learner needs (Wortham, 1995). Focus group interviews will be effective for discussing the fulfilment of specific learner needs in the course. Instructional materials will need to be evaluated to ensure that they correspond to learner needs, reflected real language uses and facilitate the learning process (Cunningsworth, 1995).

3.2.6 Treat Needs Analysis as an On-going Activity

Finally, an ESP program that aims to meet the ever-changing needs of the learners will include an on-going system of evaluation, aiming to provide information on how the program itself can be improved through the introduction of changes that are deemed necessary. Learner needs should be analysed on an on-going basis because they are likely to change over time, depending on contextual and human affective variables. This principle expands the attention of needs analysis to include both curriculum development and action research.

The purpose of needs analysis is to identify learner needs, taking place at a relatively theoretical level outside of classes, yielding recommendations on how a course should be designed. Yet, at a more profound level, needs analysis is actually a process in curriculum development (Brown, 1995; Richards, 2001); it can and should be extended to curriculum development because many other important variables are connected with learner needs in authentic teaching and learning. A description of needs conducted prior to classes, by itself, will not generate a complete understanding of learner needs. Allwright (1988:51) states that "what happens in the classroom still must matter. We need studies of what actually happens [inside classes]".

The subject of needs analysis also extends to curriculum development by action research. The spiral, iterative and evaluative procedures of action research plus its belief in change for improvement demand consideration (Dick, 2000; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; McNiff & Whitehead, 2002). Action research usually originates from a 'thematic concern' (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988), which is 'learner needs' in the present situation. The concern leads to the first 'moment' (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988), planning, which involves building learner needs into the first half of a curriculum. Research then proceeds to subsequent moments such as acting, observing and reflecting. Implementing and evaluating are engaged to ascertain whether or not the curriculum meets learner needs. Action research generates spirals of investigation which

"unfold from themselves and fold back again into themselves" (McNiff & Whitehead, 2002:56). With this consideration, a curriculum is redesigned based on learner needs discovered in the initial procedure of teaching and learning, which are then implemented and evaluated in the second half. Change for improvement is another important characteristic. Action research is "an inquiry which is carried out in order to … change, in order to improve some educational practice" (Bassey, 1988:93). In employing action research in needs analysis, needs are checked in the first component; elements which are unsuitable can be changed to improve the curriculum during the second half to comply with learner needs more effectively.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

i. Why should needs analysts consider first the communication needs of the learner?
ii. What and how can you differentiate between communication needs and learning needs:
iii. Explain why you think that needs analysis should be an on-going thing.
iv. Write short notes on the following: (a) target situation analysis (b) present situation analysis (c) objective needs (d) subjective needs (e) process oriented needs (f) product-oriented needs, strategy analysis, means analysis, perceived needs.

4.0 CONCLUSION

An eclectic approach to needs analysis, I think, should be a way out in ESP. The learner's present situation analysis is a guide to the course designer as to what the learner knows. The target situation analysis signifies the target communicative competence. Again, the experts and sponsors have what they consider the 'Perceived needs' of the learners which must also count in addition to the learners' 'felt needs', product-oriented needs, process-oriented interpretation with its focus is on how individuals respond to their learning situation, involving affective and cognitive variables. Finally, objective needs are explored prior to a course, whereas subjective needs are addressed while the course is underway. All these go to show that needs analysis is an on-going thing, starting from the beginning of the course to the end of the course. *Learning-situation analysis* is the route with present-situation analysis as the starting point and target-situation analysis as the destination (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). For various reasons, learners may be well motivated in the subject lesson but totally turned off by encountering the same target materials and tasks in an EAP classroom. The target situation is thus not the only indicator of what is useful in learning situation. Needs, potentials and constraints of the learning situation must also be taken into consideration (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you noticed that while Munby's approach to course design focuses on target situations, the systematic approach considers present situations of the learners before engaging in the language course. The present situation analysis was however criticized for its over-reliance on learners' perceptions of their needs. Criticising other approaches attention to the learners' language needs, Hutchinson and Waters suggested learning-centred approach to needs analysis because it considers the learner from the onset of the language course till he reaches the target situation. Another approach to needs analysis that was considered is learner-centred approach where the learner's needs are viewed in three ways: perceived vs. felt needs; product vs. process oriented interpretations; and objective vs. subjective needs. Finally, it has been recommended that the best approach to needs analysis is task-based approach. This involves selecting relevant tasks from the real world language needs of the students.

The unit also tells us that the investigation into the learner's needs starts from an analysis of communication and learning needs, and proceeds through the spiral and interactive stages of curriculum development. Prior to classes, learner needs are established as a result of individual interviews with key stakeholders from five groups. After the interviews, the identified needs are assessed in terms of their suitability for the context under investigation. Based on the identified needs and preliminary reflections, a new curriculum is designed for the first part of the course by the teacher researcher. The curriculum design process includes: context analysis and course planning; establishing the principles of teaching and learning; formulating aims and objectives; designing of syllabus and instructional materials; and, in conclusion, assessment. All of the processes are treated as an interrelated whole as suggested in the literature (Brown, 1995; Richards, 2001).

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

i. Explain why there is need to source information about the learner from multiple perspectives
ii. Briefly describe the principles of needs analysis.

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UNIT 6 APPROACHES TO AND STEPS IN ESP COURSE DESIGN

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Now that you have learnt what it means to design a course, let us examine the approaches you can adopt in doing so. Some of the existing approaches to course design include: language-centred approach, skills-centred approach and learning-centred approach. As a course designer, you organize the syllabus on any of the three depending on what you intend to achieve. However, ESP course design is learning/learner centred with the learner at the centre of all instructions. A course designer must adopt some criterion for the selection of those notions and functions which would be particularly useful. Every course designer in ESP must follow a particular sequence for goals to be achieved. Curriculum development processes in language teaching comprise needs analysis, goals setting, syllabus design, methodology, testing and evaluation. ESP course design follows this procedure. By analysing the language needs of specific groups of learners, we should be able to identify those notions and functions which will be most valuable to teach. The concept of needs analysis enables us to discriminate between various learner types and to produce syllabus inventories specifically geared to their needs.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

You are expected, by the end of this unit, to be able to:

- explain the difference between language centred and learning-centred approaches to course design;
- state the disadvantages of language-centred approach to course design;
- state when a syllabus is said to be skill-based;
- state the design that is appropriate to ESP;
- explain what is meant by needs analysis;
- list and explain the two orientations to needs analysis;
- state the factors to be considered in the implementation of a syllabus;
- formulate goals and objectives for specific learners of English;
- state the criteria upon which a course could be organized;
- differentiate between process and product syllabus; and
- briefly explain the steps one should follow in designing a course.

HOW TO STUDY THE UNIT

a. Read this unit as diligently as possible.
b. Find meaning of unfamiliar words in the unit using your dictionary.
c. As you read, put major points down in a piece of paper or jotter.
d. Do not go to the next section until you have fully understood the section you are reading now.
e. Do all the Self-Assessment exercises in the unit as honestly as you can. In some areas where it is not feasible to provide answers to Self-Assessment exercises, go to the relevant sections of the unit to derive the answers.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Approaches to Course Design

A course could be designed following any of the approaches below:

3.1.1 Language-centred approach to Course Design

Language is the focus in a course book, in which learners have the chance to take the language to pieces, study how it works and practises putting it back together (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p.109). A syllabus based on language-centred approach highlights the structures of a discourse. Firstly, it presents many significant vocabulary items: subject-specific words of the topic, sub-technical words in scientific English and many common core words as well. Lexis is important to

express functions (Swan, 1990) and the lexical input enables participants to learn and master these expressions to communicate on their subject.

The following steps should be taken by a course designer who intends adopting the language-centred approach to course design:

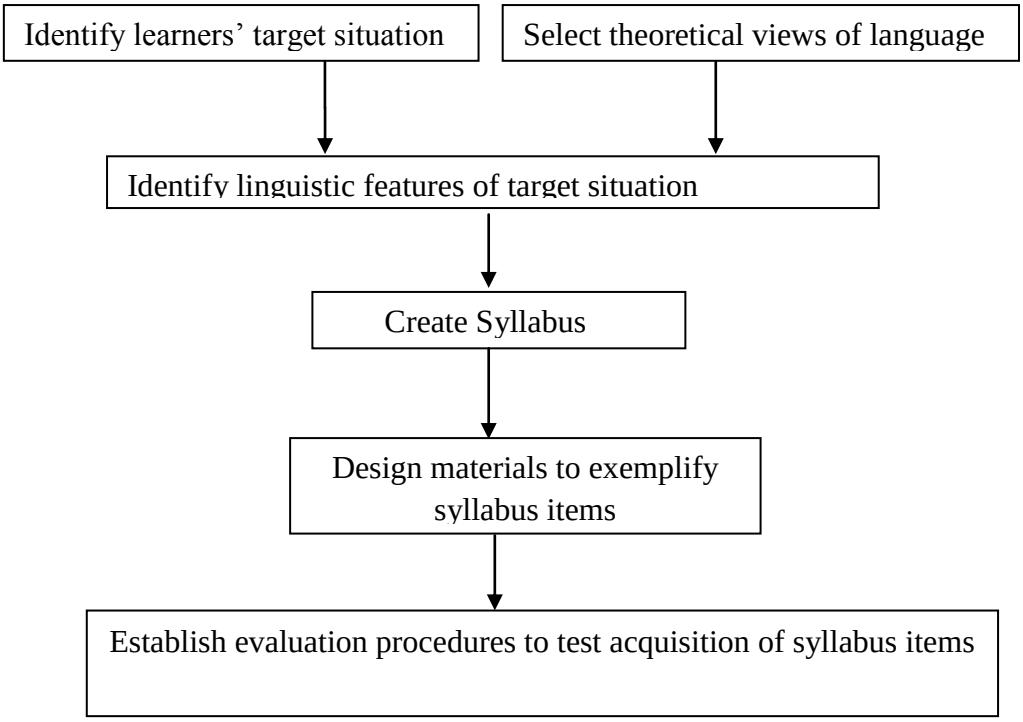
i. Identification of the target situation;
ii. Selecting the appropriate learning theory;
iii. Finding out the linguistic features characteristic of the target situation;
iv. Designing/creating a syllabus
v. Designing or writing materials to suit the purpose and
vi. Evaluation/assessment of the syllabus (Umera-Okeke, 2005, p. 53)

The learner is only used to identify the target situation and is dumped. His learning needs are not considered.
Hutchinson and Waters (1987) give the following as the disadvantages of constructing syllabus based on language-centred approach:

(a) It is a learner-restricted syllabus.
(b) It is a static and an inflexible procedure. Once the initial target situation analysis is done, no change is done. It did not take care of conflicts and contradictions inherent in human endeavours.
(c) It appears to be systematic giving the impression that learning is systematic. Systematization in learning is internally generated not externally imposed.
(d) Language centred approach is at the surface level. It says nothing about competence that underlies performance. Learning is not a straightforward logical process. A lot of other factors come into play.
(e) It gives no attention to other factors which play a part in course design such as the role of interest and motivation (p. 68-69).

A language-centred course design, according to Hutchinson and Water (1987, p. 66) will look like this:

Fig 7: A Language-centred Approach to Course Design



Source: (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 66)

3.1.2 A Skill-based Syllabus

Skills are abilities of people to display enough competence in a language. This is the ability to perform independently in a language situation or context in which the language use can occur. In this syllabus, the content of the language teaching involves a collection of particular skills that may play a role in using language. Although situational syllabuses combine functions together into specific settings of language use, skill-based syllabi merge linguistic competencies (pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and discourse) together into generalized types of behaviour, such as listening to spoken language for the main idea, writing well-formed paragraphs, delivering effective lectures, and so forth.

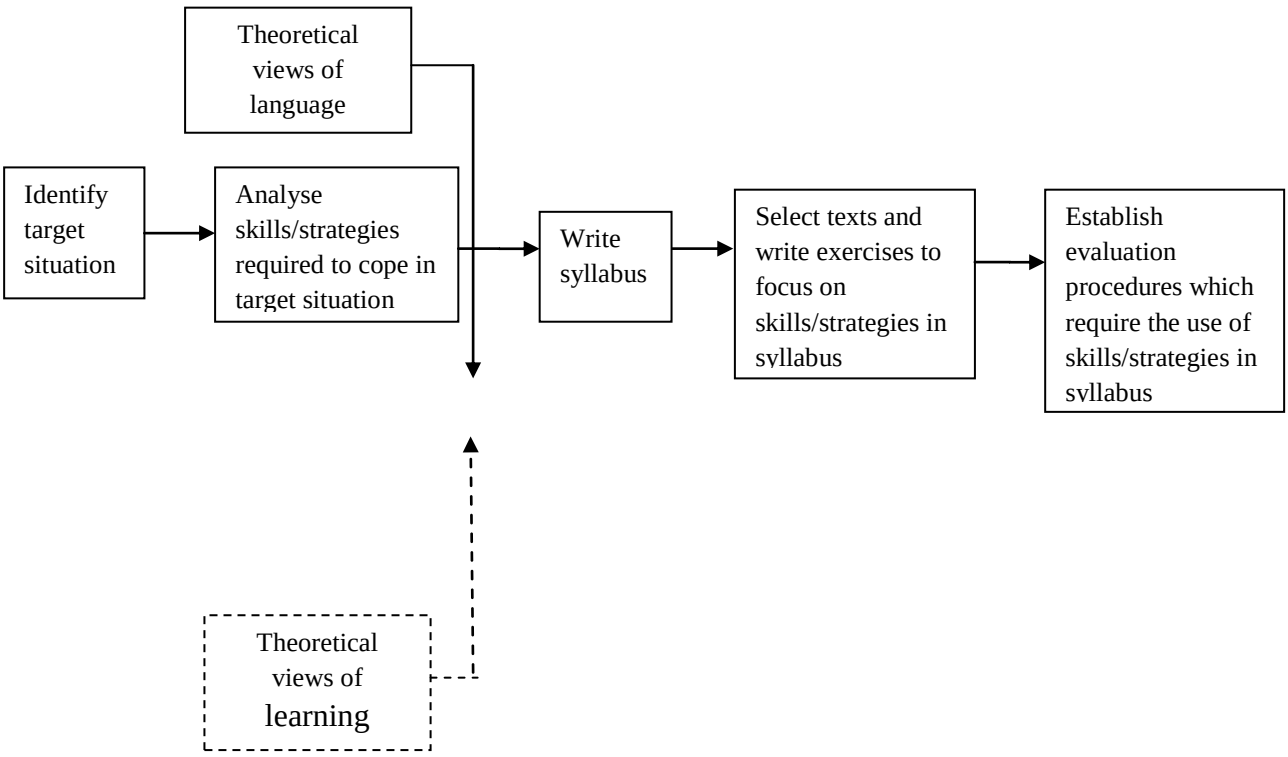
The primary purpose of skill-based instruction is to learn the specific language skill. A possible secondary purpose is to develop more general competence in the language, learning only incidentally any information that may be available while applying the language skills.

Skills-centred approach enables the course designer to discover the potentials and abilities that the learner brings to the ESP classroom. By this approach, Widdowson's goal oriented and process oriented courses are distinguished. The entire success of a programme is not achieved at the target situation because of time and students' experiences. Therefore,

the process oriented course is intended to enable learners achieve a purpose of constantly developing proficiency as the learning process goes on. The learners are expected to achieve what they can within a given time constraint. The process oriented approach concentrate on skills. Skills-centred approach is said to be a reaction to constraints of learning imposed by limited time, resources and idea of specific registers of English as a basis for ESP.

It is the duty of ESP to help learners to develop skills and strategies which might stay with them even after ESP course. The learner is considered in the process of learning unlike in the language-centred approach. Language is viewed in terms of how the mind processes it and the learner is seen as a user of language and not a learner of it.
In skills and strategies approach, ESP learning situation is still dependent on the target situation and the learner is used to identify and analyse the target situation needs.

Fig 8: A Skill-centred Approach to Course Design



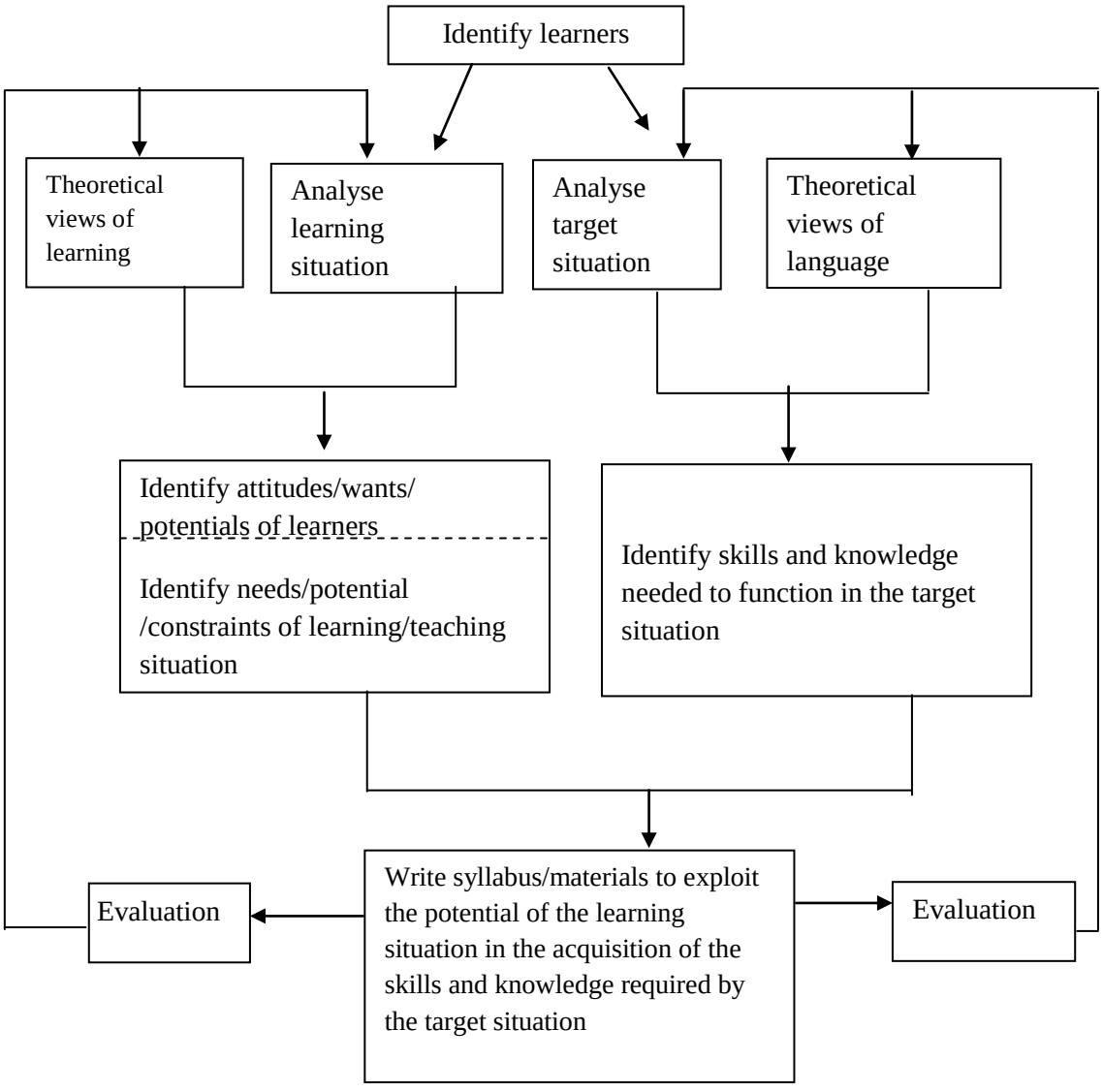
Source: (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987:71)

3.1.3 Learning-Centred Approach

In essence, learning-centred approach emphasizes the fact that learning is more than representing language items and skills advocated by the two previously discussed approaches. Learning centred approach considers the social context of education and gives more latitude to the teacher. Learning should consider tasks, exercises, teaching techniques, and all other activities through which the content is to be learnt. Learning-centred approach examines how the learners achieve their goals in learning.

All that is required at the initial stage of the learning process is a general syllabus stating the content and skills and the teacher/material writer takes care of other factors that emerge from the needs analysis of the learning situation.

Fig. 9: Learning-centred Course Design Process



Source: (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987:74)

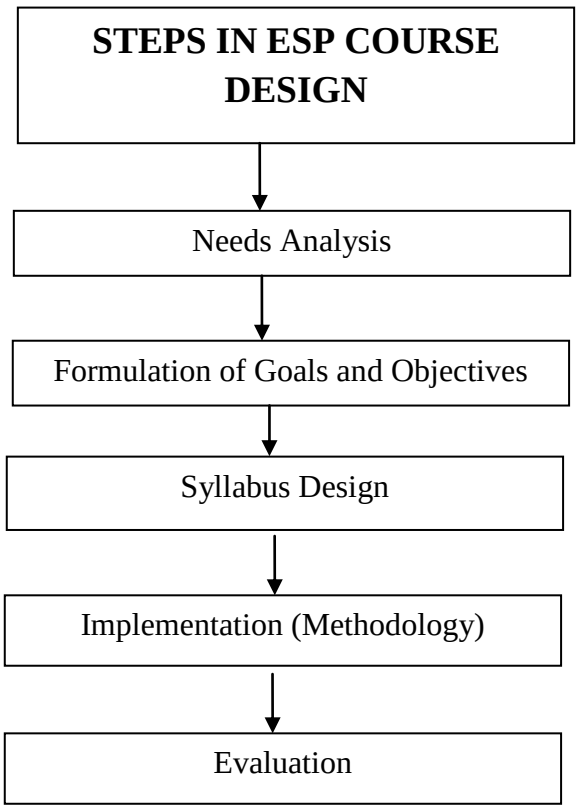
SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

i. Differentiate between language-centred approach to course design and learning-centred approach.
ii. State when a syllabus is said to be skill-based
iii. Mention and explain the design that is appropriate to ESP

3.2 Steps in ESP Course Design

To design a course based on the learners needs, you are expected to follow a particular procedure. The figure below illustrates the steps in ESP course design:

Fig. 10: Steps in ESP Course Design



3.2.1 Needs Analysis

Analyzing the specific needs of a particular learner group serves as the prelude to an ESP course design, because it determines the 'what' and 'how' of an ESP course. Chen (2006) also reached the conclusion that ESP course designers should explore and identify the learners' potential needs in the first place. What is an undisputed fact is that any ESP course should be needs driven, and has an '*emphasis on practical outcomes*' (Dudley-Evan & St. John, 1998:1). Therefore needs analysis is and always will be an important and fundamental part of ESP (Gatehouse, 2001, Graves, 2000). It is *'the corner stone of ESP and*

leads to a very focused course' (Dudley-Evan & St. John, 1998:122). Seeking out learner's needs is in recognition of the fact that in ESP, the learners have different specific and specifiable communicative needs which they want to achieve by undergoing the course. Needs analysis is the process of establishing *what* and *how* of a course (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). Needs analysis evolved in the 1970's to include 'deficiency analysis', or assessment of the 'learning gap' (West, 1997:71) between target language use and current learner proficiencies. The course designer should take cognizance of the fact that there may be variation between the learner's needs and that of the teacher or the guardian.

Certainly though ESP was a driving force behind needs analysis as Richards (2001) observes, the emergence of ESP with its emphasis on needs analysis as a starting point in language program design was an important factor in the development of current approaches to language curriculum development (p.72).

There are two orientations to needs analysis in ELT circles, according to Brindly. They are the "narrow or product-oriented interpretation of needs whereby the learner's needs are seen solely in terms of the language they will have to use in a particular communication situation." The second is the "broad or process-oriented interpretation which sees needs in terms of "the learning situation."

The current concept of needs analysis in ESP, according to Dudley-Evans and St John (1998:125), includes consideration of the following aspects:

(a) Professional information about the learners: the tasks and activities learners are/will be using English for – *target situation analysis* and *objective needs*.
(b) Personal information about the learners: factors which may affect the way they learn such as previous learning experiences, cultural information, reasons for attending the course and expectations of it, attitude to English - *wants, means, subjective needs*.
(c) English language information about the learners: what their current skills and language use are - present situation analysis – which allows us to assess the learners' lacks.
(d) The learners' lacks: the gap between (c) and (a) – lacks.
(e) Language learning information: effective ways of learning the skills and language in (d) – learning needs.
(f) Professional communication information about (A): knowledge of how language and skills are used in the target situation-linguistic analysis, discourse analysis, genre analysis.
(g) What is wanted from the course?

(h) Information about the environment in which the course will be run – means analysis.

3.2.2 Specifying the Goals and Objectives of the Course

The course designer, after ascertaining the learner's needs tries to formulate the goals and objectives of teaching the course. In ESP, the goal is often for communicative competence rather than linguistic competence. Corder (1973) said that the content and structure of a syllabus is related to the objectives of the learner or of society. These must be specified in terms of what he wants or must be able to do in terms of social behaviour and linguistic performance. This is known as his "terminal behaviour". But Ingram (1982) maintains that a clear specification of objectives provides a means of ensuring coherence of language activities in responding to learner needs. What do you want them to know and be able to do at the end of the semester? How will the course build on where students started and help them move through the rest of the curriculum?

In most language teaching programmes, strict behavioural objectives as defined by Mager (1962) are not often used. Mager state that behavioural objectives should:

i. describe the behaviour to be performed;
ii. describe the conditions under which the performance will be expected to occur;
iii. state a standard of acceptable performance.
iv. Language programmes usually use objectives which specify:
v. the processes which underlie fluency in specific skill areas;
vi. the form of the linguistic or communicative content which will be covered; or
vii. the form of a level of proficiency.

Hawkey suggests that research in learner needs should be taken into account when specifying objectives. Van Ek (1976) sums up the situation by asserting that language learning objectives must be geared towards learners' needs, and that they should specify the following components:

i. the situations in which the foreign language will be used, including the topics to be dealt with;
ii. the language activities in which the learner will engage;
iii. the language functions which the learner will fulfil;
iv. what the learner will be able to do with respect to each topic;
v. the general notions which the learner will be able to handle;
vi. the specific notions which the learner will be able to handle;
vii. the language forms which the learner will be able to use;

viii. the degree of skill with which the learner will be able to perform.

For instance, the goals and objectives for a course in Business English could be stated as:

Goals and Objectives

The overall aim of the course is to fully prepare the senior students for their future career because after the graduation they are likely to seek employment in international companies. Before recruitment, resumes are sent out to companies and interviews are conducted. Therefore, job application constitutes a vital part of the course. In their future business career, they may find themselves working in a company where English is widely spoken, or using English as a medium of communication with other business people from all over the world.

Goals

By the end of the course, learners should be able to familiarize themselves with business terminology and write competently in English. For example, they should be capable of writing appropriate business letters, e-mails as well as a good resume. They must have the ability of understanding intermediate business articles and newspapers, understanding and conducting general business conversation as well as maintaining relationships with the target community.

Objectives

The objectives for each skill are as follows:

Listening:

To understand telephone messages and conversations in business settings

- To understand relevant business news reports.

Speaking:

- To communicate effectively with native speakers in job interviews as well as business settings.

- To respond effectively to telephone messages and job interviews

Reading:

- To understand or even interpret a variety of texts, such as business reports, documents and newspaper articles.

Writing:

- To write resumes and business-related letters or e-mails.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

i. As a course designer, what would you consider the goals and objectives of an English course for Hotel workers?
ii. What are the two orientations of needs analysis identified in this unit?
iii. Of what use is needs analysis to a course designer?

3.2.3 Course/Syllabus Design

The next step in ESP course design is to translate the information gathered from needs analysis into syllabus design. Munby (1978) calls this to "convert needs to syllabus content." A syllabus normally refers to "what is to be learnt with some indication of the order in which the items should be learnt" and "the interpretations that it is put to" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 81).

In this case, the main orientation of such a syllabus is determined by the needs of the learners and an indication of how the content may be most effectively used to cater for these needs. As mentioned earlier, and in conformity with the interdisciplinary advocated for an ESP program, the syllabus will also incorporate aspects of the students' discipline of study which will reinforce their motivation and the usefulness of the language to be learnt.

The syllabus can take various forms, but according to Swan, cited in Robinson (1991):

The real issue is not which syllabus is put first. It is how to integrate eight or so syllabuses (functional, notional, situational, topic, phonological, lexical, skills) into a sensible teaching programme (p. 28).

The objective of organizing a syllabus should be to promote learning, and not just to provide a description of the language. Therefore, the content matter should be organized in such a way so as to facilitate teaching and learning. The unit of organization should also suit the particular purpose of learning.

The syllabus may be structured on the basis of a gradual move from the more general to the more particular, a statement of a general rule to a statement of particular rules or exceptions which incorporates the deductive process. The material can also be organized so that the

direction is from the particular to the general which is the inductive process.

The syllabus can also be organized such that the material starts with the learner's home life, moves on to the classroom situation and then moves out of the school into the post office, railway station, grocery shop and so on.
Corder (1973) says that "the ideal syllabus would be one in which the sequencing of items taught logically derives from and presupposes the learning of some previous items." He also put forward the notion of a "natural syllabus" or a "built-in syllabus". He explains that the relevance of performance analysis to the designing of a syllabus is based on the notion that there is some 'natural' sequence of elaboration of the approximative system of the second language learner and that when/if this can be well established it would provide a psychological logic to the ordering of material in a syllabus (p. 132).

However, it is quite impractical to allow natural ordering to be the basis of syllabus organization because it is very rare for teaching and language acquisition to go hand in hand.
According to Allen (1984), there are basically three approaches which can be utilized to sequence and organize content:

1. the traditional, structural-analytic approach in which the highest priority is given to formal grammatical criteria;
2. the functional-analytical approach which defines objectives in terms of categories of communicative language use; and
3. a non-analytic, experiential, or "natural growth" approach, which aims to immerse learners in real-life communication without any artificial pre-selection or arrangement of items.

Some of the syllabus types are: (a) the structural or grammatical or linguistic syllabus; (b) the notional syllabus; (c) the functional syllabus; (d) process and task-based syllabus and so on. The type to be adopted will depend on the students' needs, the objective of the course, the sponsor's or teaching institution's bias as regards their aim for the language course. We shall briefly discuss some of these syllabus types:

1. Product-Oriented Syllabuses

The product-oriented syllabus is also known as the synthetic approach; these kinds of syllabuses emphasize the product of language learning and are prone to intervention from an authority. They include:

(a) The Structural Approach

Historically, the most prevalent of syllabus type is perhaps the structural or grammatical syllabus in which the selection and grading of the content is based on the complexity and simplicity of grammatical items. The learner is expected to master each structural step and add it to her grammar collection. As such the focus is on the outcomes or the product The structural syllabus design fosters the generative use of language and allows speakers to form sentences that have never been uttered previously. This is known as the traditional syllabus which is organized along grammatical lines giving primacy to language form. It specifies structural patterns as the basic units of learning and organizes these according to such criteria as structural complexity, difficulty, regularity, utility and frequency. It makes ample use of highly controlled, tightly structured and sequenced pattern practice drills. Historically, it is also known as grammatical syllabus in which the selection and grading of the content is based on the complexity and simplicity of grammatical items. The learner is expected to master each structural step and add it to her grammar collection. As such the focus is on the outcomes or the product.

One problem facing the syllabus designer pursuing a grammatical order to sequencing input is that the ties connecting the structural items may be rather feeble. A more fundamental criticism is that the grammatical syllabus focuses on only one aspect of language, namely grammar, whereas in truth there exist many more aspects to language. Finally, recent corpus based research suggests that there is a divergence between the grammar of the spoken and of the written language; raising implications for the grading of content in grammar based syllabuses.

(b) The Situational Approach

The limitations found in structural approach led to an alternative approach where situational needs are emphasized rather than grammatical units. Here, the principal organizing characteristic is a list of situations which reflects the way language is used in everyday life i.e. outside the classroom. The fundamental unit of organization here is a non-linguistic category, namely the situation. A situational syllabus is a syllabus where language is always presented within a situational context. Functions such as requesting, complaining, apologizing apply across a whole range of situations. The designer of a situational syllabus attempts to predict those situations in which the learner will find himself, and uses these situations, for example, a restaurant, an airplane, or a post office, as a basis for selecting and presenting language content. The underlying assumption here is that language is related to the situational contexts in which it occurs. Thus, by linking structural theory to situations the learner is able to grasp the meaning in relevant context.

One advantage of the situational syllabus is that motivation will be heightened since it is "learner- rather than subject-centred" (Wilkins.1976, p. 16). However, a situational syllabus will be limited for students whose needs were not encompassed by the situations in the syllabus. This dissatisfaction led Wilkins to describe notional and communicative categories which had a significant impact on syllabus design.

(c) The Notional/Functional Approach

This is a combination of notion and function in designing a syllabus. The idea was that language should be classified in terms of what people wanted to do with it –function – or in terms of what meaning people wanted to put across – notions- rather than in terms of grammatical items. The notional/functional types of syllabuses stress on communicative properties of language where the central concern is the teaching of meaning and the communicative use of patterns, it emphasizes what speakers communicate through language and derives its content from an analysis of learners' needs to express certain meanings. Furthermore, the language should be categorized by level, starting with the basic level, which would permit the learner to survive when visiting the country in which the language was spoken.

Wilkins' criticism of structural and situational approaches lies in the fact that they answer only the 'how' or 'when' and 'where' of language (Brumfit & Johnson, 1979, p.84). Instead, he enquires "what it is they communicate through language" (p. 18). Thus, the starting point for a syllabus is the communicative purpose and conceptual meaning of language i.e. notions and functions, as opposed to grammatical items and situational elements, which remain but are relegated to a subsidiary role.

In order to establish objectives, the needs of the learners will have to be analyzed by the various types of communication in which the learner has to confront. Consequently, needs analysis has an association with notional-functional syllabuses. Although needs analysis implies a focus on the learner, critics of this approach suggest that a new list has replaced the old one. Where once structural/situational items were used, a new list consisting of notions and functions has become the main focus in a syllabus. White (1988, p. 77) claims that "language functions do not usually occur in isolation" and there are also difficulties of selecting and grading function and form. Clearly, the task of deciding whether a given function (i.e. persuading), is easier or more difficult than another (i.e. approving), makes the task harder to approach.

The above approaches belong to the product-oriented category of syllabuses. An alternative path to curriculum design would be to adopt

process oriented principles, which assume that language can be learnt experientially as opposed to the step-by-step procedure of the synthetic approach.

2. Process-Oriented Syllabuses

Process-oriented syllabuses, or the analytical approach, developed as a result of a sense of failure in product-oriented courses to enhance communicative language skills. It is a process rather than a product. That is, focus is not on what the student will have accomplished on completion of the program, but on the specification of learning tasks and activities that s/he will undertake during the course.

The process syllabus was advocated by Breen (1984), whereby a framework would be provided within which either a predesigned content syllabus would be publicly analysed and evaluated by the classroom group, or an emerging content syllabus would be designed in an on-going way. It provides a framework for decisions and alternative procedures, activities and tasks for the classroom group. It openly addresses teaching and learning and particularly the possible interrelationships between subject matter, learning and the potential contributions of a classroom. The actual syllabus is designed as the teaching and learning proceeds.

(a) Procedural/Task-Based Approaches

The procedural syllabus was proposed by Prabhu (1980). Prabhu's '*Bangalore Project*' was based on the premise, "that structure can best be learned when attention is focused on meaning." This syllabus proposes to replace the linguistic syllabus with a syllabus of tasks which are graded conceptually and grouped by similarity. The tasks and activities are planned in advance but not the linguistic content. The emphasis here is on meaning rather than form. The emphasis is on the learner who is preoccupied with understanding, working out, relating, or conveying messages, and copes in the process, as well as he can with the language involved. There is no syllabus in terms of vocabulary or structure and no presentation of language items. Within such a framework the selection, ordering and grading of content is no longer wholly significant for the syllabus designer.

Arranging the program around tasks such as information- and opinion-gap activities, it was hoped that the learner would perceive the language subconsciously whilst consciously concentrating on solving the meaning behind the tasks. There appears to be an indistinct boundary between this approach and that of language teaching methodology, and evaluating the merits of the former remain complicated.

A task-based approach assumes that speaking a language is a skill best perfected through practice and interaction, and uses tasks and activities to encourage learners to use the language communicatively in order to achieve a purpose. Task-based teaching provided learners with opportunities for learner-learner interactions that encourage authentic use of language and meaningful communication. The goal of a task is to "exchange meaning rather than to learn the second language" (Ellis, 1999:193).

Tasks must be relevant to the real world language needs of the student. That is, the underlying learning theory of task based and communicative language teaching seems to suggest that activities in which language is employed to complete meaningful tasks, enhances learning. According to Ellis (2000), for interactive tasks to be successful, it should contain elements that

- are new or unfamiliar to the participants;
- require learners to exchange information with their partners or group members;
- have a specific outcome;
- involve details;
- centre on a problem, especially an ethical one, such as deciding in a small group who should take the last spot in a lifeboat, a nuclear physicist or a pregnant woman; and
- involve the use of naturally occurring conversation and narrative discourse.

Teachers, using task-based syllabus are expected to use problem-solving tasks to provide learners with opportunities to share ideas, build consensus, and explain decisions about real-life issues important to them.
The components of a task according to Nunan (1988) include;

1. Goals
2. Input
3. Activities
4. Teacher role
5. Learner role
6. Settings

The starting point for task design should be the **goals and objectives,** which are set out in the syllabus or curriculum guidelines which underpin the teaching programme.

The next step is selecting or creating **input** for students to work with. The use of authentic input is a central characteristic of communicative tasks. Where possible, it is desirable to build up a **"bank" of data.**

Texts, audio or video recordings can be classified and filed under topics or themes (e.g. Work/Jobs; Holidays; Future Plans; The Media), and provide a ready-made resource to be drawn on when designing tasks.
Nunan (1988) contends that one should work from the data to the teaching/learning objectives, rather than the other way round - i.e. it is better to derive **communicative activities and other exercises** such as grammatical manipulation exercises, from input, rather than say, deciding to teach a particular item, and then creating a text to exemplify the target feature or item.

(b) Learner-led Syllabuses

The notion of basing an approach on how learners learn was proposed by Breen and Candlin (1984). Here the emphasis is on the learner, who it is hoped will be involved in the implementation of the syllabus design as far as that is practically possible. By being fully aware of the course they are studying, it is believed that their interest and motivation will increase, coupled with the positive effect of nurturing the skills required to learn.
However, as suggested earlier, a predetermined syllabus provides support and guidance for the teacher and should not be so easily dismissed. Critics have suggested that a learner-led syllabus seems radical and utopian in that it will be difficult to track as the direction of the syllabus will be largely the responsibility of the learners. Moreover, without the mainstay of a course book, a lack of aims may come about. This leads to the final syllabus design to be examined: the proportional approach as propounded by Yalden (1987).

(c) The Proportional Approach

The proportional syllabus basically attempts to develop an "overall competence" (Yelden 1987:97). It consists of a number of elements with theme playing a linking role through the units. This theme is designated by the learners. It is expected initially that form will be of central value, but later, the focus will veer towards interactional components. According to Yelden, the syllabus is designed to be dynamic, not static, with ample opportunity for feedback and flexibility. This kind of syllabus is also referred to as "Multi-dimensional syllabus". It is a syllabus leading to lessons of varying orientation – some covering important functions, others dealing with settings and topics, and yet others with notions and structures. This allows a syllabus design which is less rigid and more sensitive to the various student language needs. There is flexibility to change the focal point of the teaching material as the course unfolds.

The shift from form to interaction can occur at any time and is not limited to a particular stratum of learner ability. As Yalden (1983)

observes, it is important for a syllabus to indicate explicitly what will be taught, "not what will be learned".

This practical approach is focused on flexibility and spiral method of language sequencing leading to the recycling of language. It is relevant for learners who lack exposure to the target language beyond the classroom. But how can an EFL teacher pinpoint the salient features of the approaches discussed above?

"Learner-learning centred", "task-based", "activity-based" and "problem-solving" are all attributes which are generally associated with an effectively communicative-oriented approach. And, as may be deduced from the recent literature on ESP, this orientation is characteristic of special purpose language teaching in general and ESP in particular. Such an approach aims, among other things, at helping learners develop the skills associated with language learning, as well as skills related to their own discipline of study. Examples of such skills are "information", "mental", "social" and "action" skills.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

i. On what criteria could a course/syllabus be organized?
ii. Name and describe at least three types of syllabus.
iii. How can you differentiate between a structural syllabus and a notional/functional syllabus?
iv. All syllabus types are grouped under two headings. What are they?
v. From what you have so far learnt about ESP, what syllabus design best suits English for Specific Purpose?

3.2.4 Syllabus Implementation/Methodology

The next step in ESP course design is for you as the teacher to implement the syllabus you have designed. This requires increased resources, training, and re-training of the ESP teacher. The process or task-based syllabus, the use of authentic texts, collaboration with content teacher in creating and interpreting the syllabus should be encouraged. No matter how well developed a syllabus is, it would not be able to achieve what it is meant to if serious consideration is not given to its successful implementation.

Various sources have cited a number of factors which need to be given consideration in the successful implementation of a language syllabus. These factors would also affect the choice of an appropriate syllabus for use.

Maley (1984) gives the following factors:

1. cultural
2. educational
3. organizational
4. learner
5. teacher, and
6. material

(i) Cultural factors are cited as the most powerful factors in the implementation of any language programme. It depends on whether a society is outward-looking and welcomes innovation, or inward-looking, seeking inspiration from deeply-rooted traditional values. The attitudes of a given society towards the learning process, towards books, towards teachers are also of key importance.

(ii) Educational factors refer mainly to educational philosophy. Other factors are whether the system is authoritarian or participatory, whether it views learning as acquiring knowledge or acquiring skills, whether learning is considered a product-oriented business or as a life-long process, and whether the system encourages dependence or learner initiative. It is also important that top-level administrators are well-informed about the syllabuses. It is also important to take account of the role of exams in a given educational system.

(iii) Organizational and administrative factors will affect the implementation of a programme, especially if the national educational system is highly centralised or highly decentralised. This will be reflected in the way decisions are arrived at and communicated to others, that is, whether they are by open consensus or by closed decree. It is equally important that there is a clearly defined structure of communication between the administration and those executing a programme. There should be sufficient channels of communication between syllabus designers and classroom teachers. There should also be a clear structure of communication between technical and secretarial staff on the one hand and the teaching staff on the other.

(iv) Learner factors involve the age and background of the learners as being highly significant. It is also significant how learners are selected for the programme because certain syllabuses may not suit the study habits of certain learners.

(v) Teacher factors refer to the training and experience of teachers, which provide an important criterion for successful implementation. The availability of teacher training is a key factor. It is important that the teacher is proficient in the target language. Teachers' language proficiency and training may well favour the choice of one syllabus vs. another. Teachers will have

to understand why the syllabus is as it is so that they see the necessity of having to change their teaching procedure if necessary. Teachers, administrators, and educators must be familiar with the objectives of the syllabus. It is also important that teachers are aware from the start about the number of hours they are expected to work, as this will have important consequences for time-tabling and teacher morale.

(vi) Material factors mean that there should be an adequate budgetary provision for all aspects of the programme. The hardware ordered for the programme should be appropriate and not just ordered for prestige reasons. Spares for the hardware should be readily available and they should be serviceable in the vicinity. Software should also be appropriate and available to those who need it. There should also be adequate provision for secretarial assistance.

Other sources have also given class size as a variable or factor to be considered. For example, the sorts of drills associated with structural syllabuses would be difficult to conduct where there are classes of 50 or more students.

The economic condition is another important factor, mainly because new materials and retraining of teachers is expensive, it is vital that this factor be kept in mind for all aspects of the implementation process because the whole process actually depends on it.

The successful implementation of a syllabus also depends largely on the extent to which materials, methodology and exams are compatible with it.
These very same factors would also have to be taken into consideration when selecting an appropriate syllabus type to achieve the purpose desired.

3.2.5 Evaluation

Course/syllabus evaluation is the final stage in designing a course. It is the measurement and workability of the syllabus. As a syllabus provides the teacher and students a guarantee that some grounds have been covered, it needs to be evaluated so as to find out how far it has succeeded in achieving anticipated goals

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

i. Using the knowledge you have acquired about steps in course design and syllabus types, design a one week course of 5 hours for hotel workers.
ii. State the disadvantages of language-centred approach to course design.

iii. What is the difference between target needs and learning needs?

4.0 CONCLUSION

There are many essential points when considering a syllabus to be designed and implemented. The various syllabuses discussed in this investigation all present valuable insights into creating a language program and course. Syllabuses are frequently combined in more or less integrated ways with one type as the organizing starting point around which the others are arranged and connected. A predetermined and prearranged syllabus provides support and guidance for the instructor and should not be so simply dismissed. Moreover, without the support of a course book, a lack of aims may come about. To put it another way, in arguing about syllabus choice and design, it should be kept in mind that the question is not which type to choose, but which types and how to connect them with each other. Finally, and perhaps preferably, a hybrid syllabus needs to be constructed and designed due to pragmatic reasons. As Hutchinson and Waters (1987:51) state "it is wise to take an eclectic approach, taking what is useful from each theory and trusting also in the evidence of your own experience as a teacher".

Whether a syllabus is flexible or whether it is binding will depend mainly on the objective which it is to achieve. Most inexperienced teachers prefer a "rigid" syllabus which clearly prescribes everything that has to be done and how. Experienced teachers, on the other hand, prefer both freedom and responsibility and therefore a syllabus which is more flexible. The complex teaching situation today requires that time be set aside and concerted effort be put into designing a syllabus which would be appropriate for the variables involved in the teaching-learning process. The priority in language teaching nowadays is communicative performance among an increased number of learners.

The stages of syllabus design outlined in this paper provide a basis for going about preparing a language programme. The modern trend in language teaching is towards being learner-centred. This brings with it a large number of variables, which have been pointed out under the section called Syllabus Implementation/Methodology, which dictate the choice of a syllabus type. Therefore the emphasis on syllabus design is justified so as to produce appropriate syllabuses for the specific needs of the learners.

5.0 SUMMARY

We have looked at the three basic things the teacher should consider in designing a course. The teacher may strictly adhere to the learner restricted syllabus, which is systematic presentation of the language issues with no input from learners. Though this approach is criticized for

being too strict and rigid, it could be seen as a predetermined and prearranged syllabus which provides support and guidance for the instructor and should not be so simply dismissed. Another approach to course design discussed in this unit is the skills and strategies approach whereby the route to the target situation must be considered. This approach is intended to enable learners achieve a purpose of constantly developing proficiency as the learning process goes on. This is for want of time and the fact that all learning cannot be achieved at the target situation. Finally, the learning/learner-centred approach was discussed. In this approach, the teacher only influences the learning process but the learner determines what he or she learns.

The choice of a syllabus is a major decision in language teaching, and it should be made as consciously and with as much information as possible. There has been much confusion over the years as to what different types of content are possible in language teaching syllabi and as to whether the differences are in syllabus or method. Several distinct types of language teaching syllabi exist, and these different types may be implemented in various teaching situations. The job of a course designer is a complex one that is systematic. This unit has identified the steps a course designer should follow in order to design a successful ESP course. It starts with finding out the language needs of the students that are undergoing the course. The course designer translates the information gathered from needs analysis into syllabus design. The unit also described various syllabus types in language learning, though mention was made of the "learner-learning centred", "task-based", "activity-based" and "problem-solving" are all attributes which are generally associated with an effectively communicative-oriented approach. And, as may be deduced from the recent literature on ESP, this orientation is characteristic of special purpose language teaching in general and ESP in particular. For the implementation stage, necessary factors that should be considered for successful implementation including the organization, learner, teacher, material factors, among others, were described. Finally, course assessment/evaluation as the last stage in course design was also described.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSESSMENT

A well designed course in the hands of a teacher who cannot implement it is nothing. What are the necessary factors to consider in course implementation?

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